



Forum in the NSW Parliament House 23rd June 2009 On UN International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking



A Forum to recognise the UN International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking was held on 23 June in the Jubilee Room at the New South Wales State Parliament. Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) Australia, in partnership with Drug Free Australia (DFA) met with over 80 guests including MP's from both major political parties, independent members of parliament, leaders from a wide variety of organisations, such as Life Education, Narcotics Anonymous, Ambassadors for Peace from the Universal Peace Federation, and people working with those affected by drugs. The event was hosted by Hon David Clarke MP. The Forum delved deeply into the issues to find and act upon real ways to dry up not only the supply but the demand for drugs and to learn from history and the approaches that bring results.

WFWP Australia president Mrs Tracy DeGeer as the MC welcomed and thanked all those who came to support this important issue and commemorate not only 21 years of the UN 's work but 100 years of international cooperation against drug trafficking. She quoted from the Sydney Morning Herald, reporting the desire of two 11 year old girls living in inner Sydney, an area of disproportional suffering from drugs and alcohol that if they made a game which reflected their hopes for the area it would wipe out the bad guys from the area who were the drug and alcohol dealers.

The Hon David Clarke MP welcomed the guests and expressed his support of the UN stand against drug abuse and his concern regarding the NSW Government's continued support for the controversial Injection Room operating in Kings Cross, Sydney. Keynote speaker, Major Brian Watters, Member of the United Nations International Narcotics Control Board presented

a global update on drug policy and how other countries in the OECD are preventing and reducing their illicit drug use.

Major Watters has been working in this area of preventing drug abuse and helping addicts recover, for many years. His talk was very clear and tinged with the pain of experience and genuine caring for addicts,

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Major Brian Watters,
Member of International Narcotics Control Board
and Director of Drug Free Australia.

United Nations Affiliation

WFP International became a “NGO in General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations” in 1997. This status has continued to be renewed based on the preparation of the quadrennial report.

Consultative status is granted by ECOSOC upon recommendation of the ECOSOC Committee on NGOs, which is comprised of 19 Member States.

There are only one hundred and thirty-nine NGOs worldwide that hold the general consultative status. The requirements of this level of affiliation include:

- ❖ Applying organization’s activities must be relevant to the work of ECOSOC
- ❖ The NGO must have been in existence (officially registered) for at least 2 years in order to apply
- ❖ The NGO must have a democratic decision making mechanism
- ❖ The major portion of the organization’s funds should be derived from contributions from national affiliates, individual members, or other non-governmental components
- ❖ NGOs granted General Consultative Status must submit to the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, every fourth year, a brief report of their activities, in particular regarding their contribution to the work of the United Nations (Quadrennial Report)

General Consultative Status is reserved for large international NGOs whose area of work covers most of the issues on the agenda of ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies. These tend to be fairly large, established international NGOs with a broad geographical reach

The benefits of receiving this status include:

- ❖ The NGO may propose new items for consideration by the ECOSOC
- ❖ Organizations granted status are also invited to attend international conferences called by the UN General Assembly special sessions, and other intergovernmental bodies

WFP International maintains a UN office in New York City. WFP International has twenty UN representatives in seven countries: Austria, Chile, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Switzerland, Thailand, and the US.



PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN

TARGET 3.A:

Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

- 3.1 Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education
- 3.2 Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector
- 3.3 Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament.

Success Stories

Today, Rwanda has the highest number of women parliamentarians in the world with women constituting nearly 50 percent in the Chamber of Deputies and about 35 percent in the Senate.

Recently, Rwanda conducted elections for the Presidency and the parliament had a referendum on a new constitution. For the first time in Rwanda’s history, free and fair elections were held. The new constitution guarantees a minimum of 30 percent of parliamentary seats and other leadership positions to women. Today, Rwanda has the highest number of women parliamentarians in the world with women constituting nearly 50 percent in the Chamber of Deputies and about 35 percent in the Senate. The Government of Rwanda also has 34 percent of women in its Cabinet. UNDP has been supporting the Rwanda Parliament, in particular the Rwanda Women Parliamentary Forum. In February 2007, the Forum held an international conference to share its experiences and to forge partnerships with development allies in the area of nation building. Speakers at the conference agreed that women play a critical role in the development of nations and in the attainment of the MDGs.

