



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

SUMMARY REPORT (draft)

PEACEWOMEN ACROSS THE GLOBE, AT WSF NAIROBI, 2007

From mid to late January 2007, 32 of the 1000 PeaceWomen Across the Globe met in Nairobi to participate in a self-organised 'Women for Peace' programme at the World Social Forum (WSF).

This was the first international meeting of the 1000 PeaceWomen for the Nobel Peace Prize 2005 nomination, and the first time that PeaceWomen Across the Globe had formally engaged with the WSF. The decision to organise our first international meeting of peacewomen around the WSF was made while conscious of concerns about the organisational and logistical challenges at the WSF. In the end, we decided at the Coordinators Meeting in July 2006 to go ahead with plans and to actively participate at the WSF, but to treat it as a 'test', against which we would decide about future engagement with the WSF.

This is a (draft) summary report of the experience and outcomes of the first international PeaceWomen Across the Globe meeting and participation at the WSF in Nairobi 2007.

The Objectives

1. (Immediate) to mobilise a large number of PeaceWomen including representative 'envoys' from different regions, to strengthen international solidarity, extend and deepen networks across religious, linguistic and ethnic divides, provide opportunities for training and information to expand their capacities and skills.
2. (Longer term) To establish the basis for a strong and growing presence at the WSF of a broad platform of women peacebuilders and peace organisations in order to influence the direction of the WSF in regards to the role of women and the discourse on peace and conflict.

The Results

1. Regarding mobilisation, solidarity, extension of networks and expansion of capacities:
 - i. About 70 women directly and actively participated in our Women for Peace programme. About half this number were from PeaceWomen Across the Globe,

13 were from our local partner Coalition for Peace in Africa (COPA) and the rest were from other organisations that collaborated with us (the list of participants is in Annex 1). Given the short time frame for organising and fund-raising, and the limited staff capacities, we were satisfied with this number, and recognise that we could not have coped with a larger number with our current capacity.

- ii. The delegation included at least 26 from Africa, 20 from Asia, 8 from the global North, one envoy from Latin America (Mexico), one envoy from Eastern Europe (Moldova), two envoys from Central Asia (Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan) and one for Chechnya and Russian Federation. We provided internal interpreting support in Arabic and French, and also gained from the support of a German Russian speaker as part of our delegation. There was wide diversity within the group.
- iii. We were able to organise shared accommodation at one guesthouse for most of the participants. This was very important for networking and establishing relationships and planning amongst the women. For those who stayed at the PCEA guesthouse (despite some dissatisfaction with the quality of accommodation), there were far greater opportunities to organise, plan and build a sense of community among the women. For those who did not stay with us at the PCEA guesthouse, it was difficult to connect with the rest of the women at the WSF, and there was frustration in this regard.
- iv. The travelling exhibition, 1000 PeaceWomen Across the Globe, served as a meeting place at the WSF site for women peacebuilders, especially the 1000 PeaceWomen. We were only able to secure a space one day before opening, and only 20% the size originally ordered. This was a great disappointment and seriously hampered our plans to use the exhibition as a meeting place for discussion and mobilising. This particularly affected the peacewomen who were not staying at PCEA, who were relying on opportunities at the WSF to connect with the group. Nevertheless, the volunteer exhibition team of Eva Gillis and Lasse Andersson received a great deal of positive feedback and support. It is clear to the organisers that if the exhibition had not been there we would have faced greater obstacles, and that it drew a lot of interest from passers-by and also served an important purpose as a meeting point for women peacebuilders.
- v. Mobilisation was partly successful. This was due to a lack of staff but also due to lack of organisation and logistical obstacles at the WSF itself. Very high phone costs, difficult internet access, and very high demands on the time of coordinators to address relatively minor but recurring problems such as transportation, funds and accommodation, which should not have arisen, each contributed to reducing mobilisation during the days of the WSF. In short, we were overwhelmed by the logistical challenges we faced in Nairobi around the WSF. We managed to cope only adequately due to a strong team effort amongst not only PWAG and COPA, but also with the solidarity and support of several of the peacewomen themselves, who helped to create spaces for workshops that had not been set up by the WSF organisers, to help women with disabilities, to

organise meetings and reporting, and to resolve problems encountered by others in the delegation.

