



Featured Editorial

Reconciliation and Middle East Peace: A Remarkable Model

October 24, 2017



By Carolyn Handschin

For many, any hope for peace in the Middle East revolves around peace between Israel and Palestine. Yet, regardless of decades of both formal and informal peace processes, insecurity and mistrust weigh heavily on hopes for peace. Many seasoned negotiators have retired in frustration over recurring eruptions. Are the “experts” missing something?

Over the past 21 years of WFWP’s Women’s Conference for Peace in the Middle East (MEW), something remarkable has developed. Year after year, scores of women leaders from the MENA region have met to debate pressing issues affecting the region. Their strength, intelligence and dignity defy the stereotype of a subordinated class. The respect they express for their fathers, husbands and sons in a predominantly patriarchal society and the stories they tell of how they were empowered by them—is inspiring.

During the first ever MEW in 1997, WFWP Japan President, Motoko Sugiyama, explained, “not only are women the nurturers and preservers of traditional cultural and social values, they are predisposed to resolving conflicts and making peace.” Maureen Reagan said something very similar at WFWP’s side event at the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. “We need only look into

the mother’s role in families to find the most effective models of mediation, reconciliation and peace making.”

What is it that makes this tool so elusive to formal peace processes? At the 13th MEW in Greece, “Reconciliation: A first step to lasting peace,” the Focal Point on Women’s Issues for the [United Nations Institute on Disarmament Research \(UNIDIR\)](#) pointed to one important factor: Reconciliation between states is difficult because the enemy remains “faceless.” Understandably, the aggressive, defensive mindset at most negotiating tables, is not conducive to sincerity and mutual concern. Women are rarely considered important partners in these fora. However, statistics published by [UN Women](#) show that the participation of women can dramatically increase the sustainability of peace accords.

Over the past 17 years, I was often called on to facilitate sessions where emotions were expected to run high. No matter what else was happening in the region, the state of affairs between Israel and Palestine seemed to have either predominant or underlying influence. Every year, it seemed like violence would flare up just days before the conference, leaving the participants raw and passionate as early as the registration table.

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Conflict at Heart of Hunger Crisis, Says SG Guterres

September 21, 2017 - UN HQ, New York

By Roshan D’Souza

At a high-level event on famine prevention and response held at the UN Headquarters in New York, the ninth UN Secretary-General, [António Guterres](#), thanked co-host World Bank for their exemplary partnership. He cited some pressing concerns that had evolved since his previous Call for Action affecting South Sudan, Somalia, northeast Nigeria and Yemen. After seven months of support from donors and coordinated efforts from governments, agencies and NGOs, he recognized that keeping famine at bay doesn’t mean keeping suffering at bay.

“Humanitarian aid is saving lives but a long-term solution depends on ending and preventing conflict,” says SG Guterres.

From refugee camps to war zones, human dignity has been central to the Secretary-

Hunger Crisis, contd. on p. 8



Our Vision

Women working together to realize one global family rooted in a culture of sustainable peace.

Our Mission

Empowering women as peacebuilders and leaders in the family to transform the community, nation and world. Through education, advocacy, partnership, reconciliation and humanitarian service, WFWPI aims to create an environment of peace and wellbeing for future generations and people of all races, cultures and religious creeds.

Carolyn Handschin - *Editor-in-Chief*
Yeon Ah Moon - *Publisher*
Sungmi Orr - *Editor, Layout & Design*
Christina Lange - *Distribution*

This newsletter is published by the United Nation's Office of the Women's Federation for World Peace Int'l
4 West 43rd Street
New York, NY 10036, USA

Contact Us

New York, USA: unoffice@wfwpi.org
Geneva, Switzerland: c.handschin@wfwpi.org
Vienna, Austria: renate.amesb@gmail.com

www.wfwpi.org

At the UN in New York ...

Overview of the 72nd Session of the UN General Assembly

September 12-25, 2017 - UN HQ, New York



(From left to right) Secretary-General António Guterres, Alexa Ward, Lynn Walsh

By *Jeanne Carroll*

The 72nd Regular Session of the [United Nations General Assembly](#) convened at the UN Headquarters in New York City from 12 to 25 September, 2017. This session's president, H. E. Mr. Miroslav Lajčák of the Republic of Slovakia set the theme: "Focusing on People: Striving for Peace and a Decent Life for all on a Sustainable Planet." In his opening address to the assembled 193 member states, Lajčák highlighted six overarching priorities: making a difference in the lives of ordinary people; prevention and mediation for sustaining peace; migration; political momentum for the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) and climate; human rights and equality, including

equal opportunities for genders; and working to ensure that the [Paris Climate Agreement](#) is integrated into national, regional and international frameworks.

In his opening session remarks, Secretary-General António Guterres said, "Our world faces serious threats—from the proliferation of nuclear weapons to global terrorism, from climate change to inequality. We also face major challenges, from migration to the unintended consequences of technological advances, such as cyber attacks." He stressed the necessity for change and declared, "One key change, within and beyond the United Nations, must be to empower the world's women and girls."

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DPI / NGO Intergenerational Dialogues on the Sustainable Development Goals

August 1, 2017 - UN HQ, New York



By *Alexa Ward*

The [UN Department of Public Information \(DPI\)](#) and the NGO DPI Executive Committee hosted an event, "Intergenerational Dialogues on the Sustainable Development Goals," on August 1, 2017, in the UN Headquarters in New York. The event was chaired by Mr. Jeffrey Brez, Chief of NGO Relations and Advocacy at DPI.

The Opening Plenary featured three prominent UN leaders. The UN Secretary

General, António Guterres, sent a message of encouragement to the participants. "We have no greater partner than you, the non-governmental organizations. Today, you reach across generations to help realize the [2030 agenda](#), a life of dignity for all people." He closed his remarks with, "The UN is committed to working with you for a more peaceful, just and prosperous future for all."

The Honorable Peter Thomson, President of the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly,

began his remarks with a personal insight, "In your 60s, you are at the top of your game. I intend to spend my 70s in a similar vein. Why shouldn't the older generation do what it is expected to do, and pass down insight and wisdom to the younger generation?" He offered his recipe for a sustainable place for humanity on this planet. "Young people need to take ownership for these goals, and we the older people who made these things the way they are, also need to take responsibility and work with them to make these seventeen Sustainable Development Goals achievable by 2030."

The [UN Envoy on Youth](#), Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, who was on the job for less than two weeks, opened her remarks with, "Solidarity across generations is key for social development, and for this we require new approaches in the workforce, in education and in social and economic development." She concluded with a call to action that highlighted

Dialogues, contd. on p. 8

At the UN in Geneva ...

