



PeaceWomen Across the Globe
FRIEDENSFRAUEN WELTWEIT
نساء من أجل السلام عبر العالم
Femmes de Paix Autour du Monde
Женщины мира за мир на земле
MUJERES DE PAZ EN EL MUNDO
Mulheres pela Paz ao redor do Mundo
DONNE DI PACE NEL MONDO

ピースウーマン—国境を越え平和をつくる女たち
全球和平妇女



Newsletter 2/2017

FOCUS MIRIAM CORONEL FERRER IN SWITZERLAND

More women – more peace In conversation with the Philippine peace expert

Every year, PeaceWomen Across the Globe invites a renowned peace expert to Switzerland for lectures and for an exchange of views. At the end of October, Professor Miriam Coronel Ferrer from the Philippines reported on her experience as the chief negotiator of the peace agreement with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

Miriam Coronel Ferrer took part in various events in Geneva and Bern organised by PeaceWomen Across the Globe, together with partner organisations. For example, there was a master class for practitioners on gender and peacebuilding, discussions with students, and a meeting with high-level UN representatives, international organisations and embassies, dealing with the prevention of violent extremism. To mark her visit, PWAG hosted the 30th – and this year's final – Women's PeaceTable in Bern, focusing on women's participation in peace processes. Professor Coronel Ferrer spoke about her experience as a chief negotiator and discussed how Switzerland can promote women's participation in these peace processes with representatives of Parliament, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and academics.

Peace Agreement in the Philippines

In 2014, the Philippine government and the *Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)* signed an historic peace agreement. The 17 years of negotiations ended a 40-year conflict. The peace agreement

became famous for its diverse gender-related provisions, as well as the consistent involvement of women in clarifying future social and economic issues. The implementation of the peace agreement has been in progress since 2014; unfortunately, it has stalled now for political reasons.

Women and peace negotiations

"When you negotiate a [peace] agreement, you make many compromises. So you cannot really work out a perfect deal, but you will make an imperfect deal if the woman's perspective is not included." Miriam Coronel Ferrer

Her nomination as chief negotiator meant that Miriam Coronel Ferrer encountered fierce resistance at the time. The MILF had a hard time accepting a woman as a negotiating partner: "We cannot negotiate with a woman!" was the tenor of the rebel group, although women were already present in the economic sector, albeit not in political life. The beginnings of the negotiations were difficult; initially there was no eye contact and no shaking of hands. Heavy pressure was exerted on

Top: A young woman discussing the role of women in the implementation of the peace agreement in Colombia at this year's Women's PeaceTable.



FOCUS MIRIAM CORONEL FERRER IN SWITZERLAND

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the MILF to include a lawyer in their negotiating group. In the Moro culture, a woman is not allowed to travel alone, but has to be in the company of a male relative. The question was no longer, “how do we get more women to the negotiating table”, but rather who will meet the extra cost of their escort.

Women change the dynamics of negotiations, and an awareness of gender issues grows within otherwise male-dominated groups. Miriam Coronel Ferrer reports, for example, that the MILF used only the masculine (he, him, Muslim brethren) with the feminine form never being used. In the course of the negotiations, there was more and more talk of HE or SHE, as well as of Muslim brothers AND sisters. The use of gender-just language, once introduced, was irreversible. Women of all ages were mobilised through the peace process. “And once mobilised, the women can no longer be held back” says Miriam Coronel Ferrer. “It’s very scary for men to allow this change in the beginning. But once accepted, people are very grateful for it”.

More women in peace negotiations

Miriam Coronel Ferrer says women must be supported and their awareness raised by participating in workshops while taking an active role in peace negotiations. After the workshops, the women gained much more self-confidence and developed more ideas about how to bring their influence to bear. Networks to support these pioneering women are very important.

What can Switzerland and PeaceWomen Across the Globe do?

From the beginning PWAG’s projects and network have focused on promoting changes in the political agenda. UN Resolution 1325 provides us with an official instrument for structural change: democratisation, the active participation of women in peace negotiations and the prevention of violence. Switzerland is now preparing its fourth National Action Plan to implement the resolution – there is momentum for influence. We are further developing the network, organising peace tables and workshops, carrying out political work and creating a pool of PeaceWomen to get women better known and recognised as speakers and mediators. Women have their own concerns about “peace”; they are much more anchored in everyday life and think more broadly about it. More women – more peace, Miriam Coronel Ferrer concludes.

We cannot give up! Miriam Coronel Ferrer

Top left: Miriam Coronel Ferrer

Top right: During the Women’s PeaceTable in Colombia a ceremony to commemorate the victims of enforced disappearances was held.

FOCUS 30 WOMEN'S PEACETABLES WORLDWIDE

Since 2000, the UN has recognised the impact of armed conflict on women and girls and has demanded that women be involved in peace negotiations and reconstruction. Since then, little has been done – the 30 Women's PeaceTables around the world want to change that.

Peace is best achieved and more sustainable if all sections of the population are represented in the peace process. And yet, on average, only nine percent of those involved in peace negotiations are women. PWAG wants to effect change so that women become visible and actively participate in peace processes. For the past three years we have been organising Women's PeaceTables, together with women's organisations. After an initial 10 tables in our first year, there was a total of 30 peace tables in 2017.

An impressive number!

30 Women's PeaceTables worldwide

Women's PeaceTables are local events that take place in conflict and post-conflict regions. They are platforms where women can address their concerns when they do not receive the space to voice them through official channels. The peace tables offer an exchange of experiences and knowledge for peacebuilding, and PWAG is able to create the framework in which strategies can be developed and concrete recommendations made.

