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VIRTUAL INTERNATIONAL PARALLEL
EVENT ORGANIZED BY IAW AND AFEM
IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GENERATION
EQUALITY FORUM, 29 JUNE 2021

IAW POLICY MAKING AND ADVOCACY PRESENTATIONS BY IAW MEMBERS

The Generation Equality Forum in Paris took place from 30 June – 2 July engaging nearly 50,000 people with the announcement of bold gender equality commitments including \$40 billion of committed investments and the launch of a global 5-year action journey to accelerate gender equality by 2026.

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Manju Kak

Dr Manju Kak's work as an author and academician has been in the field of art, history and the sociology of culture in which she holds a Ph.D. She has authored six books which include a book on Nicholas Roerich, the Russian artist and proponent of the first Peace Pact. She is the recipient of national and international fellowships such as the Charles Wallace, Hawthornden Award, Breadloaf, and Senior Fellowship of the Ministry of Culture. She has had government consultancies, been a teacher, a visiting professor at important centres of learning and organized important and meaningful conferences. She has presented papers and participated in many conferences in India and overseas. As a development journalist and as a panelist on national television channels she has advocated justice, women's rights and peace. She has served as National Treasurer of India's largest NGO, the All India Women's Conference (AIWC), where for 22 years she has helped promote women's rights from grass root funded projects to international high tables. As a Peace Activist and Member in Charge of Peace, Communal Harmony of AIWC she has conducted advocacy workshops, seminars at regional and national level. She is a Trustee in the government funded Lal Bahadur Shastri Memorial Trust, Advisory Board Lila Foundation, and Vice President of IAW.



Rosy Weiss

Rosy Weiss is French interpreter by education and a retired official in Austria's Ministry for Social Security, Generations and Consumer Protection and the Ministry of the Environment, Youth and Family, where she was responsible for international negotiations. Ms Weiss served as IAW President from 2004 to 2010 and as chairperson of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Status of Women from 2006 to 2009. She was involved in the drafting of reports of Austrian NGOs to CEDAW and to the Universal Periodic Review. During Austria's EU Presidencies she served as liaison between governments and NGOs during the negotiations at the Commission on the Status of Women in 2006 and as chair of the Regional Preparatory Conference (The Hague Forum) for the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD+5).



The International Alliance of Women (IAW) and The Association of Women of Southern Europe (AFEM) hosted a virtual international event parallel to the Generation Equality Forum (GEF) held in Paris in June/July 2021. The themes were:

EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN, THE PRIORITY FOR GLOBAL RECONSTRUCTION TOWARDS PEACE, DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE POST PANDEMIC WORLD and
THE NEED FOR A REDEFINITION OF THE ECONOMY BRINGING IN NEW CONCEPTS LIKE CARE ECONOMY WITH A FOCUS ON THE COVID 19 CONTEXT LEADING TO A GLOBAL SHIFT IN POWER RELATIONS BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN.

Presentations by three of the IAW representatives form the major part of this edition of IWNews. One of those speakers, Rosy Weiss, has provided an overview from Mexico City March 2021 to CSW66 March 2022 with two important websites for you to access. This precedes the presentations.

Vale Terpse Lambrinopoulou and Ida Kurth

We have very recently lost Terpse and there will be an announcement in the next Newsletter. You will have read about Ida in an earlier Newsletter. These two women were activists within the Alliance over many years and will be missed by many of us.

This is **an invitation to all members** to send me their memories/photos/stories that we might include in articles to be published in IWNews to acknowledge and remember Terpse and Ida. Your contributions will also add to information being compiled for **IAW Archives**.

As well, this is **a reminder to all members and member organisations** to maintain archival information about the work of your organisation and its active members. No doubt articles can be read in your current websites but many of us go well back before the digital age, so please start talking about longstanding members, past and current, to make sure you have historical information easily accessible to your future members to read as well as future IAW members through IAW Archives.

Individual members are invited to join this trip down memory lane and add to the collection of our history.

Have you checked out **IAW Bibliography** on the website?

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VIRTUAL INTERNATIONAL PARALLEL EVENT ORGANIZED BY IAW AND AFEM IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GENERATION EQUALITY FORUM, 29 JUNE 2021

GEF Mexico City / Paris 2021 – CSW66 2022

I. Generation Equality Forum – 25 years Beijing

Mexico City 29 – 31 March 2021/Paris 30 June – 2 July 2021

Major Outcomes for IAW policy making and advocacy:

Global Acceleration Plan to Advance Gender Equality by 2026, designed by six **Action Coalitions**, around six critical issues: gender-based violence; economic justice and rights; bodily autonomy and SRHR; feminist action for climate justice; technologies and innovation for global equality; feminist movements and leadership.

The commitments made under each critical issue by an impressive list of so-called “Commitment Makers” marking the beginning of a global 5-years action journey (as it was called by Convener of the Forum, Phumizile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women) triggered pledges by nearly USD 40 Billion and policy and programme commitments from governments, civil society, the private sector, philanthropy, UN organizations and many more.

Feminist Action for Climate Justice, as an example.

Commitments made in four main areas of concern: Finance, gender just access to funding; leadership, decision-making; resilience, land tenure; data, gender environment statistics.

IAW committed itself in the frame of policy making and advocacy in all four areas.

