

## Moving Beyond Silence: Women Waging Peace

*Swanee Hunt\**

### I Introduction

Around the globe, women play a vital but often unrecognised role in averting violence and resolving conflict. With expertise in grassroots activism, political leadership, investigative journalism, human rights law, military reform, formal and information negotiations, transitional justice and post-conflict reconstruction, these women bring new approaches to the security sphere process. Sustainable peace, and therefore international security, depends on such innovations. But scholarship regarding the work of women peace builders is scarce and women's work in the field of security is largely unrecognised at the institutional and public policy levels.

'Women Waging Peace' was developed to bridge this gap. Launched in 1999 to connect women in conflict areas to one another and to policy shapers, 'Waging' advocates worldwide for the full participation of women in formal and informal peace processes. Connecting women peacemakers and policy shapers is the core of Waging's work. First Lady Hillary Clinton hosted the original roll-out of the initiative at the White House. Since then, through conferences and briefings, Waging has brokered relationships among an extensive network of over 200 women peace builders and 2,000 policy shapers, resulting in new solutions to long-standing conflicts at local, regional and international levels. Government officials, NGO leaders, media professionals and academics are collaborating with Waging network members to explore options for building sustainable peace.

This chapter lays out the case for women's inclusion in peace building, examples of women's peace efforts around the world, as well as our challenges and successes in connecting such women to policymakers to create a new model of 'inclusive security'.

---

\* Former US Ambassador to Austria (1993-1997), Swanee Hunt directs the Women and Public Policy Program at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. Ambassador Hunt is founder of Women Waging Peace and President of Hunt Alternatives Fund. Ambassador Hunt remains grateful for the editorial assistance of Annemarie Brennan while writing this chapter.

## II Why Women?

The justification for women's inclusion can be built on several platforms. *Fairness* is the most obvious: women account for half of the population and therefore it's only just that they comprise half the decision makers. Or *compensation*: given how greatly women have been victimised, they deserve to be heard. Or *representation*: leaving women out of the peacemaking process means their concerns are likely to be ignored or bargained away in the negotiation process.

But there's an *efficiency* argument as well. For lasting stability, we need peace promoters, not just warriors, at the table. More often than not, those peace promoters are women. Certainly, heroic and visionary men have changed the course of history with their peacemaking; likewise, belligerent women have made it to the top of the political ladder or, at the grassroots level, have joined the ranks of terrorists. But social science research has demonstrated that women tend to be more cooperative and less aggressive in their styles; and in conflict situations around the world, leaders of UN and other international peace missions have reported to me their frustration at not having access to women in the society, whom they perceived to be the steadiest voices of moderation.

A negotiated settlement must have the buy-in of the masses before it is truly sustainable, and thus stakeholders from throughout the society must be involved in the informal and formal peace process. In domestic policy-making, the mayor of an American city wanting to address race relations would pull together not only minority leaders, but also representatives from the business, religious, education, social welfare, labour and political circles. But foreign policymakers aren't subject to the same electoral pressure to build their work on a broad base. International negotiators have not learned to include individuals from multiple spheres who understand the dynamics of the community in which the agreement must be lived.

Women's perspectives in formal and informal peace processes are often different from men's in at least four key ways:

### *A Women are Adept at Bridging Ethnic, Political and Cultural Divides*

In his address to the 24 October 2000 Open Session of the UN Security Council on Women, Peace and Security, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated that: 'For generations, women have served as peace educators, both in their families and in their societies. They have proved instrumental in building bridges rather than walls.'<sup>1</sup> Former President of the Irish Republic, Mary Robinson, agrees that women are 'instinctively . . . less hierarchical'<sup>2</sup> and harness in a cooperative way the energies of those who are like-minded. Scores of women have told me they consider themselves generally more collaborative than men and thus more inclined toward consensus and

<sup>1</sup> See United Nations, 'Secretary-General Calls for Council Action to Ensure Women are Involved in Peace and Security Decisions', M2 PRESSWIRE, 25 October 2000.

<sup>2</sup> *Voices of Women Leaders*, SLANT, New York, (Spring 1997) at <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/sipa/PUBS/SLANT/SPRING97/quotes.html>.

compromise. In fact, when I asked a UN official why there were no women in several African peace talks, he said warlords refused to have women because they were concerned that the women would compromise.

Challengers note that female leaders such as Britain's Margaret Thatcher and Israel's Golda Meier have a leadership style quite similar to men: hierarchical and power-centred. The issue may be one of critical mass. Former European Commissioner Anita Gradin notes that in her Swedish homeland, when women made up 15 percent of the parliament, they behaved more like the men. As their numbers increased to 45 percent, the norm changed. They advocated for more changes important to Swedish women and insisted that a woman be appointed defence minister and men be given responsibilities such as social welfare.<sup>3</sup>

In 1976, women organisers in Northern Ireland won the Nobel Peace Prize for their non-sectarian public demonstrations. Almost two decades later, Monica McWilliams (formerly a member of the Northern Ireland Assembly) and May Blood (now a member of the House of Lords) were told that only leaders of the top ten political parties – all men – would be included in the peace talks. Over the next six weeks, McWilliams and Blood mobilised over 200 women's organisations to create a new party: the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition. They received 10,000 votes in the local elections, winning a place at the peace table.<sup>4</sup>

The Coalition is a non-sectarian, broad-based group of women of all political hues and religious traditions, with an agenda of reconciliation through dialogue and inclusion. Based on prior work with families affected by 'The Troubles,'<sup>5</sup> they drafted key clauses of the Good Friday Agreement to include integrated housing and the needs of young people. They lobbied for the early release and reintegration of political prisoners and pushed for a comprehensive review of the police service. In the subsequent public referendum on the Good Friday Agreement, Mo Mowlam, then British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, attributed the overwhelming success of the YES Campaign to the canvassing of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition.

