



HÖFÐI HOUSE REPORT



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CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

When it comes to women's political leadership, we are still in an era of "firsts." The majority of countries in the world have yet to elect their first female Head of State and/or Head of Government. Only three countries (Rwanda, Cuba and Bolivia) have reached equality in representation between men and women in Parliament. Only ten Heads of Government have appointed cabinets with equal numbers of women and men. Women who have risen to achieve positions in government have often proven themselves to be strong, intelligent, and empathetic leaders; nevertheless, there are still countless structural, systemic, and cultural barriers to women achieving these positions around the world.

Another place where women have been dramatically underrepresented is in national and international peace processes. According to UN Women and the Council on Foreign Relations, women have only made up two percent of mediators, five percent of witnesses and signatories, and eight percent of negotiators in all major peace processes in the last thirty years. Only two women in history have ever served as chief negotiators, and the majority of peace agreements signed since 1990 include zero female signatories. Similarly, women are underrepresented in efforts to decrease neighborhood violence, law enforcement and military operations, and transitional peace processes.

Women Political Leaders (WPL) is determined to highlight the work of women in the peace and security field, and encourages women around the globe to demand and take their seats at the table for these pivotal decision-making processes. Therefore, WPL gathered extraordinary women leaders for a roundtable conversation about peace and security, one of the most pressing topics in society today, during the Women Leaders Global Forum on Tuesday, November 27, 2018. From the election of Vigdís Finnbogadóttir as the first democratically elected woman Head of State in 1980, Iceland has prided itself

on being a leader in equality between men and women and is a fitting setting for this important meeting. This roundtable was the first of its kind and was held in cooperation with the Council of Women World Leaders (CWWL), the University of Iceland and the Höfði Reykjavík Peace Centre.



ABOUT HÖFÐI HOUSE

The Höfði House symbolizes change, transformation and most importantly peace. Built in 1909, it is one of the most beautiful and historically significant buildings in Iceland. It is best known as the building that hosted a historic Summit between U.S. President Ronald Reagan and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev in 1986, the first in a series of meetings leading to the end of the Cold War. During this meeting, images of the house, and the men negotiating there, were broadcast all over the world. Höfði was initially the house of the French consul in Iceland and still bears many signs of its original purpose, such as the letters R.F (the abbreviation of the French Republic), the name of the council and the year of its construction above an inside door.



In a world where the focus of world leaders often remains on fractures, chaos and violence, women Presidents and Prime Ministers gathered at the same house to accelerate progress towards peaceful societies and address the most complex challenges of our times.

Höfði Reykjavík Peace Centre at the University of Iceland takes its name from this symbolic house in a reference to the role Iceland played as a small non-militarised state in the conflict between two superpowers.

The Höfði Reykjavík Peace Centre, a collaborative effort of the City of Reykjavik and the University of Iceland, was established in October 2016. It is a forum for international multidisciplinary cooperation, with an emphasis on the role of small states, cities and citizens in promoting peace. The Peace Centre promotes non-violent communications, the eradication of interpersonal violence and peaceful relations between states and organizations. It is run under the auspices of the Institute of International Affairs (IIA) at the University of Iceland, a multidisciplinary organisation, which provides education, promotes research, and carries out service projects in the field of international relations.

The creation of Höfði Reykjavík Peace Centre has led to an expansion of the research area of the IIA with greater emphasis on the challenges now facing modern societies, such as climate change, immigration and refugee issues, and the rise of populist and nationalist rhetoric.

FOREWORD

What if half of the world's political leaders were women, what would this mean for peace?

What if half of the world's peace negotiators were women? What if half of armed forces and military was made up of women, what would this mean for nature of conflict? What if women were seen as active agents of peace, not passive victims of war? Where are the women?

Women are the invisible other: their contributions overlooked, and their wartime presence diminished to an archetypical damsel in distress. From 1990 to 2017, only 2% of all mediators were women, 8% of all negotiators, and 5% of all witnesses and signatories of major peace processes. The security realm suffers from the over proliferation of masculine input and the underutilisation of female perspectives and participation as both negotiators involved in peace and security as well as their contribution in warfare.