36th Session of the UN Human Rights Council: Panel Discussion Women and Youth in Peacebuilding

September 19, 2017 - UN, Geneva

By Je-ok Presser

Over recent years, the United Nations has been opening the way for the voices of young people to be heard. It recognizes that the success of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires young people to be agents of change and know their rights. Engaging women in decision-making processes for peace building and involving young people through the media are now known to be important preventative measures against conflict.

On June 20, 2017 United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres appointed the second UN Youth Envoy, Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake from Sri Lanka. Her mandate is to strengthen youth engagement in the UN and do advocacy in the field of human rights, peace and security, sustainable development and humanitarian action, serving as an

advisor to the Secretary-General. In August 2017, she went on her first trip in this new role and witnessed first-hand how Iraqi youth are affected by conflict, but also how they remain hopeful. She encouraged them to be leaders in their communities.

Human rights in the Arab Region and the role of women and youth in peacebuilding were addressed during a side event at the 36th Session of the Human Rights Council "Women and Youth in Peacebuilding." Besme International Group for Humanitarian Assistance organized the event in cooperation with the Human Rights Information and Training Center.

Dr. Hisham Khayat, an expert in sustainable development from Syria, explained the role of youth in sustainable peacebuilding. He raised the fact that terrorist groups mobilize youth

in Yemen to become child soldiers. One in three soldiers are children. "We are left alone, nobody takes care of us, we are facing an unknown future, we don't receive education," said one child soldier. "What we need right now is that the war stops." Dr. Khayat stressed the importance of actively engaging young people in peacebuilding, as warring parties often use children for their own means.

Mr. Majdi Helmi, writer and journalist in Egypt, spoke about the role of media in promoting a culture of peace. He mentioned that some organizations use young people to publish fake news via social media. Citizens receive the majority of their information through media, so media could also have

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35th Session of the UN Human Rights Council: Panel Discussion Sexual rights of women and girls in the context of sustainable development

June 12, 2017 - UN, Geneva



By Je-ok Presser

The 35th Session of the Human Rights Council focused special attention on tackling

issues regarding women's rights and their empowerment. There were several side events which addressed the sexual rights of women and girls. One was hosted by the mission of Denmark, "Sexual rights of women and girls in the context of sustainable development." This article will highlight two of the panelists and close with a short commentary.

The first panelist was Ms. Maria Jose Alcalá, Head of the Independent Accountability Panel (IAP) Secretariat for Every Woman, Every Child, Every Adolescent and the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (PMNCH), a panel of experts convened

by the UN Secretary-General to provide an independent and transparent review of progress and challenges on the implementation of the 2016-30 Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescent's Health. She stressed that even though sexual rights have come to refer to LGBT rights in many UN discussions, sexual rights actually apply to everyone. The definition of sexual rights, or what this could include, has not found international consensus. Nevertheless, for Ms. Alcalá, sexual rights are basic rights: the right to dignity, privacy, education, marriage, and

Sexual Rights, contd. on p. 10

Ever wonder how the UN Human Rights system works?

October 27, 2017

By Carolyn Handschin

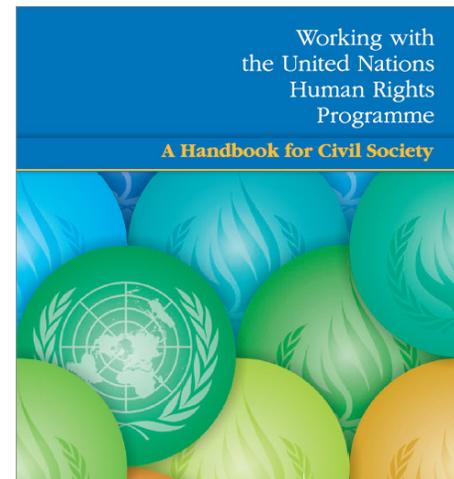
It was the impetus of WWII and the founding of the United Nations that brought human rights and a belief in universal morals into the global consciousness. One of the main goals of the [UN Charter](#) is "the promotion of respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms." Within three years, the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) was drafted and adopted. Although non-binding, it has come to be respected as customary law. To date, more than [180 member states](#) have incorporated many of its principles into their national constitutions.

While human rights have been mainstreamed throughout the UN system, there are three key bodies that deal directly with the promotion and protection of human rights and human dignity, all based in Geneva.

I: [The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights \(OHCHR\)](#), headed currently by former Jordanian Ambassador, Zeid Ra'ad Al-Hussein of Jordan, has a central leadership role in the promotion and the protection of "Human Rights and Human Dignity," offering the best expertise and support to the different human rights monitoring mechanisms in the United Nations system.

II: [The UN Charter-based bodies](#), including the Human Rights Council and the OHCHR, are called "Charter-based" as they were established by resolutions of principal organs of the UN whose authority flows from the UN Charter.

The Human Rights Council (HRC) held its first meeting on 19 June 2006. This inter-governmental body, which meets in Geneva 10 weeks a year, is composed of 47 elected UN Member States who serve for an initial



Human Rights System, contd. on p. 10

At the UN in Vienna ...

ACUNS and WFWP Co-Host Event

Countering Social Exclusion in Schools: New Evidence and Advice

May 24, 2017 - UN, Vienna



By Mary Hinterleitner

Dr. Slawomir Redo, Senior Adviser in the fields of Law and Criminology for the [Academic Council of the United Nations System](#), speaking to an audience of nearly one hundred, opened the conference on the theme, “Countering Social Exclusion in Schools: New Evidence and Advice.”

Mrs. Renate Amesbauer, President of WFWP Austria, followed with a moving tribute to the life and work of the late Ms. Elizabeth Jane Riedl, who worked selflessly to

promote peace in Britain, US, Africa, Germany and Austria. She was particularly active with WFWPI from the year 2000, when she moved from Germany to Salzburg, Austria.

Dr. Michael Platzer, Liaison Officer at the UN Vienna for Academic Council on the United Nations System and Co-chair of the Alliance of NGOs for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, walked the audience through the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN, particularly focusing on Goals 4 and 16, which deal with education, crime prevention and social justice.

Mr. Martin Kienl, Deputy Head of the Department of Integration Coordination at the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, has been active in the field of integration since 2011. A framework for integration must be defined quickly as it has become a pressing issue due to the recent influx of refugees and migrants. He gave an overview of the government strategy to support successful co-existence. This includes

mandatory language courses before entering formal schooling, followed by classroom learning and early linguistic development in kindergartens. Additionally, teachers receive support from psychologists and counselors. The signature program “Together Austria” has enabled 300 ambassadors to talk to 45,000 immigrant pupils to date. Migrants are encouraged to learn and respect Austrian values. He concluded that the greater the integration, the greater the involvement in the labor market and the lower the crime rate. He views the pace of integration as a marathon, not a sprint.