The Forum also launched an ambitious **Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action**, linking the Beijing Platform for Action with the WPS agenda of the UNSCR. https://wpshacomact.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/WPS-HA-Compact_Framework-EN-Web.pdf

The following “aspirational impacts” await their realization until 2026: financing the WPS agenda and gender equality in humanitarian programming; women’s full, equal and meaningful participation and inclusion of gender-related provisions in peace processes; women’s economic security, access to resources and other essential services; women’s leadership and full, equal, and meaningful participation across peace, security, and humanitarian sectors; protecting and promoting women’s human rights in conflict and crisis contexts.

IAW is not listed among the catalytic civil society organizations but joined in the meantime.



- II. In the meantime the **66th session of the Commission on the Status of Women of the United Nations** has been held from 14 to 25 March 2022.

Major Outcomes for IAW policy making and advocacy:

Agreed Conclusions “Achieving equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes; and **Draft resolution** on “Future organization and methods of work of the Commission on the Status of Women”.

One of the Commission’s main responsibilities being the follow-up to the Beijing Conference and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”, it is more than astonishing that no reference is made in the two papers mentioned to the outcomes of the Generation Equality Forum, the celebration of 25 years of the landmark documents of Beijing! Is there a reasonable answer to this omission?

Rosy Weiss, Hon. President IAW

Feminist action for climate justice

1. By 2026, increase the percentage of global climate finance flows, public and private, directed towards and invested in gender-just climate solutions in particular at grassroots and rural levels, including through an increase to 88% in the proportion of marked climate bilateral finance targeted towards gender.
2. Increase the proportion of women and girls in decision-making and leadership positions throughout environmental governance and sectors relevant for transitioning to an inclusive, circular and regenerative green economy by 2026.
3. Enhance and leverage the capacity of millions more women and girls in all their diversity to build resilience to climate and disaster risks, mitigate climate change, and address loss and damage, including through the provision of quality education, community-based cooperative models and land rights and tenure security.
4. By 2026, at least 20 countries demonstrate increased use of gender-environment statistics for policy making by creating an enabling environment for and increased production of gender-environment statistics.

Building the future: IAW Priorities in Monitoring the Implementation of Women’s Peace and Security Agenda and the Right to Peace

THE IMPORTANCE OF COOPERATION ACROSS INSTITUTIONS AND PRIORITIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Presented by Rosy Weiss, IAW Hon. President

Nominated in 1987 as Peace Messenger by former UNSG Perez de Cuellar, IAW’s holistic approach embraces the Beijing Platform for Action¹, as well as UN Security Council resolution 1325² and subsequent SC resolutions³, combining these priorities with the government reporting required under article 18 of the CEDAW Convention⁴, and the crucial policy framework of the Commission on the Status of Women.

An excellent example of such a holistic approach is general recommendation no. 30 of the CEDAW Committee⁵ which places the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda into the realm of human rights by integrating conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations into the procedure for the preparation of CEDAW reports, in particular by strengthening collaboration with non-governmental organizations working in these fields.

The importance of shadow reports by NGOs to the already mentioned CEDAW reports by governments should also be stressed. Used in combination, they are a powerful tool for tracking and accountability. However, it must be remembered that a report on the implementation of a given measure is only one side of the coin and should be combined with the assessment of its real effects on the situation of women and girls.

IAW strongly supports the request of the Feminist and Women’s Movement Action Plans outlined in Draft Concept note, version 18 March, to establish gender-based violence/violence against women and girls/women, peace and security as a standing agenda item at all meetings of the UN Commission on the Status of Women until 2030.

IAW also welcomes the integrated approach in the drafting of the future Compact for Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action⁶, joining forces between governments, international organizations and NGOs. In particular IAW welcomes its focus on financing, monitoring and accountability for existing policy and the integration of the five critical priority areas into all six themes selected by the Action Coalitions and expects a powerful and forward-looking document able to inspire us for the “future we want” to bring to life.

And finally, IAW supports the efforts of the United Nations and committed NGOs in working on a Universal Declaration on the Right to Peace. The unique feature of such a declaration would be that once agreed upon - including the substantial amendments by NGOs as proposed in the Santiago Declaration - it would represent an important commitment of the UN family of nations in building a preventive culture of peace. It would help to protect the human rights defined in so many important UN documents, but so often endangered or lost in conflict - and especially as women are concerned. I would further enhance women’s engagement as advocates, partners and agents of change.

IAW priorities for a peaceful and equal future, on the example of the work of two IAW commissions

The importance of land rights for women in climate change policy and finance is centre stage



to the work of IAW's Climate Change Commission, whose findings and requests will be brought to the attention of the UN Climate Change Conference, November 2021 in Glasgow as well as to CSW66, in the context of its priority theme 2022. Together with the efforts to expand opportunities for women's land ownership, safer access to water within reasonable reach, accessibility of other resources, and resettlement processes promoted by the commission, the efforts of IAW's permanent representatives to FAO, Rome, have to be highlighted. Their main message is that women are the first to understand the need for healthy food for their families, yet they also represent a large part of the workers – often unpaid – in agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Our team in Rome insists that promoting women to get equal access to and control over productive resources means enhancing decent incomes, getting healthy produced food for local markets and a better protection of the environment, by avoiding long-distance transports.