Composed of women on different sides of the conflict, the Coalition it has had the cross community credibility to work across lines. Members have helped calm the often deadly 'marching season' by facilitating mediation between Protestant unionists and Catholic nationalists. They have brought together key players from each community, including released prisoners, to work on issues of safety and security, maintaining 24-hour contact across the peacelines. Coalition members are not only idealistic but practical. When the women entered the Forum set up as part of the peace negotia-

---

3 Personal communication with Anita Gradin, former European Commissioner, March 2003 (copy held on file with author).

4 Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, *Women at the Peace Table: Making a Difference*, (UN Development Fund for Women 2000) 16–17, available at <http://www.unifem.undp.org/resources/peacebk.pdf>.

5 'The Troubles refers to the period of violent conflict in Northern Ireland beginning with the Civil Rights marches in the late 1960s to the political resolution enshrined in the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. During that time more than 3000 people were killed, most of them civilians.' British Broadcasting Corporation, 'War and Conflict: The Troubles' at the BBC website <[www.bbc.co.uk/history/war/troubles](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/war/troubles)>.

tions, some men started moo-ing as if they were cows. The women responded by setting up a blackboard outside their office doors. It was called the 'name 'em and shame 'em' board. Every day, insults hurled at the women were listed for all to see – with attribution. The public insults soon stopped.

Women's progress does not move in a straight line. In November 2003, the Coalition, along with other moderates, lost their Parliamentary seats. They held a retreat within a few days and emerged resolved to stay the course, organising for the continued implementation of the peace process and to get more women elected again.

### *B Women Have Their Fingers on the Pulse of the Community*

Living and working close to the roots of conflict, women are well positioned to provide essential information about activities leading up to violence as well as to gather wartime evidence. Grounded in practicalities of everyday life, they also play a critical role in mobilising their communities to begin post-conflict of reconciliation and rebuilding.

In Kosovo, after paediatric neurologist Vjosa Dobruna was locked out of her hospital office during Milosevic's imposed apartheid, she helped create 'Fe-mail', an email warning and emergency aid system. Having collected evidence from victims at massacre sites, she was targeted for murder or capture by Serb special police. She escaped by jumping out of a second floor window into her garden. Caught up in the flood of refugees in the exodus to Macedonia, Dr. Dobruna administered trauma relief. Subsequently, she was appointed to the UN's Joint Interim Administrative Structure of Kosovo, with responsibility for democracy building and civil society. Her portfolio included establishment of new protocols for free elections and a system of independent news reporting to replace the mendacious media machine that contributed to the destruction of her community. She says having only her car and cell phone as an office for the first six months of her job wasn't a handicap because she held meetings in cafes and homes, where she stayed in close touch with Kosovars' concerns.

Dobruna has won the confidence of Serb and ethnic Albanian Kosovars and has led efforts to create a women's caucus in the new assembly, the only political structure crossing party lines. In July 2002 Hashim Thaci, president of the assembly, said of her work: 'This women's caucus is the only effort to bring together people from all sides. It will be a model, giving us hope that we can live together.'

### *C Women are Innovative Community Leaders With or Without Formal Authority*

Around the world, women are disproportionately represented in grassroots organising, even though (or because?) their work is generally under-funded and overlooked. The good news is that grassroots leaders may set their own agenda outside the close scrutiny of political parties or official establishments.

In stark demographics, women frequently outnumber men in post-conflict populations. They often drive on-the-ground implementation of peace agreements, using techniques such as popular protests, electoral referenda and other citizen-

empowering movements whose influence has grown with the spread of democracy. Precisely because they haven't been allowed full participation within power structures, women have learned to work 'outside the box'. Africa offers many examples. With no resources available to them, Sudanese women marched through town naked to protest the abduction of their children as child soldiers. Their songs were played on radio and became popular throughout the region. Going further, during the November 2000 Burundi peace talks, Nelson Mandela encouraged women to withhold 'conjugal rights' ('such as cooking' he quipped) if their rebel husbands picked up arms again.<sup>6</sup> *Lysistrata* revisited.

In Rwanda, 'after the genocide, women rolled up their sleeves and began making society work again,' says President Paul Kagame.<sup>7</sup> A leader among those women is Aloisea Inyumba, Governor of Kigali-Ngali Province and former head of the Commission for Unity and Reconciliation. Born and raised in a refugee camp in neighbouring Uganda, she confronted a society in crisis when she entered her parents' homeland with the Rwandan Patriotic Front in the early 1990s. Inyumba witnessed the genocide of 1994 and at age 26 was made Minister for Families and Gender. She and her co-workers faced the immediate challenge of figuring out how to bury some 800,000 bodies from the massacres that wiped out ten percent of the population in 100 days. As well, she devised a system to care for hundreds of thousands of orphans. 'Each One Take One' was her motto as she urged every mother to add at least one more child to her family. Hutu women adopted Tutsi children and Tutsi women took home Hutus. Inyumba also prepared Rwandan communities for the release of about 100,000 genocidaires from prison. One by one, she visited villages to ready them for the release of prisoners – mostly men – who have been in jail for years without trial because the court system was completely overwhelmed by the catastrophic killing spree.

#### *D Women are Highly Invested in Preventing and Stopping Conflict*

The first comment usually offered by casual observers as to why women promote peace is that women are so inclined because of their social and biological roles as nurturers. While most men come to the negotiating table directly from the war room and battlefield, women's experiences usually come from care-giving professions and family care. This notion that women's contributions are linked to being mothers (or being scripted to have been mothers) has been challenged by those who see a line between biology and destiny as confining, dangerous and wrong-headed. But we don't need to argue 'nature or nurture' to make the case that women are motivated by mothering as agents for peace. Women I've interviewed in conflict areas all over the world repeatedly state that they feel driven by the need to ensure security for their families. They describe themselves as different from men with phrases such as 'after all, we bring life into the world so we don't want to see it destroyed'. That theme is picked up by many men, like

6 Swanee Hunt and Cristina Posa, 'Women Waging Peace' (2001) *Foreign Policy* 38, 42.

7 Personal communication with Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda, May 2001 (copy held on file with author).