Ms. Zita Kiedler, teacher of English and music at the European Middle School (EMS), gave a unique presentation. Her school has pupils from diverse backgrounds and focuses on integration and the promotion of cultural education through various activities. Ms. Kiedler stated that much needs to be

Social Exclusion, contd. on p. 9

2017 Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

30 Years after the INF Treaty: A New Nuclear Debate in Europe

May 2-12, 2017 - UN, Vienna



By Mary Hinterleitner

The [Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons \(NPT\)](#) was formed in 1970 to prevent the expansion of nuclear weapons, facilitate nuclear and general disarmament and promote peaceful usage of nuclear energy. It is the only international law which commits states to nuclear disarmament. 189 states are party to the treaty, leaving out India, Israel, Pakistan and North Korea.

On this initial foundation, another treaty came into force on June 1, 1988. The treaty of the [Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces \(INF Treaty\)](#), eliminated all nuclear missiles in that range of the US and the Soviet Union (later the Russian Federation). The treaty was signed by President Gorbachev and President Reagan in Washington, D.C. in 1987 and later ratified by the US Senate.

Every five years, a conference is held to review the implementation of the treaty. In

the face of emerging threats, the requirements for disarmament seems to be extremely challenging. In 2020, there will be a very important Review Conference regarding the NPT. The first of three preparatory meetings took place in May 2017 in Vienna.

Parallel activities related to the NPT Prepcom were held from April 30 to May 12, 2017 in and around the United Nations in Vienna. They were attended by a wide range of NGOs who demonstrated support for the activities of the UN in the field of disarmament. Among others, the Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament organized an interfaith prayer-vigil for the success of the NPT and a nuclear weapons-free world. Other international NGOs strong in that field of advocacy held government briefings for civil society.

The UN Secretary-General announced his intent to work on prohibiting nuclear proliferation in January 2017 and has since been appealing to people’s common sense and responsibility for the planet to promote it.

At the high-level meeting at the Diplomatic Academy on “Deploying Atomic Weapons in Europe,” experts from various countries spoke out on the issue. The speakers included Hans Kristensen from the Federation of American Scientists, Otried Nassauer from the Berliner Informationszentrum für Transatlantische Sicherheit (BITS), Igor Sutyagin from the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and

Security Studies and Susan Snyder from PAX Niederlande. Angela Kane, a former UN-High Representative for Disarmament led the debate.

Information was presented on the number and type of weapons that the US plans to deploy in Europe. It was indicated that there appears to be a psychological war between Russia and the US (NATO), where Russia feels inferior to the US (NATO). Yet, it seems that the US continues to increase its military power, and does not reach out to Russia. It was stated that many well-known humanitarian organizations, such as the Red Cross, Mayors for Peace (Head Office in Hiroshima), ICAN Austria and others, are appealing to people worldwide to support the prohibition of proliferation and production of nuclear weapons.

The atmosphere during the presentations was rather tense, due to the seriousness of the content, but the audience appeared to be overwhelmingly in favor of the prohibition of nuclear weapons. They also expressed a desire to go beyond the current Cold War situation and support the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN.

New Zealand and South Africa were cited as examples of countries who have declared unilaterally that they are nuclear weapon free zones. It is the hope that the US, Russia, Europe, North Korea and others will follow suit.



Conferences

21st Annual Women's Conference for Peace in the Middle East: Executive Report

Honoring Women's Important Contribution to Peace and in Creating Sustainable Environments during these Uncertain Times in the Middle East

July 6-7, 2017



By Carolyn Handschin, Je-ok Presser

This July, WFWPI welcomed representatives from nine governments and UN agencies to the 21st Annual Women's Conference for Peace in the Middle East (MEW). Women leaders from 18 countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, and other experts from Europe and Asia, met at the UN in Vienna to assess and honor women for their contribution to peace and creating sustainable environments in the Middle East, as well as to facilitate their forward-looking strategies.

Ms. Carolyn Handschin, Director of WFWPI UN Offices, opened the conference by reminding the audience of the celebratory nature of this event. WFWPI is marking its 25th year, 20 years of working with the UN, and 21 years of MEW. She expressed appreciation to WFWPI Japan, who initiated and finance this project. She lauded the UN for the framework by which the successful local activities of women can be brought to a global platform and from that, women in return can be empowered by the knowledge that they are contributing to a larger peace and development agenda.

Prof. Yeon Ah Moon, President of WFWPI, explained that the role of women and mothers in creating peace through their participation in all aspects of life is crucial. She encouraged the women present to be examples in creating a culture of peace and improving the quality of life in the Middle East.

Mr. Jean-Luc Lemahieu, Director, Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs at UNODC, described growing inequalities and discrimination against women and girls, but how the SDGs and the Plan of Action 2030 present women as part of the solution. He quoted the new Secretary-General,

“

Empowering women and girls is the only way to protect their rights and make sure they can realize their full potential. We can't achieve any of our goals without the participation of women and girls.

Secretary-General Guterres

Dr. Amal Osman, former Minister for Social Affairs and Social Insurance in Egypt, identified a culture of peace as a set of attitudes and a way of life. She highlighted the importance of the family and expressed that the process of peace is dynamic, requiring that everyone fulfill their roles and civic participation “leaving no one behind.”

Dr. Lan Young Moon, President Emeritus of WFWPI, stated that increasing selfishness and religious discrepancies can only be solved through love. She is convinced that women can resolve conflicts by taking leadership and being engaged.

Session 1: “Quality Education and Sustaining Peace in the Middle East (SDG4)” chaired by Ms. Carolyn Handschin

Dr. Sakena Yacoobi, Founder and Executive Director of the Afghan Institute of Learning, [Sunhak Peace Prize](#) recipient, analyzed that safety, security, peace, education and sustainability should be addressed simultaneously and that she welcomes the UN's focus on capacity building in communities.

Ms. Hanan Al Hroub, a Palestinian teacher, Global Teacher Prize recipient, focuses on creating peace in each individual by changing attitudes, learning to communicate, forgive, appreciate cultural diversity, respect other's differences and being accountable.

Session 2: “Women as Educators and Nurturers in the Family (SDG5)” chaired by Dr. Amal Osman

Dr. Farkhonda Hassan conveyed the statement of Dr. Maya Morsi, President of the National Council for Women in Egypt, saying that Egypt recognizes the importance of the family and the role of women as educators in society. She quoted former UN SG Kofi Annan, who said that women can have a huge transformative force by being role models and setting values.