In its work the IAW Peace Commission reflects what the World Economic Forum addresses in its Gender Gap Report 2021 as deeply rooted inequality and structural social injustice and their dangerous capacity to fuel and feed military conflicts all over the world. The Commission sees today's world confronted with a global pandemic and health crisis, a climate crisis, raising nationalism, xenophobia, racial and class injustices, the denying of scientific facts and findings, but most of all, enduring gender injustice.

Its latest resolution, entitled "Healthcare not Warfare", adopted by IAW's 38th Congress requests that governments shift at least 50% of all military expenditure and investments to public health, education, climate stabilisation and sustainable development. IAW also calls on warring nations to follow the UNSG's call for a global ceasefire without delay and to collaborate in cases of crises and armed conflicts in mediation and peace negotiation whereby women of a crisis region or warring country must become equal and meaningful participants in all peace processes at all levels, thus honouring women's potential to create a culture of peace.

According to SIPRI, the International Peace Research Institute in Stockholm, global militarization booms and this despite the corona crisis. Worldwide, almost \$ 2 billion was spent on armaments in 2020, even though economic power was shrinking. More money has not been spent on the military since 1988 - Cold War time.

In its most recent annual report SIPRI states that armaments expenditure worldwide represents currently 2.4 percent of global economic output, although the International Monetary Fund estimates that the economy has fallen by around 3 percent worldwide due to the corona crisis. The reality: Even during a pandemic, military spending will not be reduced.

Militarization and weapon production are not just the pit into which billions of dollars are dumped, but also major direct causes for environmental damage and climate change. What will be their future social and political consequences? Will soil degradation, floods, hurricanes, lead to increased migration, to increased tensions among states – again to warfare?

According to IAW that's at stake until 2030.

1. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw>

2. S/RES/1325 (2000)

3. S/RES/1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2011), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), 2493 (2019) (= the Women, Peace and Security Agenda - WPS)

4. Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women: A/Res/34/180, 18 December 1979

5. CEDAW/C/GC/30 (2013)

6. Generation Equality Forum

About Rape. Men's Power versus Women's Voices A Question of Consent

Presented by Dr Jocelynn A. Scutt
Barrister & Human Rights Lawyer
Seniors Teaching Fellow University of Buckingham

Introduction

In 1984 Susan Brownmiller's landmark book *Against Our Will – Men, Women and Rape* was published. Today, it is recognised as a feminist classic and a 'major work of history' as well as being one of New York Public Library's '100 Books of the Century'. That was last century. This century – the 21st – the rape about which Brownmiller wrote remains amongst the highest, and likely the highest, of unreported crimes, unactioned when reported, resulting in no trial or a trial that ends in no conviction, simply an acquittal ... with the victim/survivor not only losing out in each of these ways but running the risk of herself being prosecuted for 'wasting police time' or making a 'false complaint' – in other words, perjury, or both². 'Date rape' – a term coined by Brownmiller almost 40 years ago, remains a topic of critical and often disbelieving debate – whether it, like so-called 'real' rape, is in fact a crime or simply a 'bad' sexual experience as some wish assert, ignoring women's right not to be imposed upon sexually or in any other way. What, after all, does 'bad sexual experience' truly encompass?

Around the world, whatever the jurisdiction and whether the legal system is run on common law or civil law lines, or according to any other jurisprudential theory, the credibility of women is called into question. This is so for substantive law – how rape is framed in law as a crime. It applies to evidence laws – what evidence or 'facts' are allowed to be put into the courtroom during the trial, what is deemed relevant and what is admissible in evidence. It applies, too, to procedural rules – rules governing what judges are obliged to include in their jury directions, how rules operate to govern features of rape trials such as questioning the victim/survivor ('complainant') or defendant and how particular evidence is to be assessed, as well as ethics rules governing counsel.

Each of these areas requires consideration when calls for rape law reform are made, when reforms are made and the hope is that they will not be subverted, and when subversion of changes occurs due to judicial and counsel failures in applying the changes as intended. The existence of a patriarchal mindset inevitably subverts efforts to restore or instate what has never been recognised previously – namely the reality of rape and the credit of women who have been subjected to unwanted and undesired imposition, whatever their age, that is whether this has occurred when they are children or adults. Patriarchal notions are embedded in sexual offences laws, whatever the country, whatever the culture.

Procedural Rules

Two main obstacles arise under rules of procedure, expressed differently perhaps in every system, but nonetheless identical in their import: the prompt complaint rule and the corroboration rule. Both undermine the credibility of the victim/survivor/complainant.



- A** Prompt complaint – the notion here is that –
- a. if a woman does not complain promptly, then it is likely that she is lying;
 - b. if she does complain promptly, that is no substantiation of truth-telling: rather, all it means is that she complained promptly – with at least two questions remaining ‘of what exactly did she complain’, ‘where’, ‘how’ and, anyway, ‘is she telling the truth’.
- B** Corroboration rule – if the woman’s word is the only or only substantive evidence before the court, then the jury must be warned to scrutinise her evidence carefully for ‘rape is a charge easily made and hard to be defended against, however innocent is the accused’.