WPL's ambition is to accelerate change, to advance society. Annually, WPL convenes women leaders of the highest political office, and of influence in the security arena, for its Höfði House Meeting.

In 1986, the then Presidents of the U.S. and the Soviet Union, Ronald Reagan and Michail Gorbachev met in Iceland, in Höfði House, for the Reykjavik Summit. This historic meeting of two influential men is interpreted as an important step towards ending the Cold War - a legacy which inspired the first roundtable conversation about peace and security to which WPL invited, in cooperation with the Council of Women World Leaders (CWWL), the University of Iceland, and the Höfði Reykjavik Peace Centre.

Today's blurred lines of conflict and the emergence of non-traditional threats to security, underline the need for a broader understanding of peace. The WPL Höfði House meetings are set to influence reshaping traditional approaches to peace and security by amplifying the voices of influential women.

Silvana Koch-Mehrin,
Founder & President,
Women Political Leaders

Hanna Birna Kristjánsdóttir,
Chair of the Board,
Women Political Leaders

FOREWORD

In November 2018, Women Political Leaders (WPL) gathered women leaders for a roundtable conversation about peace and security during the Women Leaders Global Forum in Reykjavík Iceland.

This conversation is hopefully the first of many, where women leaders put their strength together to work towards peace and sustainability. We believe Iceland has a lot to offer to this international dialogue as Iceland is repeatedly ranked the most peaceful country in the world (Global Peace Index). That is, indeed, what Iceland represents: the experience of living in peace.

As we commemorate the centenary since the end of World War 1 and the 70 years anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we should be constantly reminded of the need to protect and advance our international organisations. Without them we would never have made this much progress on universal human rights, including women's rights and minority rights.

In only two years we will also be able to look back to two decades marked by the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. The resolution 1325 has helped us move forward and join the dots between women's inequality at home and away, addressing the impact of violent conflict on women and girls, as well as women's crucial role in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peacemaking and peacebuilding.

This meeting was made possible as several extraordinary women leaders were willing to take part in an enlightening dialogue on women, peace and security. The meeting was organised by Women Political Leaders (WPL) in collaboration with the Council of Women World Leaders (CWWL) and the outcomes of the meeting were jointly produced by the University of Iceland in close coordination with WPL. We look forward to continuing these fruitful and meaningful collective effort for greater peace and understanding around the world.

Auður Örlygsdóttir, Project Manager, Institute of International Affairs, University of Iceland

Silja Bára Ómarsdóttir, Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Iceland

Thorgerður J. Einarsdóttir, Professor of Gender Studies, University of Iceland

Gudbjörg Linda Rafnsdóttir, Professor of Sociology and Vice-Rector of Science, University of Iceland

ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANTS

Vigdís Finnbogadóttir

President of Iceland (1980-1996)



Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, the fourth President of Iceland, was the first woman in the world to be constitutionally elected Head of State. She was first elected in 1980 for a four-year term, winning the election against three male contenders, and then re-elected for three additional terms in 1984, 1988, and 1992. She left office in August 1996, having decided not to run for elections again. President Finbogadóttir devoted herself to the cultivation of the identity and integrity of the nation: its language, its unique and distinctive culture, and its youth. She is a champion of reforestation in Iceland and has strongly supported land reclamation in the eroded areas of Iceland. She is also a founder, member and patron of the "Save the Children" Association in Iceland. She is a dedicated spokesman for human rights and a lifetime honorary member of the Women's Rights Association in Iceland.

After leaving office, the President served as the founding Chair of the Council of Women World Leaders and the first Chair of a "World Commission on the Ethics in Scientific Knowledge and Technology" at UNESCO in Paris. In November 1998, she was nominated Goodwill Ambassador of Languages at UNESCO, and in 2000, UN Goodwill Ambassador in the fight against Racism and Xenophobia.

