



Many to Many

Issued by
Peace Through Unity

Accredited NGO in association with the
UN Department of Global
Communications.

Anthony & Gita Brooke,
co-founders

ISSN 2744-7057 (Print)
ISSN 2744-7065 (Online)

“Many to Many” is a quarterly publication under the aegis of Peace Through Unity as a communicating link between “we, the peoples” of all nations, races, creeds and ideologies offering in the spirit of the preamble of the United Nations Charter an instrument for the furthering of better relationships based on deepening mutual understanding and the aspiration to promote unity and cooperation beyond all differences.

Issue Number 157 July 2023

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“We the peoples of the United Nations...”

These words, the very first words of the United Nations Charter, have since 1945 onwards been quoted and used on countless occasions with varying degrees of sincerity and depth. The words slip so easily over our lips and touch our heartstrings, perhaps for a moment or two, on special occasions.

Even so, they have been inspiring people from all countries and ethnicities to come together in ever increasing numbers to give meaning and substance to the vision that sustained past generations, as they fought and won, at great cost, the war against the supremacy of a totalitarian might. Since WWII, people from all UN member nations have come together to contribute their skills and expertise, thoughts and life experiences to help formulate a multitude of guidelines, resolutions and modes of action, which can help us create the: *‘conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained’*, so as to *‘promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom’*. (from UN Charter)

Unlike the times of WWII, most people today receive almost instant news about the state of affairs around the world. We see the mindless acts of violence and destruction and the deterioration of the natural environment on which all life depends. We can, however, also watch

the building of ever closer and more effective networks of cooperation, through which peoples across all boundaries are uniting in a joint resolve to find ways of giving immediate aid to people in need, while also creating strategies toward long-time solutions which will result in a better future for all. Each conflict situation is deepening the resolve and commitment to find ways and means of realising the vision we hold.

And today, the values, the behaviour and mindset which causes war and so much suffering to both people and planet, stand revealed in the glaring light of an increasingly interconnected world community; the demarcation line between two opposing sets of values clear for all to see - as are those who still stand on this line, undecided.

Through the years the contours of an interconnected whole have slowly been emerging; a vehicle is forming within which an increasingly reliable circulatory and nervous system can feel and assess the conditions within every part of the whole and the needs can be met with increasing understanding, skill and respect.

However, a few more deep breaths of firm resolve will be needed before this vehicle that we, the peoples, have committed to create, will be capable of saving *‘succeeding generations from the scourge of war’*; more active, practical and wise expressions of understanding and tolerance shall need to become common practice before we, all of us, will be living together *in peace with one*

another as good neighbours and can effectively 'unite our strength to maintain international peace and security'.

Dag Hammarskjöld says in "Markings": 'You wake from dreams of doom and – for a moment – you know: beyond all the noise and the gestures, the only real thing, love's calm unwavering flame in the half-light of an early dawn.'

It is, I truly believe, with the calm unwavering flame of love sustained and nurtured in the heart of humanity that we shall stand, prepared to welcome the dawn of a new day.

Gita Brooke, editorial MtM July 2016



"Although attempting to bring about world peace through the internal transformation of individuals is difficult, it is the only way."

Thich Naht Hanh, spiritual teacher.

"If there is to be any peace, it will come through being – not having."

Henry Miller.

The Peacemakers

Little has changed since our [bulletin of February 17](#) in which we quoted authorities saying that with the war in Ukraine we are "sleepwalking to Armageddon. This month, [Anthony Blinken](#), the American cabinet minister responsible for foreign affairs, CIA, etc., insisted that the war should be continued because a ceasefire "would legitimize Russia's land grab. It would reward the aggressor and punish the victim."

But there are efforts for peace. In Culture of Peace News Network (CPNN) this month, we cite those of the African countries, the Pope, President Lula of Brazil, the Chinese government, and the civil society meeting in Vienna.

The most recent initiative comes from a [delegation of African countries](#) that met with President Zelensky in Kiev and President Putin in St. Petersburg. The delegation included the presidents of South Africa, Comoros, Senegal, and Zambia as well as the prime minister of Egypt and representatives of the presidents of the Republic of the Congo and Uganda. "This war has to have an end. It must be settled through negotiations and through diplomatic means . . . This war is having a negative impact on the African continent and indeed, on many other countries around the world," said South African President Cyril Ramaphosa.

In his meeting with the African delegation, Putin mentioned a draft peace agreement that was drawn up with the help of Turkish President Erdogan: "It was called treaty of permanent neutrality and security guarantees of Ukraine," Putin said, adding that the document included 18 articles pertaining to Ukraine's security. But the agreement was never realized, for which Putin blamed the other side.