Neither rule has validity – some women complain promptly about having been raped or sexually abused; some do not. All sorts of reasons lie behind one approach or the other, none to do with the credibility of the woman or the validity of the complaint. Some jurisdictions have ruled this rule out of order or require judges to instruct the jury that a ‘late’ complaint is simply that – it does not signify anything other than the complaint was not made immediately, or sometimes of the fact that there may be many reasons for a delay in complaining. The basic problem here is that it is the legal system and society that operate to silence the woman or refuse to hear her when she does complain. As to the corroboration rule, some jurisdictions have left it to the judge’s discretion as to whether to so advise the jury. But the warning is prejudicial to the truth: rape is not a charge easily made – it is the darkest area of hidden crime, and when women do complain, complaining is made difficult by the legal system and society as a whole; nor is rape hard to be defended against – rarely are men prosecuted, rarely does the matter go to trial, and when it does, rarely is the man found³ guilty. Furthermore, this rule is deficient in that it tells the jury to do what they have already been instructed to do: study all evidence carefully – this is their job; telling them twice, and directing specific attention in this way to the woman’s evidence, obviously undermines her credibility. The jury is effectively being told she is not as trustworthy as any of the other witnesses (including the accused). Furthermore, it compares her with an accomplice to a crime, for there, where an alleged accomplice in a crime gives evidence against his/her co-accused, such a warning is required.

Evidence Rules

In cases other than rape, if the character of a prosecution witness is attacked, the character of the defendant is automatically put in issue – that is, evidence of the defendant’s bad character can be admitted into evidence. Some jurisdictions have now modified the position making it possible to admit ‘bad character evidence’ but this does not mitigate the problem with character in rape trials.

In rape, the proposition is that because ‘consent’ is in issue, the attack on the victim/survivor/complainant’s character goes to a substantive matter and therefore does not put the defendant’s character in issue.

This might be accepted – though it can be criticised ... but rape cases are different in another way that goes directly to this attack on character. The rules of evidence are that (a) evidence must be relevant to be admitted into the courtroom; and (b) even where relevant, it can be ruled inadmissible as prejudicing the case or unfairly interfering with the jury’s deliberations. These rules are not, however, applied in rape cases: irrelevant material is admitted, including the colour of the woman’s underwear, the type of underwear⁴, whether she was drinking in a bar – in company or alone, if she lives alone, if she sleeps naked, what she was wearing ... Then whether she has had sex consensually with other men, or with the defendant on another or other occasions.

Where rules have been changed so that a judge is required to exercise discretion as to whether to admit such evidence into the courtroom, this does no more than require the judge to do what s/he should do in the first place – exercise power consistent with the rules of evidence, ruling out irrelevant evidence and ruling out relevant evidence where it would prejudice the case or unfairly interfere with the jury’s deliberations. Unfortunately, judges too often exercise discretion in favour of allowing in the evidence – and prosecution counsel fail to object as they should.

Substantive Law

Just as in recent cases in Spain the law required that the victim/survivor/complainant show signs of struggle, bruising, injury, torn clothing – this was the law in common law countries too⁵. Reforms now set out more clearly the range and type of conduct to which a victim/survivor/complainant might be subject which would evidence lack of consent – such as violence, drugging or spiking a drink with alcohol, kidnapping or holding in bondage, threats to the victim or another person (a child for example), or on the victim/survivor’s part a lack of consciousness or sleep, or a disability. Here, the defendant can argue that, nonetheless, he reasonably believed the victim/survivor was consenting, the onus being on him to produce evidence to substantiate his belief⁶. Where the defendant misrepresents the purpose or nature of the act, or his identity⁷, there is no answer of ‘reasonable belief’: the proof of misrepresentation is absolute, and the crime is proven. Further, some jurisdictions provide that a person consents only if she agrees by choice, and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice, in some cases ‘active’ consent⁸.

What is to be Done?

What we see when the law is reformed, is that judges too often undermine the changes – say where discretion lies with them to make the corroboration warning, or to admit evidence of sexual history, they do. If they exercise discretion against making the warning or admitting the evidence, too often on appeal superior courts overrule lower courts to enforce principles stuck in patriarchal perspectives of sexual interaction and women’s behaviour⁹. In the spotlight undermining reforms stand defence barristers and advocates, who press into the courtroom irrelevant evidence including sexual history, and question victim/survivors/complainants so as to undermine their evidence and confidence in ways that are haranguing and deliberately prurient. Equally responsible are prosecutors who fail to intervene when defence counsel ignore reforms and stick with their patriarchal practices based in stereotypical perspectives of women, a certainty about men’s rights to women’s bodies, and confidence that women lie, are open to sexual impositions no matter who, when or where, and (whatever women say) wanted sex with the defendant.

This means that judges and advocates working (whether as prosecutors or defence counsel) in sexual offences must undergo compulsory, regular training so that they are obliged to acknowledge women’s right to sexual autonomy and deny men’s right to women’s bodies anywhere, anytime, anyplace¹⁰. What is not consent must be defined effectively, and consideration must be given to rendering consent nugatory as an argument not only where the victim/survivor is a minor, but where grievous bodily harm is inflicted whether in the course of the sexual imposition or as a consequence, or in order to effect the act. Caution must be expressed here, too – the defining of what consent is and is not was a necessary step in moving towards a world where rape might dwell in a realm of possibly being understood in the law. However, the focus on consent now means that the woman – and what was going on in her head – becomes the focus, rather than the man’s head and body and actions and conduct, which is where the focus should be: right there, on the accused.