Dr. Lilly Sucharipa, President of the UN Women National Committee Austria, shared how UN Women created safe spaces for the Syrian women in the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan. These spaces allow them to be empowered socially and economically. Women received more respect, gained hope, dignity and skills, and men learned about the value of women.

Ms. Fatimah Al Akroka, Cultural Attache at the Kuwaiti Consulate, spoke about her pioneering initiative to create peace in Kuwait and reverse the trend of early school dropout by banding together women from around the country. She explained that economic empowerment is crucial for women to feel empowered and change their attitudes.

Ms. Alice Keirouz Sleiman, President of the Forum of NGOs of Child Rights in Lebanon, stressed the importance of peacebuilding values and having open hearts. Mothers play an essential role in educating their children on trust, justice, love, and taking responsibility, which has a positive impact on communities.

Ms. Sevilay Yildirim, an activist with the women's NGO KAYAD in Cyprus, addressed safety and security issues of women, trainings for women to become educators, and spaces for women to network and multicultural camps for children which focus on conflict resolution and gender equality.

Session 3: “Women's Remarkable Participation in Peace and Development Issues in the Region (SDG1,3)” chaired by Ms. Natascha Schellen, MBA student in Corporate Social Responsibility & NGO Management

Ms. Mouna Echemmakh, Director of a shelter for women and child victims of violence, Federation of the Rights of Women in Morocco, shared how they offer legal support, women's shelters, listening centers, educational programs for youth and capacity building for women advisors in communities.

Ms. Amal Al-Jubouri, CEO and Founder of Arab Human Rights Academy in London and Baghdad, depicted how she grew up with war in Iraq. She is now improving the psychological

MEW21, contd. on p. 11

Support Strategic Initiatives

WFWP Founder, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, is putting emphasis on nations with a potential for appreciable development. Regional and global support of these strategic opportunities is essential for their continued growth. Over the next few editions, our newsletter will highlight these 13 nations, hoping that from amongst our readers, there may be ideas for networking and resource-sharing with the local WFWP chapter. Contact details are listed and they would surely be delighted to hear from you.

Paraguay

By Rosi Guiliano

WFWP Paraguay was inaugurated on December 7, 1993, at the Excelsior Hotel of Asunción as part of Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, WFWP founder's, world tour. The official and legal founding of WFWP Paraguay came the following November.

Since its founding, WFWP Paraguay has held hundreds of events, done important social work and created a vocational training institute where those with limited income can receive their industrial title recognized by the Ministry of Education.

WFWP Paraguay has been giving lectures on AIDS and Drug Abuse Prevention in different municipalities of Asunción.

Every year, WFWP Paraguay celebrates International Children's Day in marginal areas of Asunción.

Our signature Bridge of Peace and Sisterhood Ceremonies bring together women from different ethnic, religious, racial and social backgrounds. The goal is by creating sisterhoods between these various groups of women, we can overcome the barriers that have traditionally divided them.

WFWP Paraguay organizes monthly women meetings where we give professional women the opportunity to share their thoughts and more about their work. It is also an opportunity for WFWP to offer character education, including Goals for Life, Preparation for Marriage, Addiction Prevention, and Cause and Resolution of Conflict.

WFWP Paraguay actively participates with other organizations that fight against addiction and other weak points of our society.

For more information, please contact **Rosi Guiliano** at familiagiuliano@gmail.com.



Agreement with Drugs and Adiction Prevention Asociation ASIPA



Signing agreement with ASIPA



Public at the event in the National Congress Library



Event at the National Congress Library with Senator and former First Lady of Paraguay, Mrs. Emilia Franco



Women peace ambassadors at the National Congress Library



Women peace ambassadors with Miss Paraguay 2017

Focus on Paraguay & Nepal

Nepal

By Blessie Gordon

WFWP Nepal was established in early 1997 with the help of WFWP Japan volunteers. These volunteers reached out to influential women to gain a strong foothold and set up health camps to help impoverished people. Blessie Dhakal, president of WFWP Nepal since 2011, envisioned creating a sustainable pattern of growth for the organization through an increase in membership and opening pioneer branches. There are currently eight chapters throughout Nepal with 707 members.

WFWP Nepal's motto is "One Global Family." We seek to strengthen families and communities and promote cooperation and reconciliation. Currently, our focus in Nepal is on building schools, especially in rural areas.

The first school, Shree Balrampur Secondary School, was built in 2015 in the Rupandehi district, Lumbini, the birthplace of Buddha, with the support of WFWP Taiwan. This school building benefits thousands of students who can now study comfortably in these newly furnished classrooms.

WFWP Nepal then followed with the Shree Jageshwor Higher Secondary School in Borlang, Gorkha Nepal, sponsored by WFWP International. After the school was damaged in a 7.8 magnitude earthquake, WFWP International funded the construction of a more resistant building. The school opened in March 2017 and will serve 400 students per year.

Our current project is Shree Rastriya Secondary School in Dhanusha, which is sponsored by WFWP Korea & the Tongil Group. The groundbreaking ceremony was held on July 31, 2017, presided by Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal, Parliament Member and CIG Special Envoy. A total of 800 students will benefit from this new construction.

With the addition of this new school building, the local community can now qualify for the Ministry of Education to upgrade the level of school. This means 800 more local students will directly benefit and students won't have to be sent away for further education.

Aside from the school building projects, different humanitarian projects and activities are being conducted. We provide health clinics, offer

scholarship grants to deserving students, health awareness programs, run skills and development programs in the different districts of the country, hold an inter-school art competition, and conduct Meet and Greet programs sponsored by prominent companies.

All of these efforts have contributed to WFWP Nepal having a credible reputation amongst influential women leaders and companies as well as creating an impact on the grassroots level.

For more information, please contact **Blessie Gadon** at wfwpnepalcom@gmail.com.



WFWP 25th Anniversary Celebration in Nepal



Banke Health Clinic



Chitwan Health Clinic



Chitwan Health Clinic



Computer Donations for Lumbini School



Gorkha School Inauguration



Gorkha School Inauguration



Inter-school Art Competition



Lumbini School Inauguration



Lumbini School Inauguration

New York continued ...

Hunger Crisis, contd. from p. 1

General. In his next Call for Action, he is urging all concerned parties to seriously respond to reducing the risks and vulnerability of those suffering.