Katrín Jakobsdóttir

Prime Minister of Iceland



Katrín Jakobsdóttir has been Prime Minister of Iceland since November 30, 2017. She governs in coalition with the conservative Independence Party and the center-right Progressive Party. She is the first elected Head of State who comes from a new breed of Nordic left-wing parties that link democratic socialism, environmentalism, feminism, and anti-militarism. She is Iceland's second female prime minister, after Johanna Sigurdardóttir, who took the post in 2009. Jakobsdóttir was Minister of Education, Science and Culture from 2009 to 2013 and Minister for Nordic Cooperation during the same period. Jakobsdóttir joined the Left-Green Movement in 2002 and has been a member of Althingi for the Reykjavík North Constituency since 2007.

She has been the Chairman of the Left-Green Movement since 2013 and before that she was Deputy Chairman of the Left-Green Movement's parliamentary group from 2007-2009. Prior to her political career, Jakobsdóttir worked as a language adviser, freelancer and writer for broadcast and print media. She was also an instructor in lifelong learning and leisure at the Mímir School, and a Lecturer at the University of Iceland, University of Reykjavík and the Menntaskólinn College.

Silvana Koch-Mehrin

Founder & President, Women Political Leaders



Silvana Koch-Mehrin is the President and Founder of the Women Political Leaders (WPL), the worldwide network of female politicians. WPL is an independent, non-partisan and non-profit foundation. Its mission is to increase the number and influence of women in political leadership.

Koch-Mehrin is a former Vice-President of the European Parliament (2009-2011) and a former MEP (2004-2014). She served in the committees on budget, trade and gender equality. Before entering politics, she founded and ran a public affairs consultancy in Brussels, which later merged with a larger US firm.

In addition to her work with WPL, Koch-Mehrin serves on the board of the Council of Women World Leaders, the network of female presidents and prime ministers, as well as the board of the Social Progress Imperative. She is a regular speaker at institutions such as the UN, OECD, World Bank and other international fora. Koch-Mehrin is a Young Global Leader Alumni of the World Economic Forum.

Ana Birchall

Deputy Prime Minister of Romania



Ana Birchall was appointed Vice Prime Minister for Romania's Strategic Partnerships' Implementation in the Romanian Government, in January 2018, after having previously held the position of Minister Delegate for European Affairs (January-June 2017) and ad interim Minister of Justice (February 2017). She is currently serving her second term as deputy in the Romanian Parliament, representing Vaslui County and continuing the legislative work begun in 2012. Between February 2015 and December 2016, she served as Chairman of the European Affairs Committee in the Chamber of Deputies.

In 2002, Birchall began her career as a lawyer in New York City, collaborating with White & Case LLP law firm. In 2003, she returned to Romania with her family, where she made her debut in politics and administration as advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. In 2005, she was appointed Senior Adviser for the Commission on Foreign Affairs of the Senate of Romania.

Awa Ndiaya Seck

Resident Representative of UN Women to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)



Awa Ndiaye Seck, the new Resident Representative of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women in the DRC has more than thirty years of experience at the national, regional and international levels in gender, governance, conflict prevention, peacebuilding, decentralization and electoral processes. UN Women Country Representative in Liberia until her appointment in the DRC, Ndiaye Seck previously worked for ten years at UNDP as Regional Coordinator for Africa, Crisis Prevention and Recovery (CPR), and the UNDP Regional Service Center for Africa both in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and Johannesburg, South Africa.

Ndiaye Seck also worked for twenty years as a civil servant in Senegal. She has proven experience in project management, leadership, and direct involvement in electoral processes since 1983, at the national and regional levels in Africa. She is known for her involvement in the 2000 democratic transition in Senegal, and for her work as an advocate for the promotion of decentralization and local governance as well as women's rights. Ndiaye Seck is Knight of the National Order of the Lion, Officer of the National Order of Merit of Senegal and member of WIC Senegal.

Bineta Diop

African Union Commission Special Envoy on Women,
Peace and Security



Bineta Diop is the Founder and President of Femmes Africa Solidarité, an international NGO that seeks to foster, strengthen and promote women leadership in conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa. She played an instrumental role in achieving gender parity within the African Union Commission's leadership and in the adoption of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, as well as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. She has led peacebuilding programs, as well as many women, peace and security initiatives.