Arguments for closed courts must be resisted: these leave the women alone in a courtroom with jurors, judges, defence and prosecuting counsel and courtroom personnel (who even today when women are appointed to the bench, when women are entitled to study law and go into practice are overwhelmingly likely to be male) – without any of the supports or supporters she needs. Proposals for women's evidence to be given from a remote hearing room must be questioned, too – for this leaves her alone and isolated, again without supports. Video and remote witness evidence also downgrades the evidence in the judge and jury's eyes, undermining its immediacy. Specialist police squads are to be questioned, too – why not training for all police, for women are not raped, conveniently, when the specialist squad is on duty or in locations readily accessible to them.

Finally, on consent: rape is about power and violence (whether evidenced by signs of physical trauma or not). Yet that is not all it is about: it is about the way some men imposed their sexuality, their vision of sexual rights onto women, without regard for women-as-human, women-as-equal, women with rights and entitlements that are equal to theirs and that are not to be subjugated to men's will or wish. Why not cross-examination of defendants as to their sexual proclivities, the way they seek to experience sexual activity, their performance in sexual matters? In the end, rape is about sex. Not about pleasure for the women, or her enjoyment; not 'sex' as one thinks of it and hopes to experience it in warm, loving, giving and appreciative relationships or interactions. Rape it is about the way those who rape see and enact sex for their own ends, for their own pleasure in imposing upon the victim/survivor. Certainly it is about power, but it is about power expressed through sex and sexual imposition, sex as he wants it and will have it, with nothing at all to do with woman-as-human. For the rapist, sex and power are intimately combined, one with the other, the other with one – if this were not so, why is the sexual act or are sexual acts and activity at the core of what rape is about. For the rapist, sex is about power and power is about sex.

Addressing the reality of rape, rather than the focus on women's sexuality and a notion of consent that puts women under the spotlight, the focus should be on the man who rapes because it is his will to do so.

JAS © June 2021

1. [Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape: Amazon.co.uk: Brownmiller, Susan: 9780449908204: Books](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Brownmiller-Susan-9780449908204/dp/B000APR004) (accessed 22 June 2021).
2. See Jocelyne A. Scutt, *The Incredible Woman – Power and Sexual Politics*, 2 vols, Artemis Publishing, Melbourne, Australia, 1997.
3. See *State v Rincon-Pineda*, Calif Sup Ct 1975.
4. Example (one of thousands probably millions) the Irish case where the fact that the woman wore a lace thong as underpants was said by defence counsel to be relevant to whether or not she consented.
5. [See Spain sex abuse trial: Teenage girl 'sexually assaulted by six men' gives tearful court testimony | The Independent | The Independent](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/teenage-girl-sexually-assaulted-by-six-men-gives-tearful-court-testimony-the-independent-19484841.html) (accessed 17 June 2021); [Outrage after men found guilty of sexual abuse not rape as victim was 'unconscious' | The Independent | The Independent](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/outrage-after-men-found-guilty-of-sexual-abuse-not-rape-as-victim-was-unconscious-the-independent-19484841.html) (accessed 17 June 2021); also Jocelyne A. Scutt, *The Incredible Woman – Power and Sexual Politics*, vol 1, Artemis Publishing, Melbourne, Australia, 1997; Jocelyne A. Scutt, *The Sexual Gerrymander – Women and the Economics of Power*, Spinifex Press, Nth Melbourne, Australia, 1994.
6. See for example s 75 Sexual Offences Act 2003 (UK).
7. See for example s 76 Sexual Offences Act 2003 (UK).
8. See for example s 74 Sexual Offences Act 2003 (UK).
9. See for example *Longman v R* [1998] High Court of Australia.
10. Canada has passed a law requiring judges to undergo training – this should be extended to all in the field as recommended in the WEL Draft Bill on Rape and Other Sexual Offences and Procedure, 1977, Sydney, NSW.

Women as Actors for Peace and Sustainable Security

SECURING A GLOBAL CULTURE OF PEACE

Presented by Dr. Manju Kak
Executive VP, International Alliance for Women; Co-Convenor IAW Peace Commission;
Member in Charge, Peace, All India Women's Conference, India

Introduction

"Yatra Nariyantu Poojyate, Ramante Tatra Devta" (Gods reside where women are venerated) – is an ancient Hindu shloka or hymn/verse that professes respect for women as a cornerstone for peace, harmony and good life.

Though currently new Feminist thinking may have different interpretations, traditionally the Feminine Principle recognizes the qualities attributed to the 'Mother Goddess', revered in all ancient cultures as the Peaceful Preserver and Nurturer of Life. Greek mythology, Celtic, Nordic and Asian tribal lore all recount this in many ways. Thus from the feminist perspective, the world we perceive would rest on a fulcrum of nurturing, of care. By inference that would mean living in a transformative economic and development model other than the one we have, **one that must be people centred and care centred.**

Instead we live in a world that this past year has confronted an unprecedented Global Pandemic brought on by the Covid 19 virus, added to the existing climate crisis, rising threat from authoritarianism, xenophobia, racial injustice, class injustices and most of all, enduring gender injustice.

Undoubtedly the Role of Women as Actors for Peace and Sustainable Security has never been so urgent as now. Thinkers, writers, futurists and feminist scholars too have continually pointed fingers with grim prophetic warnings that such calamities will destroy us sooner than we think.

The Pandemic is a proven global equalizer with no respect for nationality, religious differences, age or economic disparities, global health and well being hung on a 'vaccine'. The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called it the "inequality pandemic." New fault lines emerged exposing the already deeply rooted structural injustices; people who have suffered were already disadvantaged-by race, class, religious belief, gender, or place of birth in digital and economic inequality.