Born in Lisbon in 1949, an engineering graduate from the Instituto Superior Tecnica, Guterres headed one of the world's foremost humanitarian organizations. In Syria and Iraq, South Sudan, Central African Republic and Yemen, displaced people rose from 38 million in 2005 to 60 million by 2015. [The Central Emergency Response Fund \(CERF\)](#) was one of the earliest sources of funding to support early action and famine prevention with close to \$130 million. Sixty percent of the required \$4 billion reached 30 million people every month for livelihood support, health, water, sanitation

UNGA72, contd. from p. 2

Member states made statements pertaining to issues concerning their country, progress made in the last 12 months, and hopes as to what the UNGA will do in the coming year. This is an opportunity for the member states to query the impact international decisions will have on their interests. Some of the statements focused on the recent conflict between North Korea and the United States, the current political and economic situation in Venezuela, climate change, forced migration and its economic effects on countries, conflict zones, as well as the ongoing wave of terrorism in the world.

According to the [International Institute of Sustainable Development's \(IISD\)](#) SDG Knowledge Hub, there were 196 statements

Dialogues, contd. from p. 2

the following principles: sharing decision-making power equally and ensuring meaningful participation of young people; recognizing the right to participate as a basic human right and practically engaging young people in planning, implementing and evaluating work and programs related to present and future challenges; and combining the unique skills, insight and experience of each generation.

Following the Opening Plenary, the event broke into six breakout sessions, referred to as "Dialogues." Alexa Ward, Deputy Director of the WFWPI UN Office, served as the rapporteur for Dialogue 1, which covered "Breaking the Intergenerational Cycle of Poverty." One of the four speakers, Patricia Talisse, a young Syrian woman, shared a number of insights. "The global community sees poverty as a problem that needs fixing, whereas hope and resilience are more important than knowledge," said Ms. Talisse. "If you put any person in the center of their choices,

and nutrition assistance. Even with these funds, a large percentage of the population in Somalia and Yemen is a step away from famine. Food insecurity in South Sudan's population of 6 million has increased by one million. In Somalia, 3.1 million people, an increase of 200,000, and 17 million in Yemen. In northeast Nigeria, 450,000 children suffer from acute malnutrition out of 5.2 million people who are food-insecure in the region. Stunting and developmental problems plague these children's lives. \$1.8 billion are still needed not just to relieve immediate needs, but for the long-term as well.

Failure to uphold international humanitarian and human rights law, lack of safe and sustained humanitarian access to people in need, inaccessible delivery routes in areas controlled by Al-shabaab, attacks from Boko

delivered, 421 meetings and 1,528 bilateral meetings held at the event. One parallel event, Global Goals Week 2017, focused on driving progress toward the SDGs by gathering leaders from business and government, for seventeen events, to discuss how continued investment in innovation, technology, and clean energy can drive profitability and lead towards a net-zero emissions global economy. The 9th annual Climate Week NYC took place as well, with fifteen events focused on "Innovation. Jobs. Prosperity." It showcased the role non-state actors play in ensuring the successful implementation of the Paris Agreement and the achievement of the SDGs.

The main agenda items member states addressed were education, environmental conventions, social development, trade, gender,

you will see lasting changes...Empowerment is a circle, not top down or bottom up," she concluded.

The Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the UN, H.E. Mr. Hahn Choong Hee, remarked "We can be the first generation to end poverty and the last generation to save the planet." He called for intergenerational dialogue to "focus on partnership, which includes all stakeholders," and spoke on "the need to emphasize values, which are conveyed from parents to children and through schools."

The Former President of the NAACP, Mr. Cornell William Brooks, contributed, "Barriers that keep people locked in intergenerational poverty include racial and ethnic segregation, poor schools, under capitalization of poor communities, and communities that have been robbed of their social capital." He asserted, "The right to vote is central to alleviating poverty," and "the notion of poverty as a choice is a myth."

Haram in Nigeria and 1,800 South Sudanese fleeing to Uganda every day are contributing to conflict and therefore exacerbating nagging hunger crises.

The engagement of development partners working together with humanitarian agencies in earlier intervention, linking emergency relief to long-term activities, building resilience, breaking the cycle of risk and vulnerability and avoiding dependency on emergency aid can help in preventing famine and lessening suffering.

As a peace broker, bridge-builder and promoter of reform and renovation, Secretary-General Guterres called on the parties present to pursue their ambitions through peaceful means to alleviate the effects of hunger and famine for all civilians.



human development, globalization, 2030 Agenda, technology, innovation, water, and sanitation. While a number of SDGs were highlighted, four were most prevalent: #1 (no poverty); #4 (quality education); #5 (gender equality); and #16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions).

The dignified gathering of heads of state, diplomats and representatives from civil society spent two weeks working together, searching for solutions to many of the world's current dilemmas. In an effort to address diverse cultures, environments, and political climates, this 72nd UNGA established a vital foundation for resolutions to be formulated that will ensure future generations can live in a world with sustainable and lasting equality, prosperity, and peace.



Ms. Anne Williams-Isom, with the Harlem Children's Zone, spoke of the organization's goal to end generational poverty by working with families over a long period of time. Their programs impact 12,500 children and 12,000 adults, and have resulted in an impressive 100% readiness for school.

Participants in Dialogue I offered the following suggestions: voices of the youth should be incorporated into every decision at the UN; create a senior-level position at the UN to screen all programs for youth; focus on and expand participation, protection and empowerment; assess people as humans; drop assessment by race and class; leverage and harness the power of technology; and provide women and non-traditional borrowers with access to capital.

The day ended with the Closing Plenary, which focused on actions through new partnerships with a call for commitments from participants.



Vienna continued ...

Social Exclusion, contd. from p. 4



done to overcome the prejudice local pupils learn at home. Furthermore, many migrants cannot express themselves well in German, resulting sometimes in misunderstandings and confrontation. Ms. Kiedler conducted a questionnaire filled in by both local and immigrant pupils at school. They were asked how they view those who come from another country. The summary of the responses was particularly insightful for the pupils.

Dr. Katharina Kubacka, Research Officer of the Global Education Monitoring Report, [UNESCO](#), continued with a presentation on education. She explained that education is a powerful tool for justice, inclusion and peace. Nevertheless, it is complex and there are many inequalities based on ethnicity, social class and religion. In conflict zones, 36% of children are

out of school. A high percentage of refugee children, most of whom are in the developing world, do not attend school. Another barrier to inclusion is bullying, which leads to depression and, in some cases, suicide. Language is a further tangible barrier. Pupils need at least six years of basic education in their mother tongue. She also stated that textbooks are occasionally biased, as when Islamic and Arab areas are portrayed as conflict zones. Educators need to learn to be inclusive and teach the practice of peace.

