

Message

Public Forum

“Women and Peace: Where Are We Now? Maximizing the Impact of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, 10 Years On”

September 8, 2010

The United Nations University, Tokyo

Distinguished panelists, moderator, ladies and gentlemen, friends.

I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have worked together with my colleagues of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI) to make today’s public forum possible: the United Nations University, Global Action to Prevent War and the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security. I earnestly hope this forum will provide an opportunity to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, to reconfirm its significance and to promote its full implementation. I would also like to salute all those who have been exerting themselves tirelessly to this end.

Peace is not simply the absence of war. In the effort to create lasting peace, perhaps nothing is more important than the work of promoting in every corner of society the values, attitudes and modes of behavior that manifest a “culture of peace”—a culture rooted in the firm determination to resolve conflicts through dialogue rather than force, a way of life in which all people strive to appreciate difference and diversity as they work together toward common goals. From our own grassroots peace activities over the past decade, we of the SGI consider that UNSCR 1325, which declares peace and gender equality to be indivisible objectives and which stresses the critical importance of equal participation and full involvement of women in all efforts to maintain and promote peace, shares a deep commonality with the goals of a culture of peace.

Women have too long been seen only as the powerless victims of war and conflict, discrimination and violence. UNSCR 1325 was groundbreaking as a clear declaration that women can and must fulfill a positive role as protagonists in the work of building peace. I believe that the underlying message of the Resolution is that this role and these contributions should not be limited to times of conflict; the viewpoints and voices of women, which to date have not been given adequate attention, must be heeded and reflected in decision-making processes throughout society.

Regrettably, the ideals of UNSCR 1325 are still far from being fully realized. In this context, I wish to voice my strong hope that, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the Resolution, all Member States of the United Nations will work to ensure that the Security Council determines and adopts with all haste the kind of comprehensive indicators and mechanisms that will move the implementation process forward.

Importantly, this past July, in response to the voices of women throughout the world, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution calling for the consolidation of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and three other UN bodies involved with the empowerment and participation of women. The new agency, UN Women, will be launched in January 2011, and I believe that monitoring the implementation of UNSCR 1325 should be one of its priority activities.

Former Under-Secretary-General Anwarul K. Chowdhury, whose statement as President of the Security Council provided a driving impetus for the adoption of UNSCR 1325, has stated: “[T]he role of women is absolutely essential to the culture of peace. Their involvement strengthens the roots of the culture of peace. Promoting anything that will be good for the future of society advances the culture of peace. It is what Resolution 1325, in the broader interpretation of its focus, would ensure.”

Today is also the launch of the new book *Promoting Women’s Participation in Conflict and Post-Conflict Societies—How Women Worldwide are Making and Building Peace*, published jointly by Global Action for the Prevention of War, the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security. This book presents many inspiring examples of women’s endeavors to prevent and resolve conflicts, and to build a culture of peace in their local communities. It offers important perspectives to be considered and reflected in efforts by international society to implement UNSCR 1325.

Finally, while UNSCR 1325 and the larger project of realizing a culture of peace require consistent efforts by the United Nations and the engagement of all Member States, nothing is more important than the contributions each of us can make as members of civil society.

The conviction of the SGI is that a change in the heart of a single human being can transform an entire community or even the world. Based on this belief, and conscious of what we understand to be the underlying spirit of UNSCR 1325, we have engaged in community-based efforts to educate and raise public awareness for a culture of peace, often led by women. As a civil society organization, we are determined to fulfill our mission and responsibilities, working alongside our friends and colleagues here; we are committed to working toward the creation of a culture of peace in which women’s full potential and contributions are realized.

I close by conveying my warmest wishes to all the participants, for your continued health and well-being, and the success of all your important endeavors.

September 8, 2010

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