In my country, India, we faced the challenges of hitherto faceless groups such as migrant workers and front line health workers who had come from different rural constituencies of India 28 states to work in industrial centres. After the lockdown was announced, an eerie silence was cruelly broken by the voice of migrant- returnees (47% of women migrants were in urban work). The media highlighted women migrants with bleeding feet returning home, a woman dead on a platform with a child trying to wake her, a young girl who cycled across the country to fetch her father. The major issue to emerge was of stigma as migrants moved when lockdown was ordered as they were assumed to be potential transmitters of the virus. They had to go home as they lost jobs, had no place to stay, no food. Amongst them, domestic workers for instance who constitute approx. 2 of the 22 million urban work force, lost their jobs. In 70% households both the female domestic worker and spouse lost jobs. In the garment industry—a key driver of the economy and one of the largest employers of women in India, the situation was alarming. Major brands such as ZARA, H&M subcontracted the garment production to local industries which collapsed with 83% orders cancelled. The majority were from tribal areas, especially young girls from the skill building sector who found no work on returning home. *Sugar Cane women workers had already been living undignified and dangerous lives as employers had been forcing them to carry out hysterectomies so they could work longer days.* Food insecurity rose across all sectors with most women accessing one meal a day.



Clearly this crises made clear we need a new road map for a post-gender post- pandemic democracy, ensuring that vulnerabilities are not brushed aside, that the same structural inequalities do not increase especially if such a crisis were to erupt again. We women-- as growers, nurturers, mothers, home makers, care givers-- cannot any more set aside the imperative responsibility to secure sustainable security for this planet.

Global Scenario

The historic Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) laid the groundwork for the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda with strategic objectives and actions outlined under “Women and armed conflict”, with specific reference to women in crisis situations. Following the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on WPS, nine additional Security Council resolutions on WPS have been adopted, as well as CEDAW General Recommendation 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations. Other instruments and contracts have been agreed upon. Now the Generation Equality Forum (GEF) is revisiting the promises that germinated in BPFA on its 25th Anniversary. It provided all stakeholders a unique opportunity to accelerate our intentions towards an action based future to achieve the WPS and HA goals. As many as 84 countries have passed Resolutions adhering to the WPS agenda.

But the harsh truth is having chased the ever elusive chimera of peace, man has been unable to shed the scourge of war and disease despite modernization. In a patriarchal world, the primal instinct of violence has ceaselessly combined with ruthlessly ambitious vested interests to ensure that the agenda of peace is trampled upon. Atomic and nuclear power, chemical and biological weapons, viruses, technology all show what science can empower it can obliterate--the planet. With traditional wars becoming virtually passé in the face of nuclear deterrence; proxy wars through covert promotion of civil strife is the current paradigm. Ethnic conflicts, secessionism, insurgency, terrorism, riots coupled with rising intolerance, organized crime and religious fundamentalism have given primacy to non-state actors. In view of the dismal progress made surely we recognize words and resolutions will not suffice, only strategies for accelerated Action to reach defined goals. To be sure without Peace we have nothing.

Let us pause here to revisit the overall global scenario.

True globalization has brought interdependence and interconnectivity and it also ensured concentration of wealth in few hands. The rich have got richer and the poor got poorer. This in turn has taken away all sense of security amongst the poor triggering escalating civil strife. Consequently, massive population displacements and extreme humanitarian emergencies are rampant, linking the new phenomena of refugee crisis to consequent inter-state tensions on unprecedented scale, examples of which are visible in the ongoing Rohingya Crisis in Burma/ Myanmar, Taliban led atrocities in Afghanistan and many more.

Another negative development is the growing ineffectiveness of UN which has been virtually replaced by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) as the primary supra- national entity. WTO along with the World Bank dictates structural adjustments and forces changes in national laws and policies in the developing countries which compromise democracy and violate the Constitution, denying the rights of the people over resources. This is aggravating discontent amongst the populace. Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives are not held accountable for their unwillingness to tackle the roots of inequality. They are all too often designed to improve women's lives rooted in the narrow belief that women's economic empowerment amounts essentially to women's entrepreneurship. There are threats posed by corporate power to the realization of women's human rights. Corporate social responsibility initiatives are not held accountable for their unwillingness to tackle the roots of inequality unless women and feminist organizations work as watch dogs and hold governments accountable for their commitments.

The current practice of global governance that links development and security has also become a deadly political tool of coercion and is generating immense negative dynamics.

Violence and vested interests always existed but human values remained predominant to a large extent unlike today when globalization generated materialism has turned human values on its head. Consequently, it is chaos that reigns supreme and the life of common populace is getting increasingly mired in multi-pronged struggles and deprivations leading to loss of basic human rights and dignity, especially, of women and children. *As such the IAW Peace Commission's work focuses particularly on gender inequality, gender discrimination and sexism, gender-based poverty, gender-based violence, including gun violence (gun control measures), gender inequality aggravated by climate change, health-based gender discrimination including female genital mutilation, forced child marriages, LGBTQ, and digital violence among other forms of gender-based inequalities.*

As far as democratic norms are concerned, overt dictatorships have diminished across much of the world. There's another way to break a democracy: not at the hands of generals, but of elected leaders who subvert the very process that brought them to power. In many countries, due to certain conditions, populist leaders with no political experience can sweep to power by tapping into deep currents of social resentment. The Covid-19 Pandemic has additionally brought a rise in populist authoritarianism and nationalism accompanied by the denial of scientific facts. These developments create additional factors aimed at sowing division among us. Amy Chua, author of the book Tiger Mom, explains in her book Political Tribes: Group Instinct and the Fate of Nations, how America is being pulled by tribal divisions and how the 'super group' (America) is being split by race and class. According to her, “In America today, every group feels threatened.”