Ms. Giovanna Campello, Officer in Charge of the Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Section in [UNODC](#), claimed that traditional drug prevention programs do not work and that it is better to invest in healthy and safe development techniques for babies. This should be followed by early childhood education in kindergarten to support families, particularly those who are marginalized. The promotion of good mental health programs lead to better long-term results. Ms. Campello explained how certain stories and games during math lessons support the development of personal and social skills, such as to control anger. She went on to state that disruptive children are usually vulnerable and should not be stigmatised, as they benefit most from the program. In conclusion, she stated that the prevention of violence in schools is gaining greater success.

Dr. Candice Welsch, Chief of the implementation Support Section Corruption and Economic Crime Branch of UNODC, was the final speaker and presented the program “Education for Justice as a tool to preventing crime and shaping the values of future generations.” The program promotes a culture of lawfulness and the rule of law through education.

The [United Nations Convention against Corruption \(UNCAC\)](#) comprises in article 13 that parties are strongly encouraged to implement public education programs on all levels of school, including universities. States receive assistance in this regard through two initiatives of UNODC: [ACAD](#) and [E4J](#).

The Doha Declaration, adopted by the 13th UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in April 2015, underlines the fundamental importance of this education. E4J (Education for Justice) promotes education programs in all UNODC mandate areas and at all education levels through developing materials, such as class modules, teacher guides and innovative teaching tools.

The subsequent question and answer session demonstrated the interest of the audience. Furthermore, the pupils of EMS were grateful for the opportunity to view the inside of the UN building and gain a lasting impression before departing.



Featured Editorial, contd. from p. 1



My first experience “mediating” was a shock. It seemed like we would never resolve the differing views and dampen emotions. The debates often felt like personal attacks. The rules dictated that everyone has the opportunity to speak and, very importantly, that everyone listen respectfully. We took unscheduled coffee breaks when the debates spiralled out of control. The first time this happened, I fully expected most people to not return to the meeting room, but to my surprise, everyone did. Their desire for future peace brought them back. Even those who seemed to have the most vehement exchanges were standing next to each other ten minutes later, calmly eating cake.

Many of these important women leaders had painful personal tragedies buried deep inside. Some of the most eminent participants were surprised at how their emotions burst forward in this “safe” environment. Heroes emerged

during some of these exchanges as some women silently absorbed the frustration and hatred hurled at their culture or nation.

But as more victims began daring to make themselves vulnerable to the “enemy,” we all came to understand that we were both victims and obstructers to peace building on some level. One beloved former government minister shared the painful memory of being evicted from her home as a young child; how it devastated her parents and affected her entire life. Her words came out like an accusation toward Israel. Remarkably, the lone Israeli, a former senior government official, received her anger and pain. She hesitated for a long time before responding and apologized. It is difficult to describe the power and depth of that moment. My first thought was, “Peace is actually possible.” If only this could happen at the negotiating table.

Some strategists may reject the idea of reconciliation as a methodology for peace making. In the words of WFPW Co-Founder, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, “People often think that politics move the world, but that is not the case. It is culture and art...It is emotion, not reason, that strikes people in the innermost part of their hearts. It is when hearts change and are able to receive new things that even ideologies and social regimes change as a result.”

Such trust and vulnerability was only possible through so many years of investing

in these MENA nations. In 2011, we started inviting more young women to participate in the discussions. They were often even more outspoken than their more senior representatives. I vividly remember one discussion escalating when one such lady shared about her relative being killed by Israeli tanks just days before. We all exchanged nervous looks as the atmosphere intensified. The room went silent when a Palestinian shouted over the crowd that to a Palestinian, their brother nations turning their backs on Palestine is even more hurtful than what Israel has done to their country.

In 2014, the 18th MEW was held in both Jordan and Jerusalem, so Israeli participants could attend. Some of them risked their lives by potentially being photographed with “the enemy.” I saw them flinch or turn away as they were introduced to someone they shouldn’t be seen with. A highlight of that conference was a renowned Palestinian medical doctor sharing his story. A few years earlier, while tending patients at a hospital in Israel, he lost his two young daughters when rockets were fired into his home in Palestine. The room quieted as he described his shock that day. He later created an organization, I Will Not Hate, which provides scholarships for young women. That conference, too, ended with many

Featured Editorial, contd. on p. 12

Geneva continued ...

Women & Youth, contd. from p. 3

a negative impact in conflict situations by promoting values which fuel conflict situations and terror. On the other hand, media could be a tool to spread peace. Mr. Majdi Helmi emphasized that governments and NGOs play a crucial role in leaving differences aside and co-existing. For example, in Rwanda journalists are fined if they speak about the genocide.

Ms. Rasha Jarhum, Yemeni Social Policy Researcher and Women's Rights Advocate in Yemen, emphasized the role of women in peacebuilding. She stated that the participation of women in peacebuilding processes in the Arab region is not sufficient. Women represent only nine percent of participants in peacebuilding processes. Traditionally, women are mainly taking care of the humanitarian work, mediating between civil society and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), but are not included in the decision-making of the peacebuilding process, which, according to Ms. Jarhum, is perpetuated by the patriarchal culture.



Sexual Rights, contd. from p. 3

freedom of expression. She emphasized several sexual rights violations, including virginity testing, sexual harassment, rape, and female genital mutilation (FGM). She highlighted that these sexual rights apply to all people and must be assured without interference by the state.

The second panelist, Dr. Venkatraman Chandra-Mouli, works on Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (ARSRH) in the World Health Organization's Department of Reproductive Health and Research. He told the audience a personal story about his younger sister, who was subjected to sexual harassment several times on her way to school in India. His sister never told her family about these incidents. He described being shocked when she finally opened up about her experience. He emphasized that women and girls need to be educated on their rights and learn to speak up about such behavior to not condone sexual harassment. "Silence can kill," said Dr. Chandra-Mouli. He strongly suggested that parents be involved in this education and empower their daughters from an early age, as parents have the biggest impact on their children's behavior.

The panel discussion was made that much more relevant when I witnessed how kindergarten-age girls and boys behaved toward each other at a bus stop. A few kids bullied and physically attacked a girl in front of three kindergarten teachers, who did not, or chose not to, notice and intervene. The girl did not raise her voice or try to protect herself, but when a boy had his cap taken away by another boy, he screamed loudly. In this way, he drew attention to himself, causing the kindergarten teacher to intervene.

The discourse on sexual rights seems to be increasingly monopolized. Sexual rights violations, such as sex trafficking, rape, FGM and child marriage, should not be forgotten. By protecting the dignity, intimacy and sexual rights of women and girls, they can be empowered to become leaders and influence society in support of the SDGs.