Haris Silajdzic, post-war prime minister of Bosnia, who told me in 1996: 'If we'd had women around the table, there would have been no war; women think long and hard before they send their children out to kill other people's children'.

The energy of mothers determined to protect their children inspires Ida Kuklina, who works with over 200 chapters of soldiers' mothers, demanding Russian military reform. Her powerful NGO defends the human rights of servicemen. She and her members confront judges, generals and presidents with the deaths of 3,000–5,000 soldiers who perish each year, not because of war, but because of abuse by their own commanders and peers. In addition, Ida and her colleagues were so vocal criticising the war in Chechnya that the American Ambassador to Russia credited them with Yeltsin's ending of the first Chechen war.

### III Evidence of Efficacy

Policymakers sometimes ask for 'proof' of whether and how women make a difference in peace building. Advocates note that the mayor in the earlier example, putting together a race relations campaign, would not ask for proof that he should include blacks in the initiative planning and implementation. Still, research is turning up a range of new examples of women's effectiveness in dealing with conflict.

A journalist and scholar with the South Asia Forum for Human Rights in Kathmandu, Nepal, Rita Manchanda explores the context in which strong women peace builders emerge, the forces that seek to prevent their leadership in this field and the progress made by women peace builders:

Traditionally, women have formed the humanitarian front of the war story.... But beyond the passivity and powerlessness of victimhood, conflict has seen South Asian women come out and mobilise resistance, confront the security forces, the administration and the courts. Women have formed Mothers Fronts and coalitions for peace, women have become guerrillas and soldiers and women have emerged as agents of social transformation and conflict resolution.<sup>8</sup>

Adding to the work of Manchada and others, in 2002 Women Waging Peace established a Policy Commission to link gender research and theories of conflict prevention and resolution. The process has included scholars, practitioners, policymakers, grassroots organisers and students analysing topics such as how women use their traditional identities to mobilise peace; the role of women as community builders during warfare; how women adapt indigenous cultural practices to contain violence; and the crucial role of women in healing and reconciliation.

The Policy Commission's analytical body of research strengthens the effectiveness of advocacy work. Case studies address three overarching questions:

---

<sup>8</sup> Rita Manchanda, 'Where are the Women in South Asian Conflicts?' in Rita Manchanda (ed) *Women, War, and Peace in South Asia: Beyond Victimhood to Agency* (2001) 15.

1. How do women contribute to peace processes?
2. How and why is the consideration of gender issues essential to the successful implementation of peace processes?
3. What are the most effective models and examples of the inclusion of women and gender issues in peace processes? What guidelines and recommendations can be provided to policymakers for the design and implementation of international assistance programs?

The research methodology was developed after a scholars meeting and consultations with more than 60 representatives of government institutions, international organisations, leading non-governmental organisations and think tanks. Based on these consultations, the Commission identified as themes:

- a) conflict prevention and non-violent transformation;
- b) pre-negotiation and negotiation processes; and
- c) post-conflict reconstruction, including disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR); governance and political participation; and transitional justice and reconciliation.

The initial case studies reveal fascinating, untold stories:

1 *Strengthening Governance: The Role of Women in Rwanda's Transition*<sup>9</sup> examines women's contributions to post-conflict governance. In September 2003, Rwanda held its first multiparty parliamentary elections since the 1994 genocide. Women won 49 percent of the seats and are playing a significant role in politics and governance in the country. The Rwandan government developed innovative mechanisms to increase women's participation in governance and leadership structures at all levels. At national and grassroots levels, Rwandan women have made significant contributions to post-genocide recovery and reconciliation and women in governance have developed models for working across party and ethnic lines, strengthening partnerships with civil society.

2 *Adding Value: Women's Contributions to Reintegration and Reconstruction in El Salvador*<sup>10</sup> revisits the role of women in the Salvadoran DDR process and subsequent reconstruction efforts. Women's participation in negotiations had a significant impact on the inclusion of women and non-combatants in reintegration benefits programs. Women played an important stabilising role in the early phases of reintegration and are leaders in reconstruction and development despite social and economic constraints.

3 *From Combat to Community: Women and Girls of Sierra Leone*<sup>11</sup> examines the participation of women and girls in formal and informal processes of DDR. Women

---

9 Elizabeth Powley, *Strengthening Governance: The Role of Women in Rwanda's Transition* (2003) available at the Women Waging Peace website <http://www.womenwagingpeace.net/content/articles/RwandaFullCaseStudy.pdf>.

10 Camille Pampell Conaway and Salomé Martínez, with contributions by Sarah Gammage and Eugenia Piza-Lopez, *Adding Value: Women's Contributions to Reintegration and Reconstruction in El Salvador* (2004) available at Women Waging Peace website <http://www.womenwagingpeace.net/content/articles/ElSalvadorFullCaseStudy.pdf>.

11 Dyan Mazurana and Khristopher Carlson, with contributions by Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, *From Combat to Community: Women and Girls of Sierra Leone* (2004) available



mobilised public support for peace. They were active militarily in the conflict – particularly within the pro-government Civil Defence Forces – and they have provided a significant, but previously unacknowledged, number of services in the reintegration of ex-fighters, filling many gaps in official programs.

4 *Good Governance from the Ground Up: Women's Roles in Post-Conflict Cambodia*<sup>12</sup> traces women's contributions to governance and peace through local and national politics as well as civil society. Politics in Cambodia have been characterised by mistrust and a culture of violence persists. But there is growing public support for women's increased political participation since they are perceived to be more trustworthy and competent than men. Women in Cambodia have lobbied for the inclusion of human rights in the constitution, campaigned for peaceful elections, urged accountability in government structures and the establishment of government-civil society partnerships and developed mechanisms to advance their own political participation. Women are breaking new ground by appealing for fresh models of cross-party cooperation and establishing new patterns of public consultation.