As described in a recent CPNN article, [Pope Francis](#) has launched a peace mission aimed at finding a settlement of the Russia-Ukraine war, upsetting Ukraine's allies with his refusal to insist that Russia leave Ukraine as a starting point for negotiations. The pope has appointed Cardinal Matteo Zuppi as a special envoy for his peace mission.

The Pope's initiative reflects his support in general for the culture of peace. In April of this year, he diffused a [video](#) throughout the world, saying, "Let us develop a culture of peace. Let us remember that, even in cases of self-defense, peace is the ultimate goal, and that lasting peace can exist only without weapons. Let us make non-violence a guide for our actions, both in daily life and in international relations."

Recently, the Pope met with [Brazil President Lula](#) and they discussed Lula's proposal of a group of countries to mediate in possible negotiations between Kyiv and Moscow. Lula's proposal has elicited little response from the international community.

The [Chinese government](#) also presented a peace proposal earlier this year, and Chinese envoys have met the leaders of both Ukraine and Russia to promote it. While the proposal was dismissed by NATO, it was welcomed by many in the Global South, although some questioned whether Chinese threats against Taiwan did not contradict the principles of their proposal.

The Chinese initiative also reflects its public support for the culture of peace. In a [video](#) about President Xi Jinping's recent visit to the Chinese Academy of History, the Deputy Director-General of the Academy says that, "The pursuit of peace and harmony is the foundation of the Chinese spirit. It is in the gene of Chinese civilization. In the 5,000-year

history, our ideal world is of great unity. We value a culture of peace and unity."

As for the civil society, during the weekend of June 10-11 in Vienna, Austria, over 300 people representing [peace organizations](#) from 32 countries came together for the first time since the Russian invasion of Ukraine to demand an end to the fighting. Despite the uniform bottom line of the participants, which was a call for peace talks, there were plenty of disagreements about what should be mentioned in the final declaration. Noting these disagreements, participant Medea Benjamin says that "the most important segment of the final document and the gathering itself was the call for further actions." "This weekend should be seen as just the start," said organizer Reiner Braun. "We need more days of action, more gatherings, more outreach to students and environmentalists, more educational events. But this was a great beginning of global coordination."

As expressed in a [blog](#) this month by the CPNN coordinator, "Are we sleepwalking to Armageddon, as some have predicted? Or will the forces for peace be able to end the Ukraine War? . . . As the late [Daniel Ellsberg](#) warned us, our world hangs in the balance."

CPNN Bulletin, July 1 2023
[English bulletin July 1, 2023 - CPNN \(cpnn-world.org\)](#)

"The beginning of a habit is like an invisible thread, but every time we repeat the act we strengthen the strand, add to it another filament, until it becomes a great cable that binds us irrevocably through thought and act."

Orrison Swett Marden.

"I hope that the University of Peace will establish a global peace strategy which would reach from outer-space to the atom, encompassing all aspects of our planetary home, the atmosphere, the seas and oceans, the polar caps, the continents, nations, regions cities and villages: and from the whole human family to the individual, encompassing races peoples cultures, religions generations, professions, institutions, firms, the family, and all groups and associations created by the human race to attain a greater level of happiness and fulfilment. . ."

Robert Muller, #20, Dreams regarding education for peace.

Leadership of Women for a Culture of Peace

Women's equality is essential to the culture of peace. When we sent the [draft Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace](#) from UNESCO to the UN General Assembly in 1998, we made it clear that the linkage is essential between women's equality, development and peace: "Only this . . . can replace the historical inequality between men and women that has always characterized the culture of war and violence." In fact, at the dawn of humanity the monopolization of war and violence by men led to the historical exclusion of women from political and economic power (see my study [Why There Are So Few Women Warriors](#) for a scientific explanation). In order to achieve a culture of peace, the inequality must be reversed.

[This month's CPNN bulletin](#) shows that the reversal is well underway: the leadership of women for a culture of peace is more and more recognized, and the equality of women is being increasingly achieved. Of course, much remains to be accomplished, but what is important is that the process is underway. From time to time, there are setbacks, but for the most part, the process is irreversible. Women are gaining equality, and they are in the leadership of the Global Movement for a Culture of Peace. Their leadership is being recognized throughout the world. In this month's bulletin, there are women recognized by peace prizes from Yemen, Liberia, Kenya, Iran, Myanmar, Ireland, Guatemala, United States, Egypt, Tunisia, Indonesia and Bolivia.