Human Rights System, contd. from p. 3

period of three years, and cannot be elected for more than two consecutive terms. The HRC is a forum to prevent abuses, inequity and discrimination, protect the most vulnerable, and expose perpetrators. It is a separate entity from OHCHR, having been given separate mandates by the General Assembly. Nevertheless, the OHCHR provides substantive support for the meetings of the HRC, and follow-up to the Council's deliberations.

Special Procedures is the general name given to the mechanisms that address either specific country situations (e.g. Palestine or North Korea) or thematic issues (e.g. violence against women or racism) in all parts of the world. An individual "Special Rapporteur" or Independent Expert, or a Working Group serve as the representative body. They are prominent, independent experts working on a voluntary basis, appointed by the HRC. They may be the only mechanism to alert the international community to certain human rights issues. They monitor, advise and publicly report on human right situations. These experts then report to the HRC on their findings and may also report directly to the General Assembly. The OHCHR provides centralized support to the Special Procedures as a system. As of August 1, 2017, there are 44 thematic mandates and 13 country mandates.

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a unique process involving a review of the human rights records of all UN Member States. The UPR is a State-driven process, under the auspices of the HRC, which provides the opportunity for each State to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situations in their countries and fulfill their human rights obligations. The UPR was created through the UN General Assembly on March 15, 2006 by resolution 60/251, in which the HRC itself was established. It is a cooperative process which, by October 2011, has reviewed the human rights records of all 193 UN Member States. Currently, the review is in its third round, giving states an opportunity to report improvements and be scrutinized by peer review. No other universal mechanism of this kind exists. On June 18, 2007, the Human Rights Council adopted HRC Resolution 5/1, by which a new complaint procedure was established to address consistent patterns of gross and reliably attested violations, addressing communications submitted by individuals, groups, or non-governmental organizations.

III: The Human Rights Treaty Body System deals with internationally ratified treaties that represent legally-binding norms for each nation. Treaty bodies are committees that monitor the implementation of human rights treaties or conventions that were ratified by the member states. The implementation of those treaties happens through consideration of reports, petitions and the conduct of inquiries.

- Human Rights Committee (CCPR)
- Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)
- Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)
- Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- Committee against Torture (CAT)
- Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT)
- Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
- Committee on Migrant Workers (CMW)
- Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
- Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED)

This process ensures continuous efforts to implement human rights in each nation. At the same time, it allows a public scrutiny of government legislation, policies and practices in all 192 member states throughout the world. What is remarkable is that those reporting mechanisms have very constructive outcomes.

- The preparation of reports provides an opportunity to check how human rights are implemented on a national level.
- The preparation of reports should be a consultative process, involving different stakeholders in the nation.
- Civil society should be actively involved.
- Through the reporting process, committees interact with UN entities, national HR institutions, NGOs and others to gain the full picture of national implementation.
- It is an opportunity for state parties to seek guidance on how to implement a treaty.
- Follow-up is a platform for national dialogue.

The adoption of the concluding observations marks the end of the formal consideration of the report, but the reports continue with the purpose of supporting the member states' efforts to implement some of their human rights obligations.

There are five committees that can receive complaints about the Human Rights violations of individuals, minorities, any vulnerable individuals or groups: CERD; CEDAW; CAT; CRC; and CRPD. For the other committees, such complaint procedures are on the way to be implemented.

*Information collected from the [OHCHR homepage](#).



Young Adults

Filling My Heart with Peace

My Experience Interning at the WFWP UN Office in New York

October 1, 2017



By Sandy Javanoasundara

Working with the Women's Federation for World Peace, International as part of my internship program truly was a great experience. During my time there, I was able to witness their vision statement embodied in real life--women from various backgrounds all over the world working together realizing one global family. Cheesy as it may sound, this organization truly felt like a family. It might have been the modest, cozy office or the small number of staff, but I always felt welcome.

While the WFWPI UN New York office is relatively small, it serves as an administrative office for WFWPI chapters across the globe. This means that they are supporting local chapters in their frontline projects. Therefore,

my experience there was very much an international experience, even though the office is based in Bridgeport, CT.

One of the first tasks that I was assigned to was sorting and compiling information for WFWPI's Quadrennial Report to the UN. Chapters from every continent submitted their annual project report and we had to sort their activities according to UN MDGs and SDGs. While it may sound dull and tedious, I welcomed the task as it helped me see and appreciate the work our WFWPI members have done.

After that first assignment, I was tasked with helping the administrator, Christina Lange, and director, Alexa Ward, with various projects, two of which stood out to me. One due to its education virtue and the other due to a personal connection.

Towards the end of my internship, I had the opportunity to volunteer together with Christina for the United Nations Department of Public Information's (UN DPI) Intergenerational Dialogue, an NGO Conference held in New York City on August 1, 2017. We chose to volunteer to check people in for the event as part of the registration team. I was excited and honored to get this chance. This was my first time volunteering at the UN, and I must say, it was an eye-opening experience. I was able to hear people passionately share about issues they feel strongly about and who sincerely want change. Even the youngest audience member, an elementary school student, was able to share in the intergenerational dialogue. I could see how the UN is advocating for all generations to work together as a family, where every member has an equal voice.

Of all the projects that I was involved in, "Color My Heart with Peace," is the one closest to my heart. This is a project that was first initiated in WFWP Thailand by my late mother, Delia Capa Javanoasundara, who was a former president of WFWP Thailand. Growing up, I attended various WFWP activities through my mother. Because of that, I always felt that WFWP activities had a motherly characteristic, and to me, "Color My Heart with Peace" has that same special feeling. The purpose of this project is to cultivate a culture of peace in the minds of young children, aged 4 to 10 years old, through art appreciation, and to commemorate the Universal Children's Day declared by the United Nations on the 20th of November. The idea here was to adapt the project plan and bring it to America.

As a daughter, I feel proud that I could continue a project that my mother started. Early this year, my mother passed away due to her second stroke. In this early stage of loss, I felt secured in some way by being able to follow in her footsteps. It was a blessing for me to have this connection to her through WFWP. I hope that I can see this project fully implemented.

Overall, I would like to say that I am glad to be part of this organization. This internship has truly been an educational and heart-warming time for me. I want to thank Mrs. Ward, Christina Lange and Sungmi Orr for welcoming me and helping me along this journey.

Sandy Javanoasundara is a graduate student at the University of Bridgeport's College of Public and International Affairs. She will be graduating in 2018 with a degree in Global Development and Peace (M.A.) and hopes to work in the nonprofit sector.



Conferences continued ...

MEW21, contd. from p. 5

well-being of children in Iraq through art and sport. "A few women can change a lot, but many women can change everything," she concluded.

Ms. Sophia Giorgalla, Founder and President of Women without Frontiers Cyprus Branch, expressed how women need role models to be empowered, as she herself did by becoming the first female banker in Cyprus and pioneering the way for more women in managerial roles in her bank.