5 *In the Midst of War: Women's Contributions to Peace in Colombia*<sup>13</sup> documents the critical work of women at local, regional, and national levels to mitigate the effects of continued violence on their communities, mobilise for renewed dialogues and prepare for the next cycle of peace. Despite widespread disillusionment in the peace movement, women's groups have developed a process to build consensus and create an agenda addressing the root causes of conflict such as political, social, and economic exclusion. Locally, despite being targeted through violence and repression, women are leading resistance efforts, establishing informal agreements with armed actors and forming 'peace zones' to protect their communities.

Earlier in this book, Li Fung notes the 'dichotomy between 'public' and 'private' spheres, which restricts women's access to the realms of national and international politics'.<sup>14</sup> Women associated with grassroots organising and civil society efforts are often absent or under-represented in official positions – particularly when it comes to peace negotiations. Fung goes on to say when this gender-based discrimination is reinforced during times of conflict, it is more difficult for women to become involved in political processes.<sup>15</sup>

Manchanda takes a different slant:

---

at Women Waging Peace website <<http://www.womenwagingpeace.net/content/articles/SierraLeoneFullCaseStudy.pdf>>.

12 Sambath Chan, Kate Frieson and Laura McGrew, *Good Governance from the Ground Up: Women's Roles in Post-Conflict Cambodia* (2004). At time of publication, the study's executive summary is available at the Women Waging Peace website <http://www.womenwagingpeace.net/content/articles/CambodiaExecSummary.pdf>.

13 Catalina Rojas, *In the Midst of War: Women's Contributions to Peace in Colombia*, (2004). At time of publication, the study's executive summary is available on the Women Waging Peace website <<http://www.womenwagingpeace.net/content/articles/ColombiaExecSummary.pdf>>.

14 See Li Fung, 'Engendering the Peace Process: Women's Role in Peace Building and Conflict Resolution' earlier in this collection at 213-215.

15 Ibid.



Violent conflict opens up for women the public sphere predominantly controlled by men...As we see in the lived narratives of women in the Kashmir conflict or in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh, protracted curfews and high risk security regimes obliged women to innovate survival strategies for the family and community. It was the mothers, wives and sisters who made the rounds of detention centres and torture cells looking for the disappeared and entered into negotiations of power with the institutional power structures, the army, administration and the courts. Women used their traditional invisibility in the public sphere to create space for their activism. As they are seen as less threatening, they are less watched. Violent conflict blurs the divide between the private sphere of the family and the public sphere or men and politics and in so doing calls into question the validity of the divide.<sup>16</sup>

Even when a conflict creates more opportunities than barriers for women, those gains are rarely lasting. When the men return home, women lose their non-traditional jobs and they must often deal with a soaring rate of domestic violence from their soldier husbands.

#### IV What Women Peace Builders Need

Given their positions in communities and investment in a peaceful society, women can be amazingly resourceful and creative in designing their work. They still greatly benefit, however, from additional training as well as opportunities to share techniques and make connections.

##### *A Messaging and Strategic Planning*

Often coming from civil society or other fields, women need additional training in negotiation techniques. Such training, as well as other capacity-building programs, not only strengthens women's voices but also equips them to work within the traditionally male policy community.

The war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has destabilised much of the surrounding region. As a result, conflict resolution experts from across the continent are lending their assistance. Kemi Ogunsanya, originally from Nigeria, is a senior conflict resolution training officer with the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), a conflict management NGO. Originally created to address challenges in South Africa's difficult transition from apartheid to democracy, ACCORD's focus has broadened to include all of Africa, offering innovative and effective solutions to regional challenges.

In 2002, the Congolese Women's Caucus successfully pushed for the inclusion of women in the Inter-Congolese Dialogues. Kemi provided conflict resolution and negotiation training to women participating in the Sun City peace talks, which brought together Congolese representatives from the government, political parties, rebel groups, and civil society. Kemi and other women from conflicts around the world say they are able to apply material from Waging conferences to their own situations,

---

<sup>16</sup> Manchanda, above n 8, 15-16.

training local women to hone their messages, using traditional security language in their meetings with policy makers, and applying consistent pressure until they have a voice in the peace process.

### *B Exposure to Fresh Ideas*

A flow of new ideas is key to the solution of long-standing conflicts. Even brilliant and committed activists need the stimulation of hearing the accounts of others.

A civil war, detailed earlier by Neela Marikkar, has gripped Sri Lanka for 20 years. Following the disappearance of one of her sons, a soldier in the Sri Lankan army, Visaka Dharmadasa founded Parents of Servicemen Missing in Action, launching a campaign to require the Sri Lankan army to issue identification tags for soldiers. At a Waging meeting, Dharmadasa met Ida Kuklina, Secretary of the Union of the Committees of the Soldiers' Mothers of Russia. Kuklina inspired Dharmadasa to reach out to mothers on the other side of the conflict line. This outreach to the Tamil Tigers community led Dharmadasa to start peace-building dialogues between members of the two communities. Now one of the few people trusted by officials on both sides of the conflict, she is leading Track Two dialogue processes between the two groups. As she moves in and out of rebel territory in her work, Dharmadasa credits Kuklina with the broadening of the scope of her empathy from other soldiers' families to her entire country,

### *C Coalitions for Strength*

Women benefit from coalitions in which they not only share and develop new ideas but also encourage and support each other. Whether providing practical guidance or inspiration, these coalitions offer women peace builders new perspectives on their own work and cement help from others, often leading to dramatic changes.

Peace agreements signed in 1996 form the base of a comprehensive platform for socio-economic development and democratisation in Guatemala. They also include major shifts toward gender equality. That unusual inclusion is in large part due to the voice of Luz Méndez, author of an earlier chapter in this book. Between 1991 and 1996, Méndez participated in the peace negotiations as part of the delegation of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity; she was the only woman negotiator for the first few years of the talks. Over the course of the negotiations, she began to work closely with representatives of civil society organisations, which had observer status at the talks. When women's groups made proposals about women's rights in the new Guatemala, Méndez backed them, despite the opposition she received from other negotiators. In 1995, she attended the Beijing UN Fourth World Conference on Women. That experience solidified her belief that women's rights are human rights. Later, as General Coordinator of the National Union of Guatemalan Women, Méndez worked for implementation of the peace accords, particularly the gender equality provisions. In 2000, she was a member of UNIFEM's gender experts team at the Burundi peace talks. She insists that in each of these situations, she was emboldened by the presence of other women, who fed her ideas and courage.