Source: www.mdgmonitor.org/

THE 8 MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS



1 Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger



2 Achieve Universal Primary Education



3 Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women



4 Reduce Child Mortality



5 Improve Maternal Health



6 Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other Diseases



7 Ensure Environmental Sustainability



8 Develop a Global Partnership for Development

For update on the Millennium Development Goals go to www.mdgmonitor.org/

WE ARE SO FORTUNATE TO BE BORN IN SUCH A WONDERFUL TIME FOR WOMEN

Women worldwide have experienced different kinds of discrimination, due to the time period, region, and systems among the various races and social classes. On the whole, women of both East and West, and past and present, have faced much suffering and pain. Until the early 20th century, women were deprived of even basic human rights, such as education, economic rights, the right to vote, and so on. They were unable to lead a life equal to men.

Due to the amazing advances in science and civilization in the 20th century, our life has become more abundant and convenient. Yet, it is true that due to self-seeking materialism, many spiritual values such as morality and ethics, love and service, tolerance and forgiveness are being lost. In the 21st century, with the incredible development of the Internet, email, etc., the entire globe is rapidly becoming one vast community. Today, conflicts in the Middle East, or the nuclear issue of North Korea are not just regional problems. The financial crisis which started in the US now threatens the whole world. We truly feel the global village has become one community that shares a common destiny.

The Women's Federation for World Peace was founded in 1992. For the past 17 years, our members worldwide have worked to establish a movement for True Family Ethics. Centered on motherly love, they have gone beyond the walls of race and religion, culture and national borders. We believe that such family ethics is the basic prevention for the spread of HIV/AIDS. The members have developed practical projects of service and education, aimed at the building of a happy, peaceful society and a global village.

For the past ten years, I've been given the opportunity to lead WFWP. As I witness our volunteers working with genuine care and love, giving hope and healing to those in need, I myself am the one deeply moved, inspired, and filled with pride for our work.

I see the great potential of women, developed through years of endurance and giving to others, come into bloom. From now on, women, who are half of the world's population, must awaken to their call and role of self-development. Feminine values, which until now have been seen as peripheral and insignificant, are becoming recognized as the Soft Power: for instance, skills of harmonising with and serving others, patience, love, sacrifice, tolerance and forgiveness can be further trained for work in society. Her Story, which leads the world, must be created. Let us create a new paradigm of leadership: a gentle and harmonious 'Leadership of Sensibility,' a 'Serving Leadership,' which can change the world. There are 17 countries worldwide that have women as presidents, or in the highest national position. A study on these countries, and those whose Congress have more than 30% women representatives, shows for example, that there seems to be less political strife and the nation becomes more active. In the future, women will definitely become the competitive power of a nation.

We are so fortunate to be born in such a wonderful time for women. Let us realize that women should take a more central role, and be subjects in building the future, working in complementary partnership with men. Let us develop a leadership of service in response to this multicultural age of diversity, loving our neighbors, our society, and the world!



WFWP International Pres.
Prof. Lan Young Moon

THE DIGNITY OF WOMEN AND THE CELEBRATION OF LIFE ARE THE THEMES OF OUR ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT 2009.

Dear Readers,

As the year goes hurtling by at its own quickening pace I hope that you can find pause for renewal and hope in our newsletter. As we have been conducting various activities we have been constantly returning to the theme of the dignity of women and their innate right to have this respected. We also have acknowledged the power of women to support each other to create the culture of dignity and respect. The question we also return to is what aspects of traditional and modern cultures strengthens a women's or girls' awareness of this and which hinders it? Our own hearts are in pain when we think of the situation of many who from various reasons have lost touch of this sense of worth or value within themselves and how their vulnerability from that is then exploited for others profit or power. This then motivates us despite our own difficulties to work together with people and other organizations to help create a positive, life and health affirming creative culture. We can sense that a serious dialogue is occurring here and all around the world, precipitated in part by the financial crisis as the inner world of people longing for meaning, sustainable beauty and integrity seeks expression from under the suffocation of materialism and grabbing for power. We seek to be a positive part of that dialogue and invite you to make your contribution into it wherever you can. We would hope that at least some of that could be made through participating in our projects, gatherings, this newsletter or another suggestion you have.

We have continued many projects, which range from raising awareness about the consequences of drug taking, developing and delivering practical character education, liaising with Solomon Islands for the educational needs of young children in isolated villages so the seed money we provide can be effective, helping Vanuatu establish a sewing centre through to singing beautiful, healing songs in our interfaith choir. I look forward to meeting you one day in one of our regular gatherings.

With warmest wishes
Tracy DeGeer.



