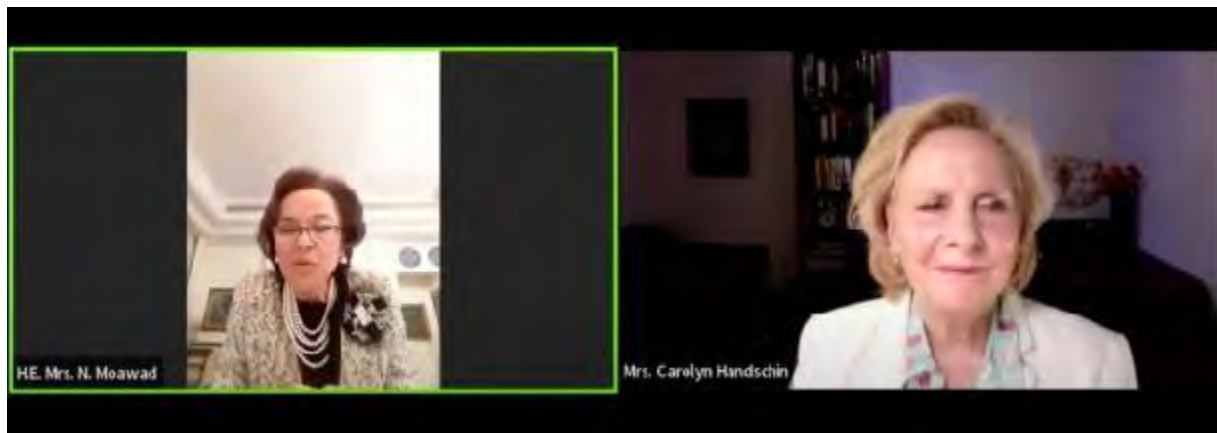


WFWPI: Securing Culture Of Peace - Women's Global Leadership And Mentoring

Carolyn Handschin-Moser
December 13, 2021



Mrs. Carolyn Handschin-Moser, President NGO Committee on the Status of Women and Director of WFWPI Office for United Nations Relations globally, greeted all the participants. In her welcoming words, she outlined the background to this conference entitled Securing a Culture of Peace: Women's Global Leadership and Mentoring with the theme of intergenerational trust, understanding and cooperation based on shared concerns for peace. She emphasized the importance of creating an environment where partnerships such as those hosting today's event can inherit from one another and join hands to build a future rooted in rights, dignity and responsibility. Mrs. Handschin then introduced HE. Mrs. Nayla Moawad, former First Lady of Lebanon, who co-hosted the conference.



HE. Mrs. Nayla Moawad, First Lady of Lebanon (1989) and Founder and President of Renee Moawad Foundation, emphasized the importance of women for successful peace processes and peaceful society. To achieve this, women leaders should take a strong stand and build the bridges that cross over the various societal divides. She referred to the Human Rights declaration and other declarations but stressed the need for role models who enable people to live by these declarations. She highlighted the role of First Ladies and other influential women and called on them to exercise their responsibility as law-abiding citizens, promoting mutually shared values and prosperity for all. Regarding the situation in Lebanon, she affirmed that women can bring about change there. She concluded her remarks by stating, 'If we as women stay in contact with each other and take action together, there is hope'.

Hon. Emanuela Del Re, EU Special Representative for the Sahel; Italy. Hon. Del Re said she encounters many different women through her position. She believes women do participate in various social processes and contribute as leaders in different ways. However, in certain countries where political participation is complex and sometimes dangerous, they need more support. Moreover, the role of women is often overshadowed by that of men, which makes it difficult for them to act freely, efficiently and effectively, despite having competency and skills as leaders and change-makers. For example, she mentioned a group of women-lawyers in Burkina Faso who are heroically fighting for women's rights and rightful position in society under very difficult circumstances. In conclusion, she praised the mentoring activities of the Women's Federation for World Peace. She considers this an important way to ensure that women continue through the generations to fulfill their role in society as agents of social change and thus become points of reference for women worldwide.

Hon. Dr. Maria Cavaco Silva First Lady of Portugal (2006-2016), Professor of Portuguese Language and Culture; Hon. Silva commenced her remarks by referring to the war-torn experiences of our grandparents and parents in Europe. She believes such people attach much greater significance to times of peace. In her opinion, a lack of appreciation of the importance of peace and harmony between peoples and nations will

endanger the future of our children and grandchildren. She welcomed the initiative of the conference "Securing a Culture of Peace: Women's Global Leadership and Mentoring." Her desire is that the spirit of commitment, dialogue, common sense and compromise in the name of a greater good will prevail. Referring to the establishment of the EU, she sees it as an example of a way to help overcome decades of conflict. It can also serve as an inspiration for discussion and the identification of new paths to follow.

Panel Speakers

Hon. Dr. Neziha Labidi, Minister of Women, Family, Children and Seniors (2016 - 2020) Director of Women's Promotion in the Ministry of Women and Family (2005 - 2011), Tunisia. Hon. Labidi expressed her gratitude to the hosts and commenced her remarks by stating that all development requires peace and security and dignity is essential to human life. After posing the question on women's role today, she referred to history to highlight the accomplishments of women pioneers in the region. Among those mentioned were Alyssa from Tyre in Lebanon (850BC); El Kahina; Princess Aroua (735 AD); and Fatima el Fehrya.

Referring to the twentieth century, she mentioned the ratification of the Personal Status Code in 1956, which introduced the emancipation of women. Currently, women constitute over 60% of magistrates, doctors, businesswomen, etc. thanks to the democratization of education. With the enshrinement of Equality Articles 46 and 21 in the constitution in 2014, women's rights were protected against emerging threats. The appointment of Professor Najla Bouden (October 2021) as the first female Prime Minister of Tunisia and the Arab world is the fruit of this historical foundation. Concluding with words of encouragement to women to always preserve their dignity and unity, she said "We are not born leaders, we become them thanks to our self-confidence, our resilience and our determination."