#### D *Access to Policymakers*

The most important tool for women peace builders is access to the policymakers they are hoping to influence. Training and skills building, crafting new ideas and working within wide coalitions are all useful means of drawing the attention of officials who control budgets and agendas.

It is important to have buy-in from people within the power structure – formal or informal. In the case of women’s inclusion, this often means collaborating with men. Li Fung and Rina Amiri note that in Bougainville, the Solomon Islands and Afghanistan, including men in women’s efforts to transform the peace-building process was essential. Fung describes how the Women’s Development Agency, which played an integral role in ending the conflict in Bougainville, had a strategy to ‘actively pursue sons, husbands and brothers, calling them to come back to their communities, sit down and think about non-violent ways of negotiating with the government’.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, Amiri explains the importance of Afghan clergy in furthering her cause. With close to 80 percent of the population illiterate, those who interpret the religious law of the Qu’ran wield a great deal of power. Conservative clerics often favour interpretations that uphold more restrictive customs, limiting the rights of women, among others.<sup>18</sup> Building the right coalition for change is key to success in forcing change.

#### V *Getting the Words Right*

Recent policy statements from the UN Security Council, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Group of Eight Leading Industrialised Nations (G8), the European Union (EU), and the Organisation of American States (OAS) call for the inclusion of women at every stage of local and international efforts to prevent, manage and resolve conflict.

##### A *UN Security Council Resolution 1325*

In October 2000, the UN Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, urging its member states to ensure the full inclusion of women in all aspects of international peace and security processes. Resolution 1325 recognises that those most negatively affected by war and conflict are civilians – particularly women and children. It also acknowledges, however, the critical role women can play in preventing and resolving conflicts and in building peace. Consequently, the Security Council urges member states to include more women at all levels of decision making and field operations. It asks the Secretary-General and member states to include a gender perspective in peacekeeping operations – both on and off the ground – and to provide training on the protection, rights and needs of women in post-conflict reconstruction. The resolution also urges all parties involved in conflict

---

<sup>17</sup> Fung, above n 15, 217.

<sup>18</sup> Rina Amiri, ‘Fine Lines of Transformation: Afghan Women Working for Peace’, the previous chapter in this collection, at 228–229.

resolution to adopt a gender-conscious approach during disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration. The policy statement stresses the responsibility of all actors to protect women from gender-based violence – especially rape – and to prosecute those guilty of perpetrating such crimes. It also calls for the support of women-led peace initiatives and indigenous approaches to conflict resolution. The Secretary-General is responsible for implementation with the mandate to investigate and communicate to all members the impact of armed conflict on women and girls and the overall gender implications of conflict resolution.

### *B European Parliament Resolution on Participation of Women in Peaceful Conflict Resolution*

In November 2000, the European Parliament passed a resolution calling on member states to guarantee the equal participation of women in conflict resolution at all levels, recruiting and training them for diplomatic positions and requiring negotiation teams to regularly consult women's community-based organisations. Because the reconciliation process presents an opportunity to address deeply rooted conflicts, the resolution promotes constitutional protection of women's equality in peace accords and grass-roots encouragement of warring factions to include women and civil society representatives in their negotiation teams, as well as fostering public awareness in conflict zones regarding systematic gender abuse. The goal is to ensure that peace is deeply rooted and that citizens, especially women, are not victimised or marginalised during demobilisation.

To this end, all member states should emphasise the importance of gender sensitivity and awareness in peace and security missions. Women are generally excluded from peace negotiations, although they are the majority of refugees and war victims. They are often targets of sexual violence as a weapon of war and suffer stigmatisation, sexual slavery, child prostitution, trafficking and sexually transmitted diseases. Member states must protect war-affected populations and facilitate international efforts in conflict prevention and resolution. Only with women's participation will negotiations take into account the rights and interests of women and girls and achieve the legitimacy needed for sustainable peace. The resolution also encourages the use of non-military strategies in peacekeeping operations that protect female participants by international human rights standards rather than cultural norms. Member states should classify sexual violence as a grave breach of the *Geneva Conventions* and support the appointment of a UN Special Rapporteur on women in armed conflict situations.

### *C OSCE Action Plan For Gender Issues*

In 2000, the OSCE approved a detailed Action Plan for Gender Issues, acknowledging the critical role women play in ensuring security while calling for greater gender equity within its institutions. A central part of the plan is the inclusion of women at all levels of the OSCE. Regular reports, intended to monitor the plan's implementation throughout the organisation, include gender-specific statistics and data on the per-

centage of women in leadership roles.<sup>19</sup> Training on human rights, gender sensitivity and non-discrimination is a prominent objective of the action plan, involving mission staff, senior staff, human rights workers, police monitors and officers. The action plan also urges all 55 OSCE member states to take similar measures for achieving greater gender equality, and pledges that the OSCE will monitor member states' compliance and encourage cooperation with other organisations to share information and best practices. Finally, the plan mandates that the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights take into account a gender perspective in all of its work. Specific action areas include increasing women's access to public and political life, enabling active participation of women in conflict resolution and management and preventing gender-related violence.

#### *D The G8 Statement on Strengthening the Role of Women in Conflict Prevention*

In early 2000, I met with President Clinton to urge him to include on the US agenda the issues of women's role in peace building. Although he enthusiastically agreed and the State Department followed suit, the process was slowed down during the preparatory process and the issue received only passing mention at the meeting in Japan. Although the US administration changed hands, the State Department under George W. Bush kept up the pressure. At their July 2001 meeting in Rome, the G8 Foreign Ministers agreed on the urgency of the systematic involvement of women in all stages of conflict prevention and resolution. The G8 Foreign Ministers' Official Statement describes the value of women as prime negotiators, peacemakers and advisers who can add creative, alternative approaches to mitigating conflict and sustaining peace. It encourages the appointment of women to national and international operational positions. The G8 foreign ministers call for special attention to the needs of female ex-combatants and urge gender sensitivity in training materials for peace-keeping operations, including military, civilian police and humanitarian personnel. They view women's involvement in bilateral and multilateral aid efforts as contributing to the larger goal of strengthening the role of women in building a peaceful and just society. The statement also highlights the positive role the private sector can play in conflict prevention and peace building. Calling for corporate social responsibility and endorsing collaboration among government, business and civil society, the G8 ministers support the notion of public-private partnerships in response to high-risk conflict situations.