At the United Nations, Resolution 1325 was adopted by the Security Council under the leadership of Anwarul Chowdury from Bangladesh in 2000 to

provide a role for women in UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding, but ever since then, it has been difficult to get it implemented. There are some successes, but the struggle goes on at the UN, as described in this month's CPNN bulletin.

There is an intrinsic relation between the culture of war and violence against women. It is evident that rape has always been a weapon of war, but that is not all. There is a consistent finding by social scientists, both political scientists and anthropologists, that there is a high correlation between the frequency of warfare of the state or non-state society and the frequency of local, including domestic violence, at the lower level. [These studies](#) also show that the causal relationship is one-way, that it is the higher level that influences the lower level. This consistent finding is understood to be the result of the fact that the state or tribe trains young men as warriors to be violent, and that violence by the state or tribe serves as a behavioral model for the family and community. Hence, the struggle for a culture of peace must include the struggle to end violence against women.

David Adams, david@decade-culture-of-peace.org

Blog: *Transition to a Culture of Peace*
<https://decade-culture-of-peace.org/blog/?p=88>

The Wisdom & Courage of Women

“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.”
— Haris Silajdzic, former Prime Minister of Bosnia

The UN Decade for Women Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1985 was a seminal experience for me. Over twelve thousand women shared together from many cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. After five days of intense dialogue, with many perspectives on how best to solve issues facing women everywhere, we stood in an enormous circle on the lawn of the University of Nairobi. As I held hands with my new sisters, Adekeye from Sierra Leone on my left, Rena from Indonesia on my right, surrounded by sisters from a rainbow of cultures and perspectives, I felt viscerally that by harnessing the power of women, we could heal the differences that divide humankind. At a very deep level, I knew that the power to bridge and connect was far stronger than the power to divide.

My work and life experience bears this feeling out. I’ve been inspired and encouraged by the women who are at the forefront of social change — leading grassroots efforts, organizing their communities, and modeling the kind of feminine power and wisdom so needed today.

For example, in a 20,000-strong squatter community called Crossroads, on the outskirts of Cape Town, South Africa, I worked with extraordinary female peacebuilders such as Regina Ntongana who worked tirelessly to protect her community from impending demolition by the apartheid government. Regina, and her colleagues in the Crossroads Woman’s

Movement, was able to keep the peace in the growing squatter camp despite crowded and difficult living conditions. Because of their fearless and united efforts to prevent demolition, Crossroads remains standing today.

The Tototo Home Industries Project in Mombasa, Kenya, models the power of small-scale loans. I interviewed women who worked and sang together in the spirit of collaboration to produce products and food to support the needs of low-income women and girls. As business grew, Tototo expanded to include small scale loans, a vocational training school, and a women’s rural development program. They reinvested the money they made to improve the lives of their families and community, raising the standard of living markedly in their regions. Their story and success spread, and today, they are joined by millions of similar microfinance initiatives that have lifted many women out of poverty and provided jobs and community development.

Tototo was modeled after the Grameen Bank, founded by Mohammed Yunus in Bangladesh. Women are considered to be vitally important in the success of these initiatives and the community economy as a whole benefits as women use loans to build businesses. Women have a high success rate in the repayment of loans, profitable loan use, and redistribution of surplus income to family and community. The Bank works to raise the status of poor women by giving them ownership of assets. 96% of the borrowers are women. Grameen serves millions of borrowers, with 10,000 families escaping poverty every month. It is a success story, disproving the myth that women and poor people are unreliable.

For many reasons, women are natural peacebuilders. Women are often at

the center of popular protests, electoral referendums, and other citizen-empowering movements because they are adept at bridging ethnic, religious, political, and cultural divides. Research indicates that women generally are more collaborative than men and thus more inclined toward consensus and compromise. Every effort to bridge teaches lessons and establishes connections to build on later. As Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary General, said *“For generations, women have served as peace educators in their families and in their societies. They have proved instrumental in building bridges not walls.”*

Further, women often have their fingers on the pulse of the community. Living and working close to the roots of conflict, they are well-placed to provide essential information about activities leading up to armed conflict and keep records during war. Many gather evidence at scenes of atrocities. Women thus play a critical role in mobilizing their communities to begin the process of reconciliation and rebuilding once hostilities end. This was certainly true in South Africa and so many other countries. Women often use their caregiving and protection role as mothers to cut across borders and divides. We know what it means to give life, to preserve life, and sustain life.

Motherhood nurtures a deeper connection and empathy with *all* mothers to protect their children, and are highly invested in preventing, stopping, and recovering from conflict. They watch as their husbands and sons go off to war; many do not return, leaving women to care for the children and elders. When rape is used as a tactic of war to humiliate and terrorize the population, they become targets themselves. Despite – or because of – the harsh experiences of so many who survive violent conflict, women generally refuse to

give up the pursuit of peace. Women frequently outnumber men after conflict, and they often drive the implementation of any peace agreement.