Diop was also co-chair of the World Economic Forum on Africa in 2014 as Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security. She was named one of the 100 most influential people in the world by Time Magazine in 2011, and she was co-chair of the World Economic Forum on Africa in 2014.

Clare Hutchinson

NATO Secretary General's Special Representative
for Women, Peace and Security



Clare Hutchinson took office as the NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security in January 2018. She is the high-level focal point on all aspects of NATO's contribution to the Women, Peace and Security agenda, with the aim to facilitate coordination and consistency in NATO's policies and activities and to take forward the implementation of the NATO/EAPC Policy and Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

Hutchinson worked as a Senior Gender Adviser for the United Nations for over a decade. She has been instrumental in setting the strategic development of Women, Peace and Security for the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping in New York, Kosovo and Lebanon. Hutchinson has long been a champion for women's issues, working with women's groups for many years and supporting projects for women's empowerment. She worked in the burgeoning ICT industry as a communications expert for internet start-ups and led projects that helped women and young people utilise technology.

Jennifer Smith

Premier of Bermuda (1998-2003)



Dame Jennifer Meredith Smith earned her place in Bermuda's history in 1998 as the first Progressive Labour Party (PLP) Premier, the first female Senator and the first female Deputy Speaker. In addition, in 1972, Smith became the youngest woman to run in a general election and in 1980, she became the youngest member of the Senate. She was elected to the House of Assembly of Bermuda representing St Georges in 1989, and deputy party leader in 1994, succeeding to the leadership two years later upon the death of L. Frederick Wade.

After serving as Premier from 1998 to 2003, Smith served two terms as Minister of Education beginning in 2003 and again in 2010. Between these terms, she served as Deputy Speaker of the House. Smith has also served as a member of the Board of Trustees and been involved in many organizations including the Bermuda National Gallery, Bermuda Dance Foundation, Boys and Girls Club of Bermuda, Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences, Bermuda Society of Arts, Bermuda Heritage Association, Bermuda TB Cancer and Health Association, Friends of the Bermuda College Library, Bermuda Business & Professional Women's Club, Bermuda Zoological Society, and Amnesty International.

Jewel Howard-Taylor

Vice-President of the Republic of Liberia,
President of the Senate



Vice President Chief Dr. Taylor served as Senior Senator of Bong County with a resounding mandate, which succeeded in representing the people's interests, hopes and aspirations, as evidenced by her election as Senator in 2005 and again in 2014. Vice President Chief Dr. Taylor is a prominent stateswoman dedicated to the promotion of affordable, quality education, a transparent justice system, accessible health system, women's economic and political participation, and accountable public service system.

Vice President Chief Dr. Taylor held a number of official posts in the Liberian government, including Deputy Governor of the National Bank of Liberia, President of the Agriculture Cooperative and Development Bank, and Mortgage Financing Underwriter of the First Union National Bank. In addition, she focused on educational, health and social projects. As a result of more than 18 years of experience in the private and public sectors, she has the privilege to be able to cut across political, social and ethnic lines. Vice President Chief Dr. Taylor remains a strong voice for change and progress in Liberia, and an icon for Liberian Women.

Mari Kiviniemi

Deputy Secretary General of OECD, Prime Minister of Finland (2010-2011)



Mari Kiviniemi took up her duties as OECD Deputy Secretary-General on 25th August 2014. Her role consists of sharing her extensive experience to help increase the impact and relevance of OECD work and to contribute to the public policy challenges of promoting inclusive growth, jobs, equality and trust. She is responsible for the strategic oversight of OECD's work on Efficient and Effective Governance; Territorial Development; Trade and Agriculture, Statistics; for advancing the Better Life Initiative; as well as Entrepreneurship, SMEs', Local development and Tourism.