#### *E Organisation of American States*

Success breeds success. In a 2003 Declaration on Security in the Americas, the OAS acknowledged the importance of strengthening the participation of women in efforts to promote peace and security; the need to increase women's decision-making role at all levels in relation to conflict prevention, management and resolution; and the neces-

---

<sup>19</sup> The first *Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan for Gender Issues* was distributed by the Secretary-General in May 2003.

sity of integrating a gender perspective in every policy, program and activity of inter-American organs, agencies, entities, conferences and processes that deal with matters of hemispheric security.

## VI Walking the Talk

Despite ample policy resolutions, comprehensive analysis to prove the efficacy of women's involvement and important connections made between women peace builders and policy shapers, the full inclusion of women in peace processes remains elusive. As Fung notes in her earlier chapter, women's marginalisation is reinforced by structural inequalities that support gender-based discrimination.<sup>20</sup> The United Nations, for example, is beleaguered by male dominance among permanent representatives and upper level administration; and so, examining UN Resolution 1325, we see interest and intention, but little implementation.

Following the passage of the resolution in 2000, the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality established the Inter-Agency Taskforce on Women, Peace and Security, headed by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues, to ensure coordination of implementation throughout the UN system. The Taskforce, which developed an Action Plan for Resolution 1325's implementation, includes representatives from nearly 20 organisations – among them the Department of Disarmament Affairs, Department of Political Affairs, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Office of the Special Adviser for Gender Issues, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Development Fund for Women. It also includes among its official observers the International Organisation for Migration and the NGO Working Group for Women, Peace and Security.<sup>21</sup>

The Inter-Agency Task Force contributed to the preparation of the Secretary-General's study 'Women, Peace and Security'.<sup>22</sup> Mandated by Resolution 1325, an October 2002 report on this study examines the effect of armed conflict on women and girls; outlines the relevant international legal framework and assesses its implementation; and reviews the gender perspectives in peace processes and missions, humanitarian operations and reconstruction and rehabilitation, including DDR (disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration). With an eye toward further implemen-

<sup>20</sup> Fung, above n 15, 208.

<sup>21</sup> Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, *Task Force on Women, Peace, and Security*, Website of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, United Nations, <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/activities/tfwpsecurity.htm>>. See also the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, *Implementation of the Security Council resolution (1325) on Women, Peace and Security*, website of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, United Nations, <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/gmtoolsscnoteres.htm>>.

<sup>22</sup> *Women, Peace, and Security: Study Submitted by the Secretary-General Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1325*, 57 UN SCOR, UN Doc S/2002/1154 (16 October 2002).

tation of Resolution 1325, the study includes recommendations for concrete action to ensure greater attention to gender perspectives in each of these areas.<sup>23</sup>

Following the presentation of this report and subsequent debate, the President of the Security Council issued a statement on the Council's behalf that strongly encouraged member states to continue and to increase their efforts at gender mainstreaming, particularly within peacekeeping and reconstruction efforts. The statement urged the Secretary-General to appoint more women to special representative, envoy and gender adviser positions and requested member states to contribute to a database of women candidates for such positions. Noting the important contributions of women in peace building, the statement requested the integration of gender perspectives into all reports presented to the Security Council and into all manuals and training materials for peacekeeping organisations. In an apparent effort to bridge the public-private dichotomy which Fung cites, the President's statement asserts:

The Security Council recognises the vital role of women in promoting peace, particularly in preserving social order and educating for peace. The Council encourages its Member States and the Secretary-General to establish regular contacts with local women's group and networks in order to utilise their knowledge of both the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, including as victims and ex-combatants, and of peacekeeping operations, to ensure that those groups are actively involved in reconstruction processes, particularly at decision-making levels.<sup>24</sup>

The Security Council's statement also encourages UN member states, civil society organisations and other actors to create clear and detailed strategies and action plans for gender mainstreaming and the integration of gender perspectives into humanitarian, peacekeeping and reconstruction missions, as well as mechanisms that monitor such missions. It also requests that the Secretary-General present a follow-up report in October 2004.<sup>25</sup>

One year after that statement was released, in October 2003, the UN Security Council held an open debate on women, peace and security. Speakers indicated that barriers to implementation had not yet been overcome. Bulgarian Ambassador Tafrov levelled this critique: 'The resolution provides a very important legal framework for action by the Council, but we should not stop there. It must be said that the results of its implementation are meagre indeed.' Ambassador Hannesson of Iceland agreed, saying: 'The Security Council should put the same effort into ensuring the implemen-

---

23 Ibid 11. See also the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, *Implementation of the Security Council resolution (1325) on Women, Peace and Security*, website of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, United Nations, <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/gmtoolsscnoter.htm>>.

24 *Statement by the President of the UN Security Council*, UN Doc. S/PRST/2002/32 (2002).