Additionally, women are critical to economic development, active civil society, and good governance, especially in developing countries. As Isabel Coleman says in *“The Payoff from Women’s Rights”*, focusing on women is often the best way to reduce birth rates and child mortality; improve health, nutrition, and education; stem the spread of HIV/AIDS; build robust and self-sustaining community organizations; and encourage grassroots democracy. A UNESCO project demonstrated that giving women a simple primary school education decreases child mortality 5 to 10%. And investing in girls’ education is considered one of the best long-term investments.

The reality is that women’s progress is global progress. In societies where women have equal access to education and political rights, governments are more open and free, and younger generations are healthier and better educated. There is a strong correlation between the amount of gender equality in a society and its wellbeing, critical to reducing poverty and improving governance.

Fortunately, gender equality has become a development priority over the past decades and is one of seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s), the international community’s action plan to reduce global poverty by 2030. Women’s empowerment is essential to achieving all SDG’s.

Women’s groups have expanded around the world to take a stand for gender equality, and I’ve had an opportunity to work with a number of them. As CEO of Peace X Peace (PXP), an international women’s peacebuilding and

leadership organization with a large network of women, we created a safe, accessible, and profound space for women to connect across divides, learn from each other and support their communities. PXP was a pioneer in using technology to connect women globally as a vital force for building peace and raising and multiplying women's voices, so often silenced. Many other organizations continue this work, including Vital Voices, Global Fund for Women, Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, and so many others.

It's not that long ago, really the last generation of women, who became independent economically and were well educated in growing numbers. Many in my mother's generation were homemakers who were dependent on their husbands for survival, often lacking the skills, education or socio-economic freedom to step forward. Boomers comprise the first generation of women who have so many choices.

We've come a long way, and the wisdom of women is evident all around. Women are collaborators for change. We are the primary carriers of the feminine qualities of compassion, nurturing, caring, inclusion, and partnership. These qualities are not separate but an equal and necessary part of the whole. Men can access these qualities if they are nurtured and valued.

The feminine embodies a deeper awareness and heightened perception, a tracking of what's occurring before it becomes visible. We pay attention to the nuances and are often able to perceive changes in the air before they actually become visible. This awareness helps us to understand what's underneath the tension or conflict, so that it can be truly healed and transformed, not just temporarily resolved while continuing to fester. This is why peace treaties that actively involve

women stakeholders are much more likely to be durable.

Women are breaking stereotypes. Their models of effective leadership inspire a renewed sense of purpose and hope for the future. We are balancing the forces of the heart with the drive for accomplishment. We are willing to step out and defend life with a powerful commitment to justice and truth. The pioneering spirit and courage of many extraordinary forebears inspires us to find the courage to showcase our own passion.

It's time for feminine qualities to be valued in our society, and to become integrated into every process and assumption we make. It's time for more policy makers to be women, and to encourage more feminine leadership. It's time to bring forth the wisdom of women who are leading NGOs at the grassroots level and building bridges across many divides, often at great risk. It's time for women to step decisively into the role of catalyst for powerful, positive change. The good news is that this is happening. May it continue on a much larger scale.

As a woman my country is the whole world. – Virginia Woolf

Kimberly Weichel. An edited chapter from my book : Beyond Borders: One Woman's Journey of Courage, Passion and Inspiration, published in 2016. www.kimweichel.org

One's Own Demise

One's own demise is a story shared by many, but seldomly heard.

In my mind I still see memories of what was.

Deep within my soul is a cry that only I hear.

Trapped in my own thoughts, demons congregate, lurking, waiting patiently.

Whilst lucid dreams continue to haunt thy self, will they ever forsake me?

Memories don't lie.

Memories don't die.

Separation, incarceration, scarification.

Engraved in the flesh like a tattoo needle piercing though skin.

Yet, only past affairs flow from this vessel.

Chaotic times, surrounded by convicted minds.

Relationships deteriorate, and a father's love is from a distance.

Oh yes, there is a façade hidden behind such a smile.

Memories come.

And memories go.

Yes, indeed, the many trials and tribulations are not shown on one's mask.

However, does one heed to the lessons learnt, or stay imprisoned by his own despair?

No not me, no not I.

I will endure, I will overcome, and I will conquer.

Cause in all its greatness, there is also beauty.

You just have to keep moving forward, regardless.

For only nga Atua know.

As the universe shuffles the deck of one's life.

Like the four seasons.

Many different hands are dealt today, tomorrow, or 13 years from now.