Kiviniemi was Finland's Prime Minister from 2010 to 2011. Previously, she was Special Adviser on Economic Policy to the Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development, Minister for European Affairs and Minister of Public Administration and Local Government. Elected for the first time at the age of 26, she was a Member of Parliament from 1995 to 2014, chairing and participating in a vast number of committees. She also held a variety of leadership positions in her political party, the Finnish Center Party.

Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca

President of Malta



Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca is the ninth President of the Republic of Malta. Her nomination as President was, for the first time in the history of the Maltese National Parliament, approved unanimously by a parliamentary resolution of the House of Representatives taken on 1st April 2014, marking a development in the constitutional history of Malta. At the age of 55, Coleiro Preca is the youngest person to assume the office of President, and the second woman to occupy the office of Head of State after 32 years.

Coleiro Preca began her 40-year long career in politics at the young age of 16. Within the Labour Party, she served as a member of the National Executive, Assistant General Secretary and General Secretary, occupying the latter post between 1982 and 1991. She also served as a Member of Parliament for sixteen years, between 1998 and 2014. As a Member of Parliament in Opposition, she served as Shadow Minister for Social Policy, for Tourism, for the National Airline, and for the Health Sector. Coleiro Preca was a member of the Parliamentary Committee for Social Affairs, the Parliamentary Committee for the Family, and the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee.

Paula Cox

Premier of Bermuda (2010-2012)



The Hon. Paula Ann Cox, CBE JP, is a Bermudian politician and former Premier of Bermuda. Cox was first elected to the Bermuda Parliament in 1996. She has had varied experience in Government, having held a number of Cabinet portfolios. In November 1998, she was appointed as the first PLP Minister of Labour, Home Affairs and Public Safety. She has served as Minister of Education and Development, Attorney General and Minister of Education and Development and assumed the Ministry of Finance portfolio in January 2004. While the Minister of Labour, Home Affairs and Public Safety, Cox was judged as the most effective politician in the Best of Bermuda Gold Awards for 2001. This accolade was repeated in 2003 when she was the Minister of Education and Development and again in 2006 in her capacity as Minister of Finance.

While no longer an elected public servant, Cox passionately believes in public service and is a strong proponent and advocate of effective and good governance. Currently, she serves on a number of boards including the Bermuda Credit Union, the Global African Diaspora Consortium, and the International Black Women's Public Policy Institute (IBWPPI). She is employed as General Counsel for the Horseshoe Group.

Rosalía Arteaga Serrano

President (1997) and Vice President of Ecuador (1996-1998)



Rosalía Arteaga's political career began in 1992, when she was appointed Undersecretary of Culture. Two years later, she was Minister of Education, Culture and Sports. She became the first female Vice President of Ecuador in 1996. Following the constitutional crisis of 1997, she was in the Presidency of the Republic for six days, after the Congress decided to alternate the presidential succession.

Following her political career, Arteaga went on to serve a Secretary-General of Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, the only South American Member of the Encyclopedia Britannica Publishing Council, Executive President of the FIDAL Foundation, and member of the Board of Directors of the Library of Alexandria in Egypt. She is a Honoris Causa Professor at the University of Tarapoto, in Peru, and a Honoris Causa Doctor at the International University of California. She has published 14 books of essays, poetic prose, poetry, short stories, children's and youth literature. She gives lectures promoting the importance of education and environmental protection.

Xia Jie

Vice Chair-Woman and Member of the Secretariat
of the All-China Women's Federation



Xia Jie has been serving as the Vice-president and Member of the Secretariat of the All-China Women's Federation (ACWF) since February 2017. Prior to that, she served as a Member of the Standing Committee of the CPC Henan Provincial Committee in Central China and Director-General of its Organization Department for five years. Her service to the government dates back to 2000, holding positions such as Director-General of the United Front Work Department at the CPC Heilongjiang Provincial Committee, Deputy-Secretary of the Standing Committee of the CPC Shuangyashan Municipal Committee and Secretary of Shuangyashan Municipal Commission for Discipline Inspection, and Member of the Standing Committee of the CPC Shuangyashan Municipal Committee in the Heilongjiang Province and Director-General of the Publicity Department.