25 Ibid, final paragraph. See also the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, *Implementation of the Security Council resolution (1325) on Women, Peace and Security*, website of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, United Nations, <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/gmtoolsscnoter.htm>>..



tation of Resolution 1325 (2000) as it puts into all its other resolutions. The effectiveness of the United Nations and its international authority ultimately rest on the extent to which it is seen to implement its own decisions'.<sup>26</sup>

As an innovative way to bring attention to this problem, the United Kingdom Women's National Commission sponsored a Moot Court regarding the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security at the Commission on the Status of Women meeting in March 2004. Structured as a tribunal, '1325 on Trial' allowed witnesses and prosecutors to highlight the action – or inaction – of governments and UN entities that have primary responsibility for applying the resolution in war affected countries. The evidence presented made clear that while ad-hoc and one-off efforts have been made by officials, the NGO community has been the greatest force and supporter of Resolution 1325. A packed auditorium of some 200 people voted almost unanimously against the defence. The judge's sentence provided a number of specific recommendations on awareness-raising and implementation, including resources channelled to NGOs, extensive training around Resolution 1325 for government, UN and NGO personnel, and including men and boys in outreach efforts. Other recommendations were to strengthen institutional collaboration and support mechanisms within the UN and among UN member states, civil society organisations and other interested parties. The recommendations also called for gender perspectives and experts at all stages and for explicit references to gender concerns and, when possible, gender units and advisers in peace operation mandates and operations.

## VII Acting as If

While Resolution 1325 remains unimplemented, even without adequate support situations women are playing important roles in stabilising the most recent conflict areas.

### *A East Timor*

In 2002, the UN established a support mission in East Timor. A Special Representative to the Secretary-General headed the mission, which would initially comprise 1,250 civilian police and a military troop strength of 5,000, including 120 military observers. In addition to a focal point for HIV/AIDS, a Civilian Support Group of up to 100 personnel to fill core functions, a Serious Crimes Unit and a Human Rights Unit, it was determined that the civilian component would include a focal point for gender. In

26 Felicity Hill, 'Summary of Statements, Actions, Commitments and Recommendations, Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace, and Security', 29 October 2003 (2003) Portal on Women, Peace, and Security, United Nations Development Fund for Women, <http://www.womenwarpeace.org/summary2003.doc>. For the full text of all statements delivered at the debate, as well as press releases and other collateral materials, see Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, United Nations Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace, and Security, (2003) website of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, <http://www.peacewomen.org/un/SCOpenDebate2003/OpenDebate2003index.html>.

addition, the UN High Commission on Refugees sponsored an East Timor Women's Initiative to raise women's profile in post-conflict reconstruction.

### *B Afghanistan*

The world knows the plight of Afghan women under the Taliban. With international support, great advances have been made since the fall of the regime: more than 20 percent of the delegates to the December 2003 Constitutional Loya Jirga were women. When the female vote split, preventing any women from being elected to the Constitutional Loya Jirga secretariat bureau, individual women successfully lobbied to be included; one was named a deputy chair and two were made rapporteurs. The constitution finalised at the Loya Jirga enshrined the rights of women: 'citizens of Afghanistan – men and women – have equal rights and duties before the law'. Additionally, 25 percent of national assembly seats were set aside for women.

Improvement has been made at the local level as well. Rina Amiri's chapter discusses how networks of women from across the country have begun to work together for the advancement of women's rights. As the Ministry of Women's Affairs and NGOs open offices throughout the country, training sessions and seminars are held in Kabul and throughout the provinces, providing rural and urban women opportunities to meet. Amiri notes that such initiatives are helping different populations in Afghanistan overcome misconceptions and stereotypes about one another. 'Rural women are gradually recognising that urban women hold similar values and that they can play a key role in advocating on their behalf. Urban women are slowly learning to discard age-old prejudices about the backwardness of rural women.'

### *C Liberia*

In 1994, Mary Brownell, a former elementary teacher, ran a radio advertisement calling all women to attend a meeting at Monrovia City Hall. The resulting Liberian Women's Initiative was pivotal in monitoring the words and actions of warlords. Using their community status as mothers and elderly women, they reprimanded and cajoled fighters into laying down their weapons. When the election of Charles Taylor in 1997, instead of peace, brought international condemnation, Liberian women joined with their counterparts in Sierra Leone and Guinea to form the Mano River Union Peace Network. They organised a major advocacy campaign, targeting the leaders of their three nations, as well as the international community. The group focused on disarming child soldiers, stemming small arms trafficking and addressing inflammatory political issues. Throughout 2002 and 2003, they were key mediators between the various fighting forces, 18 political parties and the government. In recognition of their role, in August 2003 the Network was an official witness and signatory to the peace agreement. The women have continued to work with the UN on disarmament and demobilisation efforts.

*D Iraq*

Women in Iraq, once among the most liberated in the Arab world, faced the erosion of their rights under the regime of Saddam Hussein. The US-led Coalition Provisional Authority made several serious missteps in its earliest days, appointing only a minimal number of women in decision-making positions. As the Iraqi Governing Council began to formulate policy, it looked as though that negative trend would continue. On 29 December 2003, the Governing Council passed Resolution 137 to cancel the Iraqi family law in place since 1959, replacing it with much more restrictive *Shariah* (Islamic law).

Energised by internal leadership and supported by several outside groups such as UNIFEM, the World Bank, Women for Women and Women Waging Peace, women's groups in Iraq and around the world organised protests, leading to the revocation of Resolution 137. The interim constitution signed on 8 March 2004 states that: 'All Iraqis are equal in their rights without regard to gender, sect, opinion, belief, nationality, religion, or origin and they are equal before the law. Discrimination against an Iraqi citizen on the basis of his gender, nationality, religion, or origin is prohibited'.<sup>27</sup>

The interim constitution also set a goal for the new parliament to be 25 percent women but does not guarantee that 25 percent of the seats in parliament will be filled by women. Bush administration officials, for domestic reasons allergic to the notion of 'affirmative action' protections for minorities, quickly pointed out that target did not create a quota. Still, addressing this critical moment in her nation's history, Iraqi Minister of Municipalities and Public Works Nesreen Berwari noted:

Resolution 137, if signed into law by the CPA Administrator, would have severely diminished the status and benefits Iraqi women enjoy to date. But this resolution was a blessing in disguise. Its passage motivated Iraqi women to organise and demonstrate and successfully represent themselves. The [Governing Council] was moved to retract the resolution, the first and only resolution to be retracted.... The retraction of Resolution 137 and the 25 percent target are achievements in themselves. But more importantly, the process by which they occurred is also an achievement. It's about democracy being public, open, transparent and accountable. The retraction and the target brought Iraqi women together for a common cause. Cooperation and organisation crossed religious and ethnic lines – Shia, Sunni, Christian, Arab, Kurd, Assyrian, Turcomen.<sup>28</sup>

27 Iraqi Governing Council, *Law of Administration for the State of Iraq for the Transitional Period*, (2004) Website of the Coalition Provisional Authority, <<http://www.cpa-iraq.org/government/TAL.html>> Chapter 2, Article 12.