Mag. Christine Muttonen, President of the Parliamentary Assembly at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), 2016 - 2017, Special Representative for Central Asia, Member of Parliament of Austria (1999 - 2008, 2008 - 2017)

Mag. Muttonen thanked WFPW for the invitation and addressed gender inequality and ways of dealing with it. To secure peace and wellbeing, more women are needed in parliament, public administration, diplomatic posts and the UN peace mission. Security Council Resolution 1325 needs to be implemented. Research demonstrates that women's involvement in public life decreases violence, supports peace and security, creates healthier communities, stronger economies and greater awareness of climate change. Her background as a teacher, parliamentarian and President of OSCE PA caused her to reflect on the need for greater female involvement in foreign policy and more gender-balanced societies. She believes schools can stimulate the interest of young people, especially girls, in politics through classroom discussions and debates on current affairs.

As OSCE PA president, she placed women and security high on the agenda. As the second female president of the OSCE PA to be elected within 25 years, she could encourage the current president, also a woman. Thus, role models, networking and raising awareness among women while showing respect across party lines can encourage other women to become active. Family friendly working hours and childcare support also help. She concluded that "Women are crucial in all areas of social life, when it comes to security, peacekeeping and peacebuilding."

Hon. Edlira Çepani, National Coordinator for the Women's Network "Equality in Decision Making", created in 2008, former Member of Parliament, Albania. Mrs. Cepani described a women's network (started 2008) from all political parties and backgrounds, including media, business and civil society, which has promoted gender equality in Albania for 12 years. Women leaders cooperate despite differences, which is essential for economic development and democracy in the polarised atmosphere of Albanian politics. In Albania, 33% of parliamentarians are women; 50% of local council representatives and 70 % of the environmental representatives are women. They still encounter obstacles when they arise on the career ladder; they face stereotypical behavior and views, or they lack of confidence and visibility. Regarding Resolution 1325, Mrs. Cepani highlighted the statement that women are the main victims of violent conflict but have no preventative role. Thus, she encouraged women to gain their rightful position and participate in decision making and become role models. In conclusion, quoting an Albanian proverb, she said, "An eagle needs two wings to fly"; one wing is men and boys, the other, women and girls. Therefore, we should keep investing in family values and future leaders who want to make a change so that our eagle can fly on two wings.

Moderator: Ms. Kyung In van de Ven Oliveira is born and raised in Amsterdam the Netherlands and has been a youth representative of the WFPW Europe since 2011, and of the Dutch WFPW Chapter since 2014. She has recently joined the UN WFWPI team in Vienna and is currently working as a legal guardian and child's advocate of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers at the national guardian institution in the Netherlands.

Youth Representatives

Mrs. Marlies Ladstätter, President of IAYSP Austria (Since 2020) Volunteer, Oceania Leadership Team (2009-2011). Vienna Youth Coordinator UPF Austria. Assistant to Management Board, Austrian Red Cross (2020). Pursuing a Master's in International Peace. Her participation in service projects in Fiji and Solomon Islands taught her the importance of sharing and embracing strangers as family members. Thus, she recommends that youth volunteers to help those less privileged. The purpose of YSP, Austria is to empower youth and students to become global citizens through education in personal development and peace projects with a focus on addressing current community-based concerns. Mrs. Ladstätter considers peace to be rooted in respect and service to others. A mother generally teaches her children to treat others well and forgive mistakes. Women leaders have a similar role and are adept communicators and mediators. Research shows that women tend to lead more inclusive decision-making processes, execute more sustainable peace agreements and manage more profitable companies. In conclusion, she expressed gratitude to her mentors, her parents, her uncle, Mr. Haider, President UPF Austria and Mrs Amesbauer, President WFWP Austria

Mr. Oussama Kebir, Doctoral student at the Institut Supérieur de Gestion de Tunis and Officer in the Tunisian Army. military Officer, weapon systems engineer and doctoral candidate in artificial intelligence from the Higher Institute of Management, University of Tunis. Mr. Kebir shared his views on the importance of a culture of peace and the steps required to achieve it. He considers Human Rights essential as, globally, people desire freedom and equality. Human Rights include the right to live in a society free from violence, torture and any forms of cruel punishment and unjust imprisonment. He proceeded to highlight key elements of a culture of peace, which he emphasized is much more than just the absence of conflict.

Mrs. Elarinda Xhindi, Lawyer, Author. Participant in conferences and seminars on: Emotional Intelligence; Team Work; Career Management; Public Speaking. Certified in Minors' Friendly Law by the Council of Europe and Human Rights Education for Law Professionals. First novel: "Values Never Go Out of Fashion" (2021). Mrs. Xhindi expressed appreciation for the topic of the conference and called on women to unite and support each other to achieve success. Despite women's ongoing difficult situation due to inequality and prejudice, they are becoming more powerful, constituting 75% of political representatives in Albania. Mrs. Xhindi highlighted the following qualities of good women leaders: high level of expertise in their field, strong character development, self-confidence, role models in maintaining a culture of peace in their family.

Mrs. Xhindi listed the following challenges: the indifference of youth to societal issues; domestic violence and family turbulence with women as victims; physical, verbal and sexual abuse of children; poor education for children, where a single mother has her own career; financial instability where women lack personal income or have very low income; women serve as caregivers for children, elderly parents and grandparents. She concluded: "The more women become present in so-called non-traditional roles, the more impact they create, the more creativity, value, practicality and energy they bring."