Jie, a member of the Hui ethnic minority and a native of the city of Yucheng in East China's Shandong Province, was born in November 1960. She graduated from the Department of Economic Management at Northeast Forestry University with a master's degree.

Zainab Bangura

United Nations Special Representative on
Sexual Violence in Conflict (2012-2017)



Zainab Bangura was appointed UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict in 2012 and served in the position for five years. Previous to her service at the UN, she served as the Minister of Health and Sanitation for the Government of Sierra Leone, bringing over 20 years of policy, diplomatic and practical experience in the field of governance, conflict resolution and reconciliation in Africa. She was previously the second female Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, including Chief Adviser and Spokesperson of the President on bilateral and international issues.

Bangura has been instrumental in developing national programmes on affordable health, advocating for the elimination of genital mutilation, managing the country's Peace Building Commission and contributing to the multilateral and bilateral relations with the international community. She is experienced in meeting with interlocutors in diverse situations, including rebel groups, and familiar in dealing with State and non-State actors relevant to issues of sexual violence while fighting corruption and impunity. Bangura has on-the-ground experience with peacekeeping operations from within the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), where she was responsible for the management of the largest civilian component of the Mission, including promoting capacity-building of government institutions and community reconciliation.

Patricia H. Deyton

Representative of CWWL Secretariat



Patricia H. Deyton is a Senior Advisor to the Council of Women World Leaders (CWWL), where she previously served as executive director. CWWL convenes women leaders in government around the world both at the level of President/Prime Minister and at the ministerial level.

In addition to her work with CWWL, Deyton serves as a Professor of Practice of Business at Simmons University and a Senior Associate of the Center for Gender in Organizations (CGO), the internationally recognized research center addressing gender, diversity and organizational effectiveness. She previously was the Associate Dean of the School of Management having leadership and oversight responsibilities for the graduate programs at the SOM, including the MBA, MBA in Health Care, and Masters in Management programs as well as the role of Program Director for the @Simmons MBA and HCMBA degrees.

Deyton has accumulated 30 years of experience at executive levels in the non-profit sector, including as CEO of the American Red Cross of Massachusetts Bay. She has provided consultancies and spoken widely in the areas of nonprofit management, gender dynamics and leaders, and has served on numerous boards of directors and public commissions.

FACILITATOR

Rangita de Silva de Alwis

Associate Dean of International Affairs
at the University of Pennsylvania Law School



Rangita de Silva de Alwis is a globally recognized international women's rights expert. She serves as the Associate Dean of International Affairs at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, where she teaches international women's rights. In 2017, she started the Global Women's Leadership Project under the auspices of UN Women's Executive Director, Secretary General Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, to map the laws that regulate the status of women in the family. She serves as Special Advisor to the President of Wellesley College and as Senior Adviser to the Executive Director of UN Women on global women's rights and women's leadership. She also serves on the UN Women High Level Working Group on Women's Access to Justice. In 2017, she was appointed a Global Advisor to the UN Sustainable Development Goal Fund.

Dr. Rangita de Silva de Alwis is a women's human rights scholar and practitioner with over 25 years of experience working globally in over 25 countries with a vast network of academic institutions, government, and non-government entities on women's human rights law and policy making and institutional reform.

SESSION TOPICS & GUIDING QUESTIONS

" From Northern Ireland to Liberia to Nepal and many places in between, we have seen that when women participate in peace processes, they focus discussion on issues like human rights, justice, national reconciliation, and economic renewal that are critical to making peace, but often are overlooked in formal negotiations. They build coalitions across ethnic and sectarian lines, and they speak up for other marginalized groups. They act as mediators and help to foster compromise. And when women organize in large numbers, they galvanize opinion and help change the course of history. "

Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State, United States of America, 2009-2013

Women advancing a peace and security agenda contribute to reshaping traditional approaches, from root causes of conflict to methods of preventing violent extremism. To achieve genuine progress in the security of nations, it is vital to emphasise a more holistic understanding of peace. It is crucial to look at conflict not only through the eyes of militarization and securitization, but through the eyes of access to education, health care, employment and resources.