Tracy DeGeer President of
WFWP Australia

Tracy is a Naturopath working at the Nature Care Wholistic and Medical Centre, specialising in stress management and education and coaching for adopting healthy behaviour.

their families and communities. The way forward from his perspective was ‘The creation of a culture predominantly against drugs is the surest way to prevent it in the future.’ He was concerned that the injecting room was clouding the message we want to send out and there were better methods to help those same people, which at the same time would help more people and prevent others from starting. A Proclamation, accompanies this report (see page 5), acclaiming the UN and international community’s efforts

to fight drugs. It shows our commitment to stand with the UN’s health first approach as expressed in its campaign “Do drugs control your life? Your life, Your community. “No place for drugs”, was read out. Participants enthusiastically signed it as a positive commitment and have been encouraging their communities to



Mrs Josephine Baxter

do since as well. Josephine Baxter, Executive Officer, DFA presented an overview of the current situation in Australia and how we could develop a solutions-based approach, using primary prevention strategies, that have been extremely successful in other countries.. She wanted to leave us with the closing message. “You alone can do it, but you cannot do it alone.” It is applicable on every level in dealing with this huge community problem. The delegates from Narcotics Anonymous echoed the power of standing together to overcome a problem that by your self can seem impossible. This was followed by Drug Free Australia’s Research Director, Gary Christian launching DFA’s latest research publication. The research draws on world-wide current research into the effects of Cannabis. The publication, Cannabis – suicide, schizophrenia and other ill-effects, describes the consequences of acute and chronic cannabis use.

In closing Craig Thompson the Chairman of Drug Free Australia thanked the Hon David Clarke for hosting the Forum in Parliament. He also thanked the WFWP for co-sponsoring the event and the Universal Peace Federation and its Ambassadors of Peace for their positive message and support.



Directors from Drug Free Australia and Women’s Federation for World Peace with Hon David Clarke and other Parliamentarians



UNODC has encouraged everyone to join the pro-health campaign and organize events during the month of June, on World Drug Day and beyond ...

Those attending signed a Proclamation, supporting the UN’s campaign “Do drugs control your life

Go to United Nations website address below where our event is reported

<http://www.unodc.org/drugs/en/events/index.html>

Read Naomi Von Dinklage’s article of this gathering on page 11



The "No Place for Drugs" Commitment
 A Proclamation about the Harms of Illicit Drugs
 NSW Parliament House on the 23rd June 2009



Co-sponsored by Drug Free Australia and Women's Federation for World Peace

The coalition of civil society actors, concerned individuals and public servants participating in the June 23rd, 2009 Community Forum at the NSW Parliament House,

*Recalling with gratitude, the 100 years of international efforts to control drug trading,
 Commending the ongoing work of the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, the International Narcotics Control Board and the international community of nations for their efforts to curtail the use and availability of illicit drugs,
 Bearing in mind the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's (UNODC) international campaign which runs from 2007 to 2009, to inspire people and mobilize support for drug control and raise awareness of the major problem that illicit drugs represent to society and especially to young people,
 Recognizing that teenagers and young adults are particularly vulnerable to using illicit drugs with the prevalence of drug use among young people being more than twice as high as that among the general population and noting also that at this age, peer pressure to experiment with illicit drugs can be strong, that self-esteem is usually undeveloped and that those who take drugs tend to be either misinformed or insufficiently aware of the health risks involved,
 Recalling with sorrow that alcohol and drug-related deaths among indigenous people are 21 times higher than in the overall population,*

We the under signed are determined to work to ensure a healthy, happy, productive and creative life for all people free from the debilitating control of drugs and therefore stand with the United Nation's Drug reduction policy and with one another, commit to the goals of the campaign and in particular to:

1. Mark the 21st anniversary of the **International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking** with this "*No Place for Drugs*" Commitment,
2. **Increase awareness** that illicit drug use harms individuals, families and society at large and that while drugs control the body and mind of individual consumers, drug crops and drug cartels control farmers, and trafficking and crime controls communities;
3. **Support** the UNODC's "Health comes first" approach by:
 - a. **Reaching out to young people**, who often talk about the "highs" induced by illicit drugs but may not be aware of the many "lows" and the accompanying threat to their physiological and emotional/mental health;
 - b. **Providing** young people and others with tools to educate themselves about the health risks associated with illicit drug use.
 - c. **Increasing awareness** that leading a healthy lifestyle requires making choices that are respectful of body and mind and that to make these choices, young people need guidance from role models and need to get the facts about drug use.
4. Bring the international campaign "**Do drugs control your life? Your life. Your community. No place for drugs**" to Australian communities, communicating that the destructive effects of illicit drugs concern us all;

Name

Organisation

_____	_____
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_____	_____

17th Anniversary of WFWP & Charity Afternoon Tea

18 April 2009

Oceania Peace Embassy Sydney

A charity afternoon tea was held to celebrate WFWP's 17th anniversary. The WFWP Choir the Doves brought a cheerful spirit with humorous songs.