In these cases, there are no tanks in the streets. Constitutions and other democratic institutions remain nominally in place. People still vote. Elected autocrats maintain a veneer of democracy while eviscerating its substance. This is how most democracies die today: slowly, in barely visible steps. When democratic norms are slaughtered, peace is slaughtered.

Surely we recognize words and resolutions will not suffice, instead what is needed is accelerated Action to reach defined goals. In reminding ourselves of the first edition of the Forum in Mexico which stressed unanimously the total absence of any advancement of the WPS and UN SC Resolution 1325 in terms of participation of women, we recognize the huge gaps in all processes. Let's also refer to the 1st Declaration of the UN SG 5/4/2020 on violence against women where he noted the situation with alarm and appealed for a “cease fire”.

Pertinent here is the Global Peace Index of 2020 (GPI) (published by Institute of Economics and Peace (IEP) a leading global think tank has its core asset it's benchmark study in measuring peace and quantifying its economic value in what is known as Global Peace Index (GPI).), estimates Global peacefulness has deteriorated for the fourth time in the last five years and the ninth in twelve years, the average country score falling by 0.34 per cent.. Examples in South Asia are the ongoing Rohingya Crisis in Myanmar, the Taliban led atrocities in Afghanistan and India's terror-torn Kashmir where the genocide against Hindus in 1991 led to massive population displacement.

Generation Equality Forum:

Women as Peace Actors through International Advocacy Initiatives and Strengthening Linkages

The IAW Action Program of 2018-2020 advocated the ratification of the major conventions and resolutions such as CEDAW, UNSC Res. 1325, the major HR declarations and treaties, and the Istanbul Convention. It monitors the implementation of these instruments and the UN Resolutions and supports the efforts to establish a HR to peace as an additional legal tool. The Peace Commission aims at expanding the circle of states that ratifies these conventions and calls for a 'nuclear-arms' free world.

The IAW action plan aims to provide solidarity and working with women directly who are experiencing /suffering from discrimination by highlighting the plight of an ethnicity or a refugee group e.g. Afghan women, Chinese Uyghur women. To work in collaboration/together with other organizations, national and international, who monitor, promote, and advocate the issues of the



peace commission (e.g. IANSA work and campaigns against gun violence and for gun control). To advance the implementation of the existing legal instruments/conventions on a national and international basis, (e.g. promote, support the ratification/signing onto the Rome Statute by countries that are not yet member-states of the ICC) and promote women and girl's human rights as well as their effective participation and decision making in public life, their meaningful participation in all peace processes and the elimination of gender based violence.

GEF —25 years after Beijing— Strengthening Linkages

Of important note is the women's peace movement, comprised of women peacebuilders, women's networks and organizations, which has been a consistent driving force for advocacy and actions to address the impacts of armed conflict and insecurity in communities. Thus by endorsing the Compact at Paris, we understand the importance of the 'Big Push' that must come from Civil Society (of which Volunteerism is a crucial component). This Charter for Change while emphasizing an intergenerational approach calls to provide a Catalyst to propel Concrete, Collective and deliverable action through enhanced Commitment to action.

The IAW Peace Commission affirms our active role and participation in promoting the Objectives of a voluntary multi-stakeholder monitoring and accountability process to help narrow the gap between aspirations and concrete actions on WPS and humanitarian action, while ensuring that existing global and regional processes are harnessed for national and local engagement and action; to integrate an inter-generational approach at the forefront of peace, security and humanitarian efforts, as well as ensure women's leadership in all peace and humanitarian decision-making processes. the inclusion of young women peacebuilders and young women affected by crisis in peace, security and humanitarian processes and efforts, including in the context of the implementation of the youth, peace and security agenda; to provide an opportunity to strengthen linkages with other relevant agendas, including the youth, peace and security agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its promise for gender equal, inclusive and peaceful societies.

Promoting a Culture of Peace—a look at the grassroots.

Clearly existing global and regional processes must be harnessed for national and local engagement and action by integrating an inter-generational approach

It is acknowledged that global interdependence can enable the global community to converge its efforts at global peace and heighten the possibility of establishing peace at national and international levels. Conversely for Peace to be a dominant culture, we must recognize Peace rests on attitudinal changes at the Grassroots. Peace is Local first. Examples from history have shown us when people are righteous they move mountains, they muster courage to speak truth to power.

A sense of Moral Judiciousness and Righteousness in our Social Fabric rests on ethical practices, of how we behave and think individually. In attitudes we inculcate in our families, neighbourhoods, social norms, how we are educated and immersed in a culture of respectful co-existence. While new ways must be identified to resolve conflicts with the help of intergovernmental organisations as well as NGOs, the sensitization of individuals—**"Change One" is vital**. There is an urgent need to change too the psychology of human behavior from its global overtones of avarice and consumerism. A way forward maybe the micro-management of society through promotion of inner spiritual peace and universal view of life amongst individuals is the urgent need of the hour and by acknowledging that all cultures and religions since ancient times have promoted the ethos of humanitarianism is of utmost importance.