No doubt, I will embrace each hand, and play it accordingly.

One day at a time.

Author's name withheld. (Written as part of a Creative Writing programme in a NZ prison. Any comments or communication can be made through the editor.)

The Power of Women: Inspiring Change and Collective Action

In the words of Albert Einstein, "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results." With this wisdom in mind, it is clear that a fresh approach is needed to tackle the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which encompass the fundamental elements of security, prosperity, and quality of life for all individuals. One crucial aspect of this new approach lies in embracing women's perspectives, recognizing their unique contributions, and fostering a more balanced and inclusive society. By doing so, we can pave the way for different results and a brighter future.

In a world yearning for balance and inclusivity, the Power of Women (POW) movement emerges as a critical force in recognizing and embracing women's innate power to create a more unified society. As we stand on the precipice of change, with only two women leaders among the 2023 G20 summit participants, it is evident that women's voices and perspectives remain vastly underrepresented in decision-making processes. However, women's contributions to families, communities, the environment, the economy, and society at large cannot be denied. The Power of Women movement aims to rectify this disparity and forge a path towards a more balanced world. A balanced world where women and men are working in partnership.

The following statistics highlight the urgent need for balance and the importance of amplifying women's voices:

- Only 2 out of 20 world leaders at the 2023 G20 Summit are women, failing to represent

half of the world's population in the global economic structure.

- As of January 2023, only 31 countries have 34 women serving as Heads of State and/or Government, showcasing the significant gender gap in leadership positions.
- Women perform 66% of the world's work, produce 50% of the food, and earn just 10% of the income, highlighting the vast disparities in economic opportunities.
- Women contribute a staggering 12.5 billion hours of unpaid care work every day to the global economy, which is worth at least \$10.8 trillion a year. This value is more than three times the size of the global tech industry.
- Women spend an average of 4.5 hours per day on unpaid care work, such as cooking, cleaning, and caring for children and the elderly, revealing the unequal distribution of domestic responsibilities.
- Women drive the global economy by controlling over \$20 trillion in annual consumer spending, showcasing their significant economic influence.
- Women are at the forefront of providing critical care and support in response to global crises, such as pandemics and natural disasters, representing 70% of the global health and social care workforce.
- Closing the gender pay gap could increase women's

earnings by \$3-5 trillion globally, leading to economic growth and reducing inequalities in health, education, and food security.

- Women's entrepreneurship has the potential to create 150 million jobs worldwide, contributing to economic prosperity and empowerment.

To address these disparities and promote balance, the Power of Women recognizes the transformative power of music, media, and entertainment in shaping societal narratives and beliefs. Leveraging these powerful mediums, it harnesses the silent reinforcers of society to amplify women's voices, inspire change, and promote a more balanced and equitable society.

At the heart of Power of Women lies the Power of Women Anthem, a significant milestone in the history of women's movements. This anthem represents a transitioning point for women worldwide, symbolizing the shift from demanding equality to embracing and harnessing the innate greatness and strength women already possess. Through the power of storytelling in arts and media, the anthem aims to broaden the narrative of history, empowering women to share their stories and perspectives.

Lead by Shenali Rajaratnam, The Power of Women movement understands the transformative power of inclusivity and the integration of feminine perspectives. By incorporating diverse viewpoints, the movement aims to bring balance to decision-making processes and solutions on a global and local scale. Recognizing the significance of collaboration, POW encourages men to

stand as unwavering pillars of support, fostering harmonious alliances for the betterment of society.

The D-POW conference, set to take place in September 2023, offers an immersive and transformative experience for all attendees. With dozens of engaging sessions featuring inspiring speakers, including female leaders from various industries, participants can expect to be motivated and empowered. The conference incorporates the concept of Edutainment, combining education and entertainment to create an engaging and impactful learning environment. Utilizing leading-edge technologies throughout, this digital conference promises to be an enlightening and memorable experience.

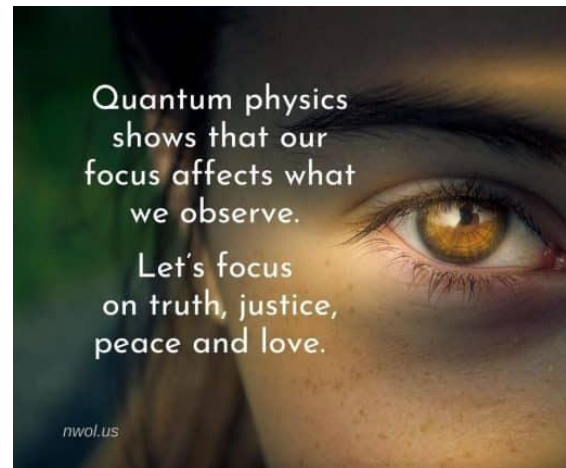
The Power of Women movement invites both women and men from around the world to register for the D-POW conference in September 2023, coinciding with the G20 summit in India. By embracing the innate greatness within themselves and collaborating with others, women can contribute to the transformation of society, promoting peace, well-being, and the sustainable flourishing of self, society, and the environment. Together, we can create a future where the power of women is recognized, celebrated, and integrated into every aspect of our lives. Join the movement and be part of this powerful journey towards a just and peaceful world.