WFWP Australia's president Mrs Tracy DeGeer reported on our work over the 17 years, especially in educating women of all backgrounds to have dignity and self esteem, through cultivating their potential and experiencing joy in sharing themselves and contributing to their family and wider society. Mrs DeGeer used the occasion to offer a substantial donation to Mrs Onis of the Women's Vocational Centre in Vanuatu. Most of this donation had come from an Australian women living in the USA. We were all moved by a letter of appreciation from the Women's Vocational Centre for WFWP's ongoing support of their work. (Read this letter on page 7)

There followed a trivia quiz and other games designed to raise funds for a school start-up project in the Solomon Islands. Everyone was pleased that the major prize was won by one of WFWP oldest members and that a good result was made for the Solomon Island children.

It was a happy and uplifting event to celebrate WFWP's anniversary.



International Women's Day 2009 FROM NEW ZEALAND

WFWP Australia observed International Women's Day 2009 with 2 events.

Strathfield Council in Sydney invited Jynene Helland WFWPI Vice President Oceania as the guest speaker at their morning tea on 6 March. Around 60 women from the local Strathfield area attended creating a warm and friendly atmosphere. Mrs Helland spoke about the important role of women as peacemakers.

As IWD fell on a Sunday this year we celebrated with an interfaith gathering. The Doves our interfaith choir shone as always with their beautiful voices and we heard the history of IWD from Kate Jones, Mamiko Rattley's moving testimony of why she does community work and some Australian women's poetry read with real heart from Brenda Muraoko. We then shared a tasty lunch together.



New Zealand WFWP members attended a women's interfaith seminar in Auckland on 27 Feb. 2009 as part of the NZ National Interfaith Forum. The theme was "Sharing our Sacred Journeys", and they joined around 100 women of many faiths who enjoyed a day of sharing and networking.



Above: Speakers at the Women's Interfaith Forum in Auckland, from (left to right) the Baha'i, Latter Day Saints, Zen Buddhism, Unificationist, Hindu, Jewish and Catholic faiths.

Left: Jynene Helland addresses Strathfield council's IWD event.

From: Lowinnio Lenakel
Community
West Tanna

To: Women's Federation
Independence Park
P.O. BOX 1145
Port Vila, VANUATU



RE: Letter of Appreciation and Gratitude.

I am writing you this letter to thank you or the organization for the gifts we have received on 16th March last month. We would like to convey our far most (sincere) gratitude and appreciation to the organization for the gifts. All that we have received on M.V. Southern Star was five (5) sewing machines and a carton of calico (clothe). We have not been able to work with the machine until 31st of March because of the bad weather. It has been raining all that period of time. On the 31st of March we gathered 43 women, and they were interested in turning and running the wheels of the hand machine. I am sending you a piece of clothe that the women have been practising on, running it to and fro. And it was a lot of fun because it has been the first time ever for some mothers to turn the wheel of a hand machine. They are still more women to come this coming Saturday, 04/04/09. Some mothers were afraid to touch the machines but after a while they can make it. I have helped them one after the other running the stitches on the piece of calico (clothe). All of them take turns. One of the women right in the middle of the bush told me that she had never done anything like this in her life time and almost shed tears. Yet, the other said that during her life time until now with her grey hair, she has never ever done anything like this with big tears in her eyes she said, "This is a great day for me, it is a great breakthrough for me in my life," All the women were so excited with this start off.

With all this news from Mother's Federation on Tanna, I, Mrs. Annie Loughman, we want to thank the organization for the real love for us. We are so proud and wave goodbye to you all, our sisters.

Thank you!
Yours faithfully:
Annie Loughman.

by Mamiko Rattley
 Character Education Coordinator
 Women's Federation for World Peace Australia

The workshop was held on 28 February at the Oceania Peace Embassy. It had been planned in order to boost members' skills in community outreach with the message of drug prevention and character education.

There were over 40 participants, about half of them young people.