Ms. Jessica Montell, Executive Director of Save Israel, Stop the Occupation (SISO), critically analyzed the Israeli educational system, where Jewish children are taught from an early age that they are the real victims of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This opened

discussion between the Palestinian and Israeli MEW participants, who later expressed a glimmer of hope that viable peace may be in sight for this seemingly unresolvable conflict. This was a clear indication that women, who are often left out of peace negotiations, might be the critical piece missing to resolution.

Session 4: "The UN and Civil Society: Influencing Change and becoming Owners of Peace (SDG17)," chaired by Dr. Zoe Bennett, President of WFWP Middle East

Ms. Carolyn Handschin gave several examples of grassroots' initiatives that were able to find a voice at the UN thanks to WFWP. She described the role of civil society to inform the UN and governments and work together. She explained that any sustainable peace starts with a "global family" that can change the world by "moving the hearts of people."

She quoted WFWP Founder, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, "A lasting solution has to include the understanding of the root of the problem as well as the source of our existence." To her, tapping into a benevolent and common source would be a natural incentive to fulfilling human rights responsibilities and fulfilling the mandate of the UN for peace.

Session 5: "Women Fostering Peace and multiplying Environments of Healing and Compassion (SDG16)" chaired by Ms. Kawther Al Jouan, Director of the Women's Institution for Development and Training

HE Ms. Wafa Bani Mustafa, Chairperson of the "Coalition of Women Members of Parliament to Combat Violence against Women" in Jordan, emphasized that education of women and girls is a right included in

MEW21, contd. on p. 12

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MEW21, contd. from p. 11

the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the SDGs. The percentage of women's enrollment in Jordanian universities is 51.2%, but their participation in the labor market is less than 14 percent. A whole generation of Syrian children is at risk of losing their future because of diminishing opportunities in education.

Ms. Ehteram Malakouti Nejad, Founder and Executive Manager of the Support Network for Single Women in Iran, empower a single women to become self-sufficient by providing them with support and resources.

Ms. Marilyn Angelucci, President of WFWP in Afghanistan, spoke about several of their activities, such as an internet café for educational purposes and a library in Kabul. They founded a school for Afghani refugees in New Delhi, including scholarship for girls, provide character education and family counseling in women's centers and created micro-financing programs for women.

Ms. Lama Al Atassi, French Syrian consultant and teacher in intercultural relations and career management in Paris, aims to preserve the Syrian cultural heritage in spite of war and as a means to facilitate peace. She developed the concept of a project where Syrian children, regardless of their origin would dance together and convey a message of peace, giving children confidence and a purpose in life. This project was inspired by the Little Angels Children's Folk Ballet of Korea.

Session 6 "Conclusions, Recommendations" chaired by Ms. Brigitte Wada, President of WFWP France

Ms. Carolyn Handschin, presented the "Conference Recommendations" for civil society and governments, as is the annual tradition. In the form of a call for the creation of a "Global Women's Peace Network" for the Middle East, the outcome document was read based upon the deliberations over the two days. Accepting them by consensus, the participants formulated concrete action steps to realize the set goals.

Ms. Nada Abdallah Harward, Consultant for International Affairs at the UN in the UAE, mentioned that the key factor is to change the mindset of women first; to heal, to

forgive, and to convince women to participate in peacebuilding processes. In this interesting time we are living in right now, where there are no borders due to technology, we need to trust youth and teach them love, critical thinking and open mindedness.

Ms. Moriko Hori, President of WFWP Japan, specialized in reconciliation studies between Japan and Korea. She informed the audience that the occupation of Korea by Japan is not taught in Japanese schools. She herself did not realize the tense relationship until her visit to Korea much later. She emphasized the importance of this 21-year-old conference series in bringing women together to listen and learn from each other for the sake of peace and reconciliation. Recently, the Japanese government invited her to report about WFWP Japan programs in the Middle East. Recognizing the far-reaching impact, they thanked her, acknowledging how much women can do.

Dr. Zoe Bennett, President of WFWP Middle East, stressed that every individual needs to take ownership and responsibility to create peace, since it needs to be created out of a genuine love for people. She hoped for a valuable impact on their personal lives and work, encouraging all to remain committed to the action steps agreed upon.

Closing remarks were given by Dr. Amal Osman who summarized that it has been mainly focused on the role of women to prevent violence and to create peace in the family, community, society and nations through being involved in peacebuilding and reconciliation processes. She expressed her gratitude to all speakers for their statements, participants for their interventions and especially their commitment to continue in their engagement for peace.

Representing all organizers, Ms. Brigitte Wada thanked and appreciated all the women who attended the conference, while expressing words of encouragement to reach the goals presented over the course of these two days. She suggested cooperation and joint efforts to realize the SDGs and especially women's participation in peacebuilding processes in the Middle East region.



Featured Editorial, contd. from p. 9

personal victories in mutual understanding and reconciliation.

In July of this year, the 21st conference was held in at the United Nations in Vienna. The depth of candid self-reflection was remarkable. The highlight was the plenary presentation by the director of "Save Israel, Stop the Occupation." She presented an analysis of one aspect of the Israeli education system where Jewish children are taught from an early age that they are the real victims of the Israeli / Palestinian conflict, even though most Israelis have never met a Palestinian. She described her fear that if her nation's government does not reflect on and reconsider their policies soon, they will bring destruction upon their people and nation.

To a surprised Arab Muslim audience, she explained that there are an increasing number of civil society initiatives in Israel that promote networking and reconciliation between Israel and Palestine. There was something just and clear in the way she critiqued her own government for the injustices they have been committing unapologetically. The mature and uncomplicated way she internalized reconciliation seemed to prevent any need for reaction from the audience. That mindset would be very effective at the negotiating table.

The atmosphere in the room was excited at the end of her talk, as if they had heard something revolutionary. I fully expected the first few comments to be negative, as any speech from that country's representative would have triggered in the past. But not one! There was only appreciation. Someone even said, "Maybe there is hope for peace after all." I think every person in the room was changed that day—the culmination of two decades of this extraordinary platform.



Upcoming Events

2017

- Nov. 20 Universal Children's Day
- Nov. 25 Int'l Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women
- Dec. 1 World AIDS Day
- Dec. 10 Human Rights Day

2018

- Feb. 26-37th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council
- March 8 International Women's Day
- March 12-23 62nd Commission on the Status of Women
- May 15 Int'l Day of Families
- June 1 Global Day of Parents
- June 18-38th Session of the Human Rights Council
- July 6 International Youth Day
- Aug. 19 World Humanitarian Day