Invitation for Working Together: POW movement emphasizes the urgent need for women, of all ages, races and cultures, to work together with all stakeholders in creating an inclusive and collaborative environment for all. By acknowledging and respecting each

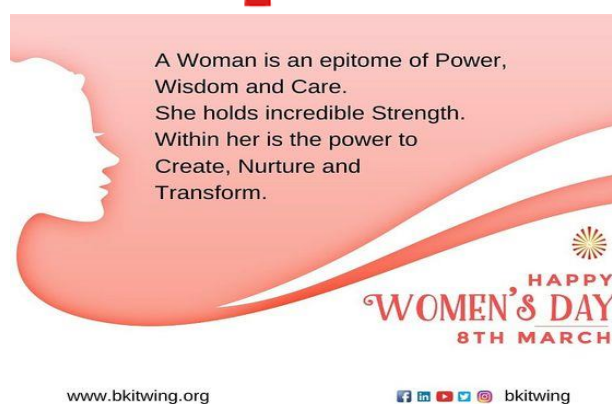
other's contributions, the society can foster strong relationships, facilitate open discussions, and establish a foundation for effective collaboration, driving towards a more just, thriving, and sustainable future for all.

To register for the conference and learn more about the Power of Women movement, visit the official website: <https://www.powerofwomen.info/d-pow>. Embrace your power, unleash collective action, and let us together shape a future of balance, inclusivity, and empowerment.

Ashley Portillo and Shenali Rajaratnam
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Woman Power and the *Women-Led* “Brahma Kumaris” World Spiritual Organization



No theme on “The Power of Women” would be complete without mention of the Brahma Kumaris (BK) World Spiritual Organization (www.brahmakumaris.org) for its exemplary global distinction (within the male dominated spiritual landscape) as **being intentionally led by its women!** Since its inception in 1936-37, when women in India had a very sad position in society, its management was actively given to women, where the senior sisters (with the loving support of the brothers) have developed its reach across the world for the betterment of humanity.

The BK’s are an international India-based spiritual organization whose “religion is peace” – *i.e. the teaching and practice of peace through the mental exercise of raja yoga meditation.* They have an established network of over 8,500 meditation centers in more than 135 countries where “*experience - practice - become*” describes their mission. Their community service is the free offering of meditation and values education experiences to all (regardless

of faith or beliefs - with no proselytization). Their learning centers offer a place to detach from daily pressures, to re-energize the spirit and reconnect with the self. Programs are designed to develop each person’s own spiritual journey by emphasizing self-discovery of one’s inner qualities and values. Their logo (above left) depicts life as a subtle still-point of spiritual light and energy, symbolic of both the soul and God. The rays emanating from the central point represent the energetic vibrations of virtues and powers that elevate human consciousness.

I am blessed to be connected to the BK’s on two levels. For not only do I live around the corner from a simply-heavenly BK Mediation Center in Cinnaminson, New Jersey where I have studied and grown spiritually. But even before the BK’s came to town, I was in awe of their professionalism from our collaborative NGO work at United Nations headquarters in New York, as they are an accredited NGO with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) revered for their high quality peace work.

I end with a BK **Thought for the Day:**
Let my eyes be a mirror for others, reflecting only the best and finest qualities. Let my ears be open to hearing only peaceful words. Let my mouth only speak pearls of spiritual wisdom. Om Shanti.

Anne Creter OPTU co-worker

1325 Remains the Most Well-Known and Widely Appreciated Resolutions of the UN Security Council: Much Remains to Be Done Though for the Humanity to Get its Benefits.

In 2010, at the opening session of the civil society forum observing the tenth anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on “Women and Peace and Security”, I had the honor to declare 1325 as “the common heritage of humanity” indicating the wide-ranging nature of the potential benefits which will flow from the landmark resolution’s full and effective implementation by all at all levels.

On 31 October this year, the world will be observing the 23rd anniversary of 1325. I am confident that under the Presidency of Brazil, the United Nations Security Council would be holding an open meeting on or around 31 October, to observe the anniversary in a befitting manner giving the civil society a due role in the deliberations.