The first trainer, Josephine Baxter, Executive Officer of Drug Free Australia, emphasised that the public does not know the truth about the dangers of drugs, and that we need to bring the correct message to the community. She showed us techniques to be effective facilitators in involving the audience, by encouraging our participation. We formed pairs and groups for energetic discussions followed by short presentations. The younger participants did very well with this exercise.

The second trainer was Paul Saver, Director of Character Education, Universal Peace Federation. He gave two sample lessons. First 'The Need for Character Education' and secondly 'The Family as the School of Love'. He pointed out that there are two aspects to any problematic situation : the need to find an immediate solution and the need to address the underlying cause of the problem. Character building can bring long term benefits, strengthening young people's resolve to say No to drugs and Yes to life.

With this kind of training and commitment to help society we can bring about change.

We have a big task ahead of us knowing that Australia has the highest drug use amongst the OECD nations.



A PILOT PROJECT IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDER COMMUNITY

Bringing the message from the facilitator's workshop, a pilot project has begun in the western Sydney suburb of Mt Druitt.

A large Pacific Islander community has been facing difficulties in handling youth problems, especially drug and alcohol abuse related crimes. Key leaders of this community requested the Women's Federation for World Peace to come and educate parents of high school students. We presented our 'Celebrating Life' messages on drug & alcohol abuse prevention and character & values education, in a culturally aware way.

Samoan and Tongan parents who completed Series 1 of the presentations received certificates from WFWP, and in turn most of them now want to become facilitators themselves to help their own people.

There are 3 series of Celebrating Life presentations:

- Series 1 Drug & Alcohol abuse prevention
Educating for Character
The Family as the School of Love
- Series 2 Who am I?
Respect, Freedom and Responsibility
- Series 3 Core Values for Leadership
HIV/AIDS prevention

We are planning to continue with Series 2 and Series 3 in the coming months.

If you would like to have presentations in your own community, please contact the WFWP office.

WFWP Int. Australian Office:
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To find out more about our international activities go to the following link to read the WFWP UN chapter's newsletter:

<http://www.wfwp.org/wfwpi/library/news/WFWPISpring09.pdf>



From Solomon Islands

Jynene Helland Interviewed Martha Horiwapu

At the end of last year I visited the Solomon Islands to participate in the Global Peace Festival in Honiara. I was in the Solomon Is. for a few weeks and during that time heard from a number of people about a woman who was obviously respected by local people. Her name was Martha Horiwapu and I couldn't go home without meeting her. So I arranged a time to talk with her at her office.

She works with the international Catholic aid and development agency Caritas. Martha is unassuming and quiet natured, obviously devoted to her family and her faith. In 2004 Martha was presented with the 'Woman of Courage' Award from the US Ambassador to Solomon Is. Martha lives in Honiara, the capital on Guadalcanal the main island of Solomon Is, but she was born in Malaita another central island.

In 1998 inter-island tensions between the Guales (from Guadalcanal) and the Malaitans, who had started to migrate to Guadalcanal, erupted culminating in large-scale violence. Twenty-five thousand people were displaced in the fol-

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WFWP ACTIVITIES IN VANUATU

Mrs Yello Ruth, Peace Ambassador in Tanna and Tafea Province has been very active and effective in teaching local women. She is the coordinator for all WFWP occupational centre activities.

The main programs that were taught: 1 Learning about Nutrition and
2 Learning how to sew and mend clothes

The mothers found the Nutritional information really interesting. One of the good things in this program is that mothers were encouraged to make use of local food which is healthier than the imported products from the shops. So now the mothers are making their own soy sauce from our local ingredients and even made our own curry. The taste is so good you can't stop eating it.

WFWP, Tanna Island is trying to raise funds to get a camera so the events can be recorded and sent to WFWP Oceania office more frequently.

Many warm greetings from your sisters in action in Tanna, Vanuatu and especially those who have been contributing their time and money towards WFWP in Vanuatu, and on Tanna.





IT HAPPENED IN THE NSW PARLIAMENT HOUSE

By Naomi Von Dinklage
Student in International Communication at Macquarie University

It was a Tuesday morning at NSW Parliament House as groups of people of all religious, social and political affiliations filtered into the Jubilee Room, all present with a common idea in mind, to be informed of and discuss the harmful reality of illicit drugs and simultaneously raise awareness of the importance of the issue, with the aim of creating proposed legislation to combat drug use in Australia.