Violence and vested interests always existed but human values remained predominant largely, unlike today when globalization generated materialism has turned our value system on its head leading to loss of basic human rights and dignity, especially, of women and children.

Women must be leaders in propagating this new 'CULTURE OF PEACE', in devising a taut PEACE NET, peopled with Peace Ambassadors who flaunt the badge of their Mission stoutly. Taking cues from the beliefs of luminaries in India like Buddha and Gandhi who professed non-violence, a strong coalition of the Peace Promoters from amongst diverse professionals like educationists, environmentalists, artists, youth organizations, human rights activists, religious and spiritual leaders, cultural ambassadors along with organizations that work for women and child welfare, focusing on their emancipation and empowerment along with grievance redressal. *This surely and meaningfully translates into what the Paris Compact aims for—ie., to strengthen the inclusion of young women peace builders and young women affected by crisis in peace, security and humanitarian processes and efforts, including in the context of the implementation of the youth, peace and security agenda.*

Let's look at the lessons thrown up by the Pandemic again. Undoubtedly in India while showing casing the uncertainties and insecurities of women's lives it also conversely made women collectively stronger in *Promoting Harmonious Respectful Co existence and Peace*. For example during the pandemic women workers and organizations have been first responders even to the migrants. They rose to the occasion to help each other unconditionally demonstrated the importance of – UNITED WE STAND! Beautiful examples of Volunteerism were seen in securing neighbourhoods for health and livelihood, people coming forth collectively to help that one family in need.

The All India Women's Conference (AIWC) founded in 1927, of which I am Member-in-Charge of Peace, is an associate of International Alliance of Women. Using the above view as a Mission we played a stellar role in supporting afflicted people and boosting morale in 2020-21 through the work of its innumerable local branches in the cause of peace promotion.

The AIWC conducted Webinars with eminent resource persons for diverse target audience advocating the Human Right to Health, Happiness and Peace, strengthening the message at the Grassroot, with the common householder, wage earner, care giver, to promote a positive dynamic in bringing about tangible attitudinal change. We have risen to the occasion creating linkages through schools, universities, internet groups to make us true propel advocacy for sustainable peace and constructive thinking for our common future. Our work was highly commended by India's National Foundation for Communal Harmony that functions under the aegis of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

But the AIWC like other associates of IAW, has always stood by the principles that we so urgently need now. We have been drizzling rain on prepared ground because we women espoused the cause of Non Violence long before the world heard of it as a modern tool of negotiation. The wise ancients in India promoted unity in diversity through precepts of *Dharma* and ethical conduct in all aspects of social interaction. They put a premium on preservation of human dignity and individual way of life along with emphasis on shelter, forgiveness and willing assimilation aimed at mainstreaming the aspirations of the conquered.

To Conclude

Clearly civilizations dominated by patriarchal constructs that celebrate dominant masculine aggression as a model for power, have led to the arms race, world wars, civil conflicts, and an insane buildup of atomic bombs reaching a dead end. (sic Deepak Chopra, inspirational author.) In 1995, the Conference of Women in **Beijing brought to the world's notice women hold up 'half the sky'**. Collectively we can shake the world and bend it to our will. "The three preceding UN World Conferences on Women the motto was "Equality, Development and Peace", a very wise interdependence which includes our concern for the Environment."

Finally let us pause a minute and reflect on the small miracle that has been witnessed. Though this past year we have experienced vulnerability, death and disease, yet we all have learnt to celebrate the resilience of the human spirit; to introspect on our priorities, to find new ways to



combat loneliness, and to recover our appreciation of our world. We have built unique bridges to each other through innumerable languages and through virtual means we have succeeded in breaking our isolation to stay connected. We have learnt the importance of family and friends, to appreciate the support given by them that has enabled our mental health. It has reminded us of the value of natural cures present -Ayurveda- how our mothers' and grandmothers' kitchens are enriched with the medicinal values in spices that boost immunity.

In the words of Professor Malabika Sarkar, "Technology has advanced as a mass revolution drawing in people from all ages and all backgrounds. And finally the miracle of global team-work of scientists, laboratory workers, governments, regulatory agencies, financiers and volunteers that has brought us vaccines in one year as against the average time span of a decade that is needed. "

Surely if the world can come together and achieve this, our vow to implement the Generation Equality Forum Compact can insure then fulfillment of our WPS-HA agenda. Our suggested Peace Net can indeed become a Movement for Intergenerational Dialogues, yoking wisdom to energy and idealism. By harnessing the strength of Youth we can surely deliver on our Collective Promises.

Deepak Chopra writes, "the urge to fight and to turn competitors into enemies, nations into armed fortresses, and everyone into winners and losers won't save a planet that needs emergency medicine." This choice involves a conscious decision, and when enough people (men and women) make the decision, *the world will change*. This is the dominant challenge for humanity. Maybe this virus will provide just this medicine, force us to acknowledge without "Universal co-dependence and co-existence," the Planet will not survive. As the Russian theosophist and philosopher Helena Roerich famously wrote, "...women must sacredly guard the chalice entrusted to them: the moving of the consciousness and the saving of the world. The Epoch of Maitreya is the epoch of woman." (*Letters of H. I. Roerich, 1935.*)

Dr. Manju Kak

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