The core message of 1325 is an integral part of my intellectual existence and my humble contribution to a better world for each one of us.

To trace back, a little more than 23 years ago, on the International Women’s Day on 8 March in 2000, as the President of the Security Council representing my country Bangladesh, following extensive stonewalling and intense resistance from the permanent members, I was able to issue an agreed statement [UN Press Release SC/6816 of 8 March 2000] on behalf of all 15 members of the Council that formally brought to global attention the contribution women have always been making towards preventing wars and building peace.

The Council recognized in that significant, norm-setting statement that “peace is inextricably linked with equality

between women and men” and affirmed the value of full and equal participation of women in all decision-making levels.

That is when the seed for UNSCR 1325 was sown. The formal resolution followed this conceptual and political breakthrough on 31 October of the same year with Namibia at the helm of the Presidency, after tough negotiations for eight months, giving this issue the long overdue attention and recognition that it deserved.

The very first paragraph of this formal resolution starts with a reference to the 8 March 2000 statement identifying the rationale and tracing the history of “Women and Peace and Security” at the Security Council. The inexplicable silence for 55 long years of the Security Council on women’s positive contribution was broken forever on the 8th of March 2000.

Adoption of 1325 opened a much-awaited door of opportunity for women who have shown time and again that they bring a qualitative improvement in structuring peace and in post-conflict architecture.

We recall that in choosing the three women laureates for the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize, the citation referred to 1325 saying that “It underlined the need for women to become participants on an equal footing with men in peace processes and in peace work in general.”

1325 is the only UN resolution so specifically noted in the citations of the Nobel Prizes. That is the value, that is the essence and that is the recognition of UNSCR 1325 in the global community.

The historic and operational value of the resolution as the first international policy mechanism that explicitly recognized the gendered nature of war and peace processes has, however, been undercut by the rather disappointing record of its implementation, particularly for lack of national level commitments and global level leadership.

The driving force behind 1325 is “participation”. I believe the Security Council has been neglecting this core

focus of the resolution. There is no consideration of women's role and participation in real terms in its deliberations.

The poor record of the implementation of 1325 also points to the reality of the Security Council's continuing adherence to the existing militarized inter-state security arrangements, though the Security Council is gradually, albeit rather slowly, accepting that a lasting peace cannot be achieved without the participation of women and the inclusion of gender perspectives in peace processes.

It is encouraging to note that in recent years, the Council has met with women's groups and representatives of NGOs during its field missions on a fairly regular basis. The first such meeting was held with women's organizations in Kosovo in June 2001 when I was leading the Security Council mission to that country as the Council President, over the unwillingness of the UN appointed Mission Chief in Kosovo.

My work has taken me to the farthest corners of the world, and I have seen time and again the centrality of women's equality in our lives. This realization has now become more pertinent in the midst of the ever-increasing militarism, militarization and weaponization which are destroying both our planet and our people.

Women's equality makes our planet safe and secure. When women participate in peace negotiations and in the crafting of a peace agreement, they have the broader and long-term interest of society in mind.

It is a reality that politics, more so security, is a man's world. Empowering women's political leadership will have ripple effects on every level of society. When politically empowered, women bring important and different skills and perspectives to the policy making table in comparison to their male counterparts.

Women are the real agents of change in refashioning peace structures ensuring greater sustainability.

As the UN adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, 1325 was about to observe its 15th anniversary and many were wondering why Goal 5 on women and girls and Goal 16 on peace and governance did not make any reference to the widely recognized resolution of the Security Council. This disconnect between the two main organs of the UN is unacceptable to all well-intentioned supporters of the world body.

That global reality is dramatically evidenced in the fact that the UN itself despite being the biggest champion of women's equality has failed to elect a woman secretary-general to reverse the historical injustice of having the post occupied by men for nearly eight decades of its existence.

I am asked again and again what could be done for the true implementation of 1325 to make a difference. In my considered judgment, I have identified four areas of priority for the coming years.

One, Leadership of the UN Secretary-General

What role the Secretary-General (SG) should play? Many believe there is a need for the Secretary-General's genuinely proactive, committed engagement in using the moral authority of the United Nations and the high office he occupies for the effective implementation of 1325.

It would have a strong, positive impact on the UN Member States if their heads of state/government received a formal communication from the Secretary-General urging submission of respective National Action Plans (NAPs).

Implementation of 1325 should be seriously taken up by the SG's UN system-wide coordination mechanism. UN Resident Coordinators who represent the SG and UN country teams should assist all national level actors in preparation and implementation of NAPs.