The Honourable David Clarke graciously opened the forum, welcoming representatives from both Labour and Liberal parties. He then proceeded to express his deep interest in the matter, delving into the idea that drug minimisation is not a tangible solution and that instead, an alternative solution lies in forming a staunch response to end all illicit drugs. He highlighted the phenomenon of heroin drug injecting rooms, expressing how they have become a space which drug pushers can abuse and exploit. He pointed out that all in all, these rooms do not address the root problem of drugs in society and that as a result, funds should be diverted into other avenues of society.

After the welcoming remarks, the MC for the occasion, Tracy DeGeer, acknowledged the custodians of the land and welcomed indigenous representatives from Queensland, few amongst many other dignitaries from different walks of life.

The first speaker was Major Brian Watters, a member of the International Narcotics Control Board who presented a very informative report, putting the issue of illicit drugs into an international context and displaying trends and patterns of drug use, most of which are currently increasing. A quote that was given by Major Watters during his comments was a true expression of the general ambience and message of the forum; 'The creation of

a culture predominantly against drugs is the surest way to prevent it in the future'. Major Watters concluded his talk and Tracy DeGeer directed the audience's attention to the proposal of a No Place for Drugs commitment, encouraging everyone to go and sign it throughout the event.

Mrs Josephine Baxter, the next speaker and representative of Drug Free Australia, defined the proclamation as the beginning step to acknowledging first and foremost that we communally hold the goal of a drug free Australia. Australia's current policy of harm minimisation has resulted in the normalisation of illicit drugs such as cannabis. The lack of serious consequence has caused a sense of complacency and safety of use, obvious in the increasing numbers of instances of drug use such as cocaine, Australia claiming the position of the highest user of illicit drugs in the OECD.

Mrs Baxter articulated the right of addicted persons to

recovery, a right that is disregarded and overlooked in following the current policy of harm minimisation. The connection of substance abuse to 33% of child abuse cases emphasises the severe effects of not addressing reformation of chronic substance abuse.

Mrs Baxter invited all present to join in and support the current Drug Free Australia efforts to solve this prevalent quandary of substance abuse.

Mr Gary Christian was called to the fore to launch DFA's most recent research paper, Cannabis- suicide, schizophrenia and other ill-effects. The paper was handed out to all present, another substantial rejoinder to educate the public, and therefore prevent the immersion into substance abuse.

Representatives of Drug Free Australia, Mrs Baxter and Mr Christian encouraged all attending to become involved and displayed the website from which to enlist for informative



emails, news and materials- www.drugfree.org.au

In closing, Mrs DeGeer directed a question-answer session to speakers and representatives of International Narcotics Control Board and Drug Free Australia. The recurring issue of creating a culture of intolerance for drugs and a drug free Australia was addressed, as some present examined the necessity of addressing socially acceptable drugs, such as nicotine and alcohol, made obvious through the increasingly formidable effects of their abuse. This brought up the issue of preventing the 'decriminalisation' of drugs to prevent the message of safety.

All attendees were confronted with the possible solution of addressing life's problems that underlie the symptoms of drug abuse.

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lowing unrest. After much bloodshed and suffering on both sides, the Townsville Peace Agreement was signed in Oct 2000 by representatives of the conflicting sides. And the long road to stability and reconciliation began.

When the civil unrest started in 1998 Martha helped mobilise groups of women to convince the men to stop the fighting. She negotiated with the militias to make sure food and medical aid was able to get to those who needed it. She was involved with counselling and began offering counselling help to the women and children (including child soldiers as young as 8 years old) traumatized by the violence. Regarding her work Martha said "I saw young people being kidnapped. I saw women being raped and girls being raped. There was a feeling in me that I have to do something to restore peace, and it was up to us to do it. No one else was going to do it."

Martha related to me one of the trips she took. Word came of a boy had been hit on the head by a falling coconut and needed urgent medical care. He was in an

area held by armed militia. Risking her life Martha took a truck out to pick up the boy. She was stopped along the road by armed men and had to explain at gun point what she was doing. The leader of the group on hearing Martha's story recognised who she was. He said "Let this Catholic lady pass." Then he and some of the other armed members of the group got on the truck and escorted her safely to the boy. "There are many stories of women risking their lives in the conflict, walking across enemy territory to bring food to their family" said Martha.

What really inspired me about Martha's story was that women were in the forefront of the reconciliation process. Their selfless passion for their families and their people gave them the courage to go beyond danger. Women as peacemakers have a central and pivotal role to play in healing and reconciliation. They have a great power within them that comes from the heart.

Women's Federation for World Peace

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A Membership application form is printed below for your convenience.

Women's Federation for World Peace • Membership application form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Associate membership: \$20

Please send this form to your local WFWP Office