- Where, in our countries or around the world, have we observed successful tactics in decreasing incidences of conflict or violence? (Some areas of focus might include decreasing gender-based violence, increasing access to education and healthcare, and expanding women's rights and freedoms.)
- In order to strengthen global cooperation and a peaceful co-existence among nations, we must first establish a baseline of trust and respect. How

do we forge and fortify these relationships in times of peace so that we can rely on them in times of conflict?

In discussing peace, it is necessary to also consider power. Power has traditionally been defined as domination and control, often measured by military might. Moreover, power may be obtained or utilized in a way that is unjust or illegitimate, often leading to oppression of those with less power. On the other hand, women often consider power as a resource that can be (re) distributed to empower communities; women are more likely to share power once they obtain it.

- If, in the past, power has been manipulated in a way that has caused conflict, how can women instead leverage power for peace?
- How do we utilize power to reduce military expenditures and the availability of armaments?
- How do we utilize power to promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution?



CONFERENCE NARRATIVE

The meeting was marked by the 18th anniversary of the UN resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, which reaffirmed the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, and peace-building. The resolution also stresses the importance of women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. The year furthermore commemorates the 100 years since the end of the World War I and the 70 years anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The women political leaders came together to discuss the conditions for peaceful societies and exchange ideas on successful strategies to reduce conflict and violent extremism. The focus was on increased social, health and economic rights and their crucial role in battling the rise of religious fundamentalism, extreme nationalist ideologies, and the radical right. Among the main conclusions of the discussion was the importance of investing in women and youth, as well as in education. The women leaders emphasized the need to uphold and defend universal values in the face of increased instability, and the possibilities of combating international threats at the local level, through values based education and by ensuring women's full participation.



WOMEN AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

In the opening comments, it was noted that women experience the consequences of war long after peace declarations and are too often deprived of recognition and justice for crimes committed against them in war. It was also noted that the international community was slow in recognising rape as a weapon of war and genocidal instrument, and that women have for too long been excluded from peace processes despite the fact that their inclusion increases the likelihood of a lasting peace. The women leaders referred to peace as not only the absence of violence but also the freedom from fear of violence and access to justice.

Women's political empowerment is a key issue in bringing about a more peaceful world. In Africa, peace agreements would not have been possible without women's participation and effective contributions. Women are picking up the pieces of conflict, as they and the younger generation will be the ones to shape the Africa its people want and deserve. Leaders must link peace, security and development and recognize that women are agents of change, that their voices are essential to the process. In order to do that, leaders must go to the front and bear witness to the impact of conflicts on women. Women's stories are not being told, neither in conflicts in Africa nor the Middle East, where, in addition to the overall conflict, a war against women and on women's bodies has been conducted by ISIL and Boko Haram.

THE VOICES OF WOMEN

Women leaders must use their voices and positions to amplify the stories of women in conflict zones and bring their embodied voices to the places of power. In security affairs, the traditional security lens has to a large extent been focused at the expenditure on armaments, thus overlooking the situation

on the ground. The focus has gradually been shifting towards early warning indicators and monitoring of human rights and equality between women and men. Special focus should be placed on marginalized groups and others vulnerable to conflict.

The voices of the most vulnerable women must be heard and their explanations on how military action affects them. Women, who have been conspicuously absent from decision making bodies, have now started to gain access - yet they remain underrepresented in political affairs within ministries for foreign and economic affairs around the world. Those at the top have to use their power to create a change and pass on the torch. Today the voices of women are being pushed back and women leaders need to speak out more and continue to use a feminist language. A system shaped by men is unjust and without equality between women and men peace can never be achieved.

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

Women's increased participation in peace processes bears witness of a more inclusive approach to peace and security in the past two decades. This shift was reaffirmed 15 years after the adoption of 1325 (UNSCR 2242) and further broadened by resolution 2250 on youth, peace and security that same year.

Decisions made by today's leaders have direct impact on tomorrow's generations. The consequences of climate change will be felt by the next generations and while financial resources are directed towards armament and fighting, the youth waits for jobs. The voices of young people need to be heard and taken into account in decision making and there is a great need for an intergenerational dialogue. Empowered enough the youth will be able to be the change needed for the achievement of sustainable peace.