A no-tolerance, no-impunity approach is a must in cases of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN personnel and its regional partners in hybrid missions. UN is welcomed in countries as their protectors – it cannot become the perpetrators themselves!

Two, National Action Plans (NAPs)

As we are approaching the 23rd anniversary of 1325, it is truly disappointing that 107 countries out of 193 members of the UN have prepared their National Action Plans (NAPs) for the implementation of 1325.

It should be also underscored that all countries are obligated as per decisions of the Security Council (as envisaged in Article 25 of UN Charter) to prepare the NAP whether they are in a so-called conflict situation or not.

In real terms, NAPs happen to be the engine that would speed up the implementation of 1325. There are no better ways to get country level commitment to implement 1325 other than the NAPs. I believe very strongly that only NAPs can hold the governments accountable.

Three, Mobilizing Men for Implementing 1325

Patriarchy and misogyny are the dual scourges pulling back the humanity away from our aspiration for a better world. Gender inequality is an established, proven, and undisputed reality – it is all pervasive. It is a real threat to human progress. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has lamented that “ ... everywhere, we still have a male-dominated culture”.

Unless we confront these vicious and obstinate negative forces with all our energy, determination and persistence, our planet will never be a desired place for one and all.

Women’s rights are under threat from a “backlash” of conservatism and fundamentalism around the world.

We are experiencing around the globe an organized, determined rollback

of the gains made as well as new attacks on women’s equality and empowerment. Yes, this is happening in all parts of the world and in all countries without exception.

Men and policies and institutions controlled by them have been the main perpetrators of gender inequality. It is a reality that politics, more so security, is a man’s world. It is also a reality that women bring in the much needed intergenerational and forwarding-looking perspectives to the policy making table compared to men.

We need to recognize that women’s equality and their rights are not only women’s issues, but those are also relevant for humanity as a whole – for all of us. This is a most crucial point that needs to be internalized by every one of us.

With that objective, we launched the initiative for “Mobilizing Men as Partners for Women, Peace and Security” on 20 March 2019 in New York with the leadership of Ambassador Donald Steinberg, taking the vow to profess, advocate and work to ensure feminism as our creed and as our mission.

Four, Direct involvement of civil society

Another missing element is a greater, regular, genuine, and participatory involvement of civil society in implementing 1325 both at national and global levels. The role and contribution of civil society is critical. I would pay tribute to Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP) for making creative and qualitative contributions for the implementation of 1325 for the last two decades.

Civil society should be fully involved in the preparation and implementation of the NAPs at the country levels. At the global level, the UN secretariat should not only make it a point to consult civil society, but at the same

time, such consultations should be open and transparent.

We should not forget that when civil society is marginalized, there is little chance for 1325 to get implemented in the real sense.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that Feminism is about smart policy which is inclusive, uses all potentials and leaves no one behind. I am proud to be a feminist. All of us need to be. That is how we make our planet a better place to live for all.

We should always remember that without peace, development is impossible, and without development, peace is not achievable, but without women, neither peace nor development is conceivable.

Let me end by reiterating that “If we are serious about peace, we must take women seriously”.

Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury

[Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury was Under-Secretary-General and High Representative of the UN (2002-2007); former Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to UN (1996-2001); globally acclaimed as the initiator of the precursor decision leading to the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 as President of the UN Security Council in March 2000 and Founder of the Global Movement for The Culture of Peace (GMCoP)]



Breaking Down Barriers for Women in Politics

Our founder, Melinda French Gates, has outlined a bold vision for building women's political power in the United States through her work at Pivotal Ventures.

"When the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* last summer, it was yet another reminder that we still live in a country where decisions are made for women instead of by them," [she wrote in TIME](#). "I'm convinced that having more women at all levels of government will make government work better. I'm also convinced there's a realistic path to getting there."

The vision Melinda describes is part of Pivotal Ventures' broader commitment to expanding women's power and influence in the United States – positioning more women to make decisions, control resources, and shape policies and perspectives.

[Learn more about our strategy at: https://www.pivotalventures.org](https://www.pivotalventures.org)

Emily Lockwood, Program Strategy Lead Seven state lawmakers share how to make our democracy more reflective – and why it matters

THE GREAT INVOCATION

From the point of Light within the Mind of God

Let light stream forth into human minds.

Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love within the Heart of God

Let love stream forth into human hearts.

May the Coming One return to Earth.

From the centre where the Will of God is known

Let purpose guide all little human wills

The purpose which the Masters know and serve.

From the centre which we call the human race

Let the Plan of Love and Light work out

And may it seal the door where evil dwells.

Let Light and Love and Power restore the plan on Earth.