The geographic range of the countries participating is as diverse as the topics that were discussed. Countries include Afghanistan, Congo, Honduras, Colombia, Pakistan, Palestine, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Switzerland. The topics address dealing with conflict, violence against women, violent extremism, discrimination of indigenous minorities, peacebuilding and economic empowerment. The peace tables bring women from hostile parties to the table, critically examine the work of the commissions responsible for dealing with the conflict, and carry out reconciliation work between former rebels and women of the community.

The Women's PeaceTables' demands

The countries involved and topics addressed at the peace tables are as diverse as the recommendations they arrived at. These recommendations are aimed at governments, political parties, armed groups, civil society and grassroots organisations. But all recommendations have one thing in common: they focus on women and on their concerns being heard during peace processes. The women demand political participation and a role in the implementation of existing mechanisms. They want economic and social justice and define peace as something rather broader than the absence of war.

In dealing with conflict, women want safe spaces in which they can testify about their experiences of violence and they want to know the truth about their missing sons, daughters and husbands.

The Women's PeaceTable in Honduras has written a declaration that we are publishing below on behalf of everyone. From Pakistan came the positive news that the young journalist Zenat Shazadi has been released after two years of imprisonment – this was due to pressure generated by the peace table.

One of the recommendations from Burundi was that PWAG should continue to initiate and promote Women's PeaceTables. We are very happy to take this up. We will consolidate the peace tables, develop them further and strengthen the thematic and regional exchange in cooperation with the women from our network. We would like to thank all those who support this important project for peace worldwide and those who organise it with us.

Declaration of Tegucigalpa (excerpt)

"No Women – No Peace" (Sin Mujeres no hay Paz)

The PeaceWomen gathered in the city of Tegucigalpa on 13 October 2017:

- **We declare our commitment to a peace based on social justice, human rights and equal distribution of common goods.**
- **The peace we desire and demand allows us to live in harmony and fellowship, in our homeland, on our land, with our rivers and forests.**
- **We want to live in a country free of war, free of death squads, in a country without torture and imprisonment.**
- **Our wish is for the torture centres to become memorials dedicated to "Nunca Mas", "Never Again"; we want educational institutions, centres of learning, of knowledge, of science, which will strengthen social, collective thinking.**
- **We want to get involved in policy making when it comes to equal opportunities. And we want to exert influence when it comes to preserving and promoting peace and security, as stated in Resolution 1325.**
- **UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on "Women, Peace and Security" identifies the destructive consequences of war and condemns the sexual violence that afflicts women and girls.**
- **We strongly condemn the violence inflicted upon women in Honduras – a deadly violence that exposes us to a patriarchal militarist society.**
- **We demand a policy that prevents violence by the state through action plans, binding laws and adequate finances.**
- **We demand the immediate development of a Victims' Protection Act, which also guarantees the prevention of violence; we demand laws that guarantee criminal proceedings and sanctions against human rights crimes.**
- **With this declaration, we call on all women in Honduras – indigenous women, women farmers, human rights defenders, leaders, workers and trade unionists – to contribute to peace.**
- **Nobody can speak of peace if the majority is excluded. And in Honduras, we women are in the majority.**



Left: Women discussing the problem of violent extremism at the Women's PeaceTable in Bangladesh.



News

Meeting of the International Board

The annual meeting of the PWAG Board took place in mid-September 2017. This year's agenda included discussion and approval of the 2018–2021 Strategic Plan. In which direction should the network evolve? Which peace promotion projects does PWAG want to realize? And which organisational form and what financing do we need to implement this ambitious plan?

PeaceWomen Across the Globe Exhibition in St. Petersburg

On the occasion of the 137th Annual Meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in St. Petersburg in October 2017, PWAG presented its exhibition "No Women – No Peace". Some 2000 delegates from the 150 IPU member countries participated in this meeting. The exhibition was opened by the President of the Swiss delegation, National Councilor Margret Kiener Nellen, and, in addition to many delegates, Swiss Consul General Roger Kull visited the exhibition too. The exhibition has been shown over 1000 times worldwide.

Recognition of peace work

Gégé Katana Bukuru from DR Congo was one of the 1000 PeaceWomen nominated for the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize. She is the director of *Solidarité des femmes activistes pour la défense des droits humains* and organises campaigns to support women affected by violence, and creates peace centers. Gégé Katana Bukuru was awarded two important prizes in 2017: the Peace Prize of the European Soroptimists International and the Swedish Government's *Per Anger Prize*.

Congratulations from PWAG!

Top: Meeting of PeaceWomen Across the Globe's International Board in Bern.



Up Close

The International Board of PeaceWomen Across the Globe*

"In a globalised world, global feminist ideas and actions are needed. PeaceWomen Across the Globe is a global platform committed to justice, equality and human rights."

Kamla Bhasin, Co-President PWAG

Kamla Bhasin has been committed to gender equality and human rights for more than 40 years. She is an economist and sociologist from India and has been part of PeaceWomen Across the Globe since the beginning. She was the South Asia Coordinator of the initiative to nominate 1000 women for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005, and has been co-president ever since.

The visibility of women's peace work has been at the heart of Kamla Bhasin's work for PWAG from the outset: "The coming together of small lamps of peace work spread around the world has made us realize how big we can be if we join hands." Her work for PWAG is only a small part of Kamla Bhasin life's work. She lives in Delhi, India and has been committed to sustainable and gender-just development since the 1970s. After 27 years of working for the UN, she is now actively involved in *Sangat*, a South Asian network of women activists. She further serves as regional coordinator for the global movement to end rape and sexual violence against women, *One Billion Rising*. She also leads workshops and provides training for NGOs, UN agencies and government officials, as well as members from the Indian Parliament.

*We will present the members of the International Board here, one at a time, in the future.



Solidarity

**Peace needs us.
We need you.
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Many thanks!

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