- vi. The fruits of the mobilisation lie firstly in the proposals that were made at the '*Women Speak Out: Peace in 2007!*' workshop on the evening of the 23rd, and in the plans that were drawn up on Day 4 (24th January) when a decision was made, at the request of several of the peacewomen to stay at the Guesthouse during the morning of the 24th in order to have a planning meeting. These important plans and decisions are provided in Annex 2. The main proposals and ideas that evolved from the 21st to the 23rd, were submitted to the WSF on the 24th via the Human Rights and Human Dignity Caucus (HDHRC).
 - vii. All the feedback so far from delegates indicates that they each valued meeting, and learned and gained from each other in ways that contribute to their capacities as peacebuilders. The feedback on learning from the WSF sessions was more mixed, but many felt that the opportunities of the WSF in terms of networking and exposure to new and different issues was very worthwhile. Other delegates said they learned much more from engaging with each other than from participating in the WSF.
 - viii. Feedback on the content and organisation of the activities that we directly organised at the WSF was very positive. The workshops included a mobilising opening session "What do Women PeaceBuilders Want from the WSF? Another World is Possible if there is Peace"; a workshop on UNSCR 1325 in conflict and post-conflict zone countries (complemented by a following workshop on 1325 in non conflict zone countries by WILPF USA), a workshop on the Experiences of Malian Women Peace Builders in the Tuareg Conflict" and a collaborative planning session on the evening of the 23rd "Women Speak Out: Peace in 2007!" All workshops were well attended and got media coverage, drew other women peacebuilders, and also led to concrete proposals and demands of the WSF Organising Committee regarding gender parity, and triggered solidarity actions for Sri Lanka as well as planning for regional gatherings. (See Annex 3-6 for reports of the workshops)
2. Regarding the longer term goal of establishing a strong and growing platform of women peacebuilders to influence the direction of the WSF:
 - i. We succeeded in the first step of establishing an open and collaborative platform of organisations around women in peacebuilding. Organisations that we collaborated with included IWTC, WILPF, the HDHRC Gender Equity Coalition, COPA, TW-MAE-W, CORDAID, , World March of Women and UNIFEM. The collaboration worked remarkably well in spite of the logistical problems we faced and this was largely due to the spirit of good will and cooperation. The proposals that arose through the Women's Speak Out event on the 23rd underline the collaborative working relations that grew out of the WSF. There were

disappointments that other collaborations did not eventuate although they had been initiated prior to the WSF. These include the World Forum for Alternatives, the Nobel Women's Initiative, IFOR/WPP, VAM, and other local community based women's organisations.

- ii. We did make initial contact with the WSF Organising Committee, through Wahu Kaara, one of the 1000 peacewomen and the Mobilisation Coordinator for the WSF Organising Committee, with whom we had a meeting in the days prior to the WSF. However once the WSF commenced, we were unable to connect further with each other to discuss future planning. It is unclear if we are in any stronger a position to influence the direction of future WSFs, though we do now have more links.
- iii. Through joining the Gender Equity Coalition of the HDHRC, we raised our voices and profile significantly within the WSF. The HDHRC was praised and recognised as the most well-organised thematic area and caucus at the WSF, and they were able to support our own programme of activities in several important ways including promotion of activities, programmed times and dates. The HDHRC produced concrete proposals, to which we contributed. Their reporting system was practical, organised and supportive, and an electronic discussion group is ongoing, which is helping to secure the platform of gender activists. Women peacebuilders were strongly vocal within the Gender Equity Coalition.
- iv. It appears quite difficult to access and therefore influence the WSF Organising Committee, not least because they are extremely busy during and in the surrounding days of the WSF when physical meetings are most possible. However, joining the HDHRC provides some opportunities since some HDHRC members are active members of the WSF International Committee. One of our proposals and demands was for the Organising Committee to have gender parity, something basic and easy to achieve. It should be noted that our plan to try to influence the direction of the WSF was driven by dissatisfaction at the weakness of discussions on peacebuilding and non-violent responses to conflict, and of the virtual invisibility of women's rights issues in earlier WSFs. In Nairobi however, both these issues were better addressed than at previous WSFs. There was substantial work and demonstrations on peace, and women were far more visible in addressing women's human rights. More work is needed – as always, but it was gratifying to see that these problems were being addressed.

Proposals put forward (still waiting for complete notes to complete this)

- Older women leaders in the peace movement should make personal commitments to mentoring another younger women for a year, to help her build her capacity for feminist leadership. As Seline Korir put it; "I need to know that if something happens to me, someone else in my network is prepared to step into my place". Each woman should bring another woman with her into leadership.

- Organise national gatherings of peacewomen, then regional gatherings of peacewomen. International gatherings are also valuable and important, but solidarity and collaboration will be strongest if developed at the national and regional levels.
- Look for opportunities and means to link individual women peacebuilders transnationally for solidarity and learning.
- Make links between the women's movement and women in power.
- Bridge the gap between women at regional levels with those at national levels, and address discrimination against rural women regarding their abilities.
- Acknowledge the lack of 'innocence' and the divisions that exist within the women's movement so that they can be better mediators and the movement can better draw more and younger women.
- Look for opportunities to integrate peace training into education systems, as a basis for preparing citizens to participate in democracy.
- Join the IWTC's "Women Reclaim the Media for Peace" week, beginning the last week of October 2007 and continuing annually. Organisations can support by organising press conferences, press releases, interviews and articles. More information will come from the IWTC.
- Coordinate at the national level with different peace groups and the women's movement to work with governments to prepare national action plans for 1325 and get them adopted.

Additional Comments:

Finances

In total, the WSF project cost PWAG over Euro 63,000. COPA and individual peacewomen as well as HDHRC covered further costs, so that the total project costs were higher than this amount. Joining the HDHRC saved us approximately 2000 Euro. There were many small unexpected expenses that arose, in particular around peacewomen arriving with insufficient funds to support themselves and additional costs for transportation and phone calls.

International meetings are very expensive, and the results are always difficult to quantify and even justify. It must be noted however that all the women stated that it was both very important and very valuable to meet together and that they consider it very important to organise more such meetings regionally for more women to be able to participate.

The big question remaining is whether the WSF itself provides added value around which to organise gatherings. It certainly requires more work than a stand-alone meeting or other event. To answer this question we must wait for further feedback from the delegates and discuss together.