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE

Education is fundamental for bringing about sustainable peace and an essential way to promote inclusive societies. Equal access to education is vital and curricula provide a great tool for fostering a culture of peace. For example, equality between women and men and democracy are among the cornerstones of the Icelandic curriculum, a remarkable change considering

that three generations ago women did not enjoy equal access to education. This suggests that change can happen quickly if it is supported.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution calls for even bolder investments in education, where the training of teachers is of greater importance than investments in technology, which often gets more attention. The interconnected global environment of today furthermore demands a freedom of access to education across borders and greater cooperation among states.

IN FACE OF CURRENT CHALLENGES

When faced with current challenges, such as climate, development issues, and disrupted global order with multilateralism under threat, defending universal values and building partnerships becomes ever more pressing. This calls for a fight for human rights and a revival of the Helsinki movement which brought together states from both sides of the Iron Curtain. The backlash against globalization and multilateralism has to be fought with dissemination of information on the achievements of multilateralism and by protecting and advancing international organizations. Without multilateral organizations as much progress as has been achieved towards universal human rights, including women's and minority rights, would have been inconceivable. Women leaders have to be critical and point out what is still to be done. However, they also need to focus on the good practices in all policy areas and make people see the benefit of global cooperation. After all, peace will never be achieved within national borders; it demands cross-border, transnational collaboration.

This meeting only marked the first step in this important dialogue and cooperation of high-level female leaders. As once stated by Former President of Chile Michelle Bachelet, "When one woman enters politics, the woman changes, when a lot of women enter politics, politics change." In this spirit, WPL will be holding this summit on a yearly basis during the Women Leaders Global Forum in Iceland.

DECLARATION

WOMEN LEADERS: POWER, TOGETHER

The Höfði House symbolizes change, transformation and most importantly peace. The building is the site of the historic summit between American President Ronald Reagan and Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev in 1986 which eventually led to the end of the Cold War.

Today we live in a time of great opportunities, and a time of great challenges. We are facing threats to multilateralism and a rules-based global order. Conflict and violent extremism have impacted many regions of the world. The technology revolution has helped to expand the rapid growth of violent extremist ideologies. Growing nationalism and xenophobia, conflict, and threats to security call for women leaders to come together, to align their actions and pursue inclusive approaches: Power, Together.

We call upon all leaders to act for peace and security through the following measures:

- We call on global leaders to strengthen their relationships with each other, building mutual trust and respect through adherence to international law and respect for human rights. In times of conflict, we must rely on these relationships to seek non-violent, mutually-beneficial solutions between nations.
- We call on national leaders to address many of the drivers of violent extremism by aligning national development policies with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.
- We call on our global colleagues to re-dedicate our commitment to promote women's participation, leadership and empowerment across society, including the governmental security sector and civil society institutions. Women's empowerment is a critical force for sustainable peace. In line with Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2242 (2015), we must ensure that the protection and empowerment of women is a central consideration

of strategies devised to counter terrorism and violent extremism. Protecting women's human rights at all times, advancing substantive equality between women and men before, during and after conflict and ensuring that women's diverse experiences are fully integrated into all peacemaking initiatives.

- We call on the private sector, including communications and technology companies, to support the prevention of violent extremism initiatives and generate creative ideas to help the international community effectively address the spread of hate speech, intolerance, fake news, and violent extremism through the Internet.



WHAT'S NEXT

The conversation is just beginning. Women Political Leaders will continue to highlight the work of women in peace and security processes, as they play a deeply important and unique role in creating lasting societal peace. We will continue our annual presence at the Munich Security Conference in Germany and host sessions on the topic of peace and security at events such as the annual WPL Summits. And, we will continue to host the Women Leaders: Power, Together roundtable on an annual basis at the Women Leaders Global Forum in Reykjavik each November.

For more information please write to: mail@wpleaders.org





HÖFÐI HOUSE REPORT