28 Excerpt from remarks of H.E. Nesreen Berwari, Iraqi Minister of Municipalities and Public Works, on International Women's Day, The White House Treaty Room (Washington DC, 8 March 2004) see US Department of State Office of International Women's Issues, *Iraqi Minister's Remarks on International Women's Day* (2004) website of the US Department of State, <http://www.state.gov/g/wi/30247.htm> >.

### *E The Americas*

In early 2003, US Secretary of State Colin Powell expressed his commitment to women's inclusion, from prevention to negotiations to post-conflict reconstruction. Recognising that women are often marginalised in the aftermath of conflict despite having played leadership roles during war, the Secretary of State encouraged ambassadors worldwide by highlighting concrete examples of how US agencies have brought women into varying stages of peace-building processes:

- The US Embassy in Cote d'Ivoire supported a two-day seminar on women's decision making in the political arena.
- The US Consulate in Istanbul co-hosted a conference entitled 'A Global Forum for Women' with a panel on women, peace and conflict and helped train women involved in conflict.
- Female attorneys in Nigeria were trained in ways to manage conflict between oil industry interests and local communities.
- Afghan women politicians, human rights advocates and lawyers received training and many of them participated in the first Loya Jirga.
- In Sierra Leone, USAID has helped prepare community leaders to rebuild civil society and government institutions.
- Programs in Serbia-Montenegro have led to increased participation by women and minorities in community development activities and increased inter-ethnic cooperation.
- Vocational training for ex-combatants in Guatemala, including women, was made possible by USAID's demobilisation program.

In addition to these and other US-led actions, in early 2004 the Organisation of American States began initial discussions on implementing various programs to advance women's contributions to peace and security issues in the western hemisphere. A number of individual missions and agencies of the Secretariat, including the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy and the Inter-American Commission for Women, are exploring how programming within the areas of conflict prevention, resolution and post-conflict reconstruction can address women's participation. In preliminary conversations, participants are considering a gender-mapping program to create a portal of all women's organisations working on conflict in the hemisphere, with the eventual outcome of providing more resources for training and capacity for women peace builders.

## VIII Conclusion

For all our talk about policy, peace is not only political – it's also personal. Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela is Senior Consultant for Reconciliation at South Africa's Institute for Justice and Reconciliation. In 1996, she joined the Human Rights Violations Committee of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), designed to help South Africa overcome its history of apartheid which was marked by violence on the part of both the State and the liberation movement. She not only facilitated

public hearings in the Western Cape province, but also developed the TRC's first outreach program, giving victims of a chance to speak publicly about their abuse. The large majority of witnesses were women who were determined to foster healing at both individual and community levels.

The most profound experience of Gobodo-Madikizela 's time with the TRC was witnessing the forgiveness between victims and perpetrators. The desire of victims to meet their perpetrators was something she had not imagined. Witnessing victims reaching out with forgiveness to perpetrators who had shattered their worlds filled her with hope. Clearly the TRC process had far-reaching consequences, not only for individual victims and perpetrators encountering each other – often for the first time – but also as a model for uniting groups with a history of conflict.

Dr. Gobodo-Madikizela herself is an example of a woman who has reached across conflict lines. She reflects on a series of prison interviews with Eugene de Kock, the commanding officer of apartheid death squads:

What enables some victims to forgive heinous crimes? What distinguishes them from those who feel unable to do so? In addition to an external context that makes reconciliation normative through the language of restoration – a truth commission, for example, or a counselling agency that focuses on victim-offender encounters, or a national dialogue that begins to put in place the symbols and vocabulary of forgiveness and compromise – there are internal psychological dynamics that impel most of us toward forming an empathic connection with another person in pain, that draw us into his pain, regardless of who that someone is. The possibility of making an empathic connection with someone who has victimised us, as a response to the pain of his remorse, stems significantly from this underlying dynamic. The power of human connectedness, of identification with the other as 'bone of my bone': through the sheer fact of his being human, draws us to 'rescue' others in pain, almost as if this were a learned response embedded deep in our genetic and evolutionary past. We cannot help it.<sup>29</sup>

In a decade of working in conflicts all over the world, I have witnessed such acts of forgiveness among women who say, simply, 'All mothers cry the same tears' as they band together across conflict lines to search for their missing sons and husbands. As Gobodo-Madikizela and other authors and activists in this book can attest, that empathy has a transformative potential, not only for women individually, but for the world. Officials concerned with security would do well to listen and, in turn, transform our foreign policy.

Moving from individual forgiveness to collaborative community work to the policy arena is a giant leap. But in recent years, the construction of a bridge across that gap has begun to be created. The design of the bridge is based on two fundamental principles: that it's smart to try new approaches to long-standing problems; and it makes practical sense to draw on 100 percent of the population when looking for solutions.

---

29 Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, *A Human Being Died that Night: A South African Story of Forgiveness* (2003) 127.

We can be heartened by resolutions of the Security Council and other international bodies calling for the inclusion of women throughout peace process. But those same groups are almost exclusively male and they've done stunningly little to walk their talk. So we've still a long row to hoe.

And along the way, as we gradually shift our foreign policy paradigm to include women in peace processes, the lives of those women will change. Their stock will be higher back home when they return from a working session in Washington. Their names will appear on invitation guest lists of other embassies and on the 'too well-known to touch' list in repressive regimes. With those developments, their voices will become stronger and their actions bolder. That is the promise of this incipient social movement stirring within the sphere of foreign policy – the promise of inclusive security. Over the decades, it will be fascinating to watch it grow.