

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honor for me to participate in this event on behalf of WFWP Europe.

Introduction:

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, launching a global campaign to end violence against women, (Febr.25th 08) said:

"I call on men around the world to lead by example: to make clear that violence against women is an act perpetrated by a coward, and that speaking up against it is a badge of honour."

Women's Federation for Peace Germany is committed to the advancement of women for peace and security; recognising each person's individual value. We promote activities that encourage development towards meeting Millennium Development Goal No.3, of Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming in all fields of life.

Women's Federation for Peace Germany contributes to this goal with the "Dignity of Women" campaign.

Basic thoughts

I would like to brief you with some basic thoughts on the relationship of MDG 3 and this project.

Each woman's situation is different, according to the society, religious, cultural and racial background and the development of the country where she lives. Therefore to empower women, we need to meet their needs accordingly.

Firstly: women need to receive basic nutrition, education, health care and financial support.

In Europe and the States the Women's Movement has inspired a paradigm shift in society. Just think about the right to vote, the right to receive education and the right to gain full employment.

However in Europe violence towards women up to today constitutes by far the most frequent violation of human rights.

We are faced with the continuous degradation of women in many areas, such as prostitution, pornography, advertisement, FGM, widow burning, honor killing and rape as part of war strategy

Within Europe, the sex trade has an annual turnover of billions of Euros. According to estimations by the UN with regard to Europe, 500.000 women – mostly Eastern Europeans- are being abducted yearly and forced into prostitution.

At no other time in history, has such a proliferation of pornography in books, magazines, videos, films and television existed. With the help of the media, a billion dollar industry

conveys the message that the brutalizing, torture, enslavement, mutilation, contempt and humiliation of the female sex are equivalent to sexual pleasure.

Domestic violence is an issue many times ignored – yet, since decades homes exist for battered women and children, taking refuge from the dangers of violence, sexual intimidation and bodily and psychological abuse.

The view of woman is distorted and she is degraded merely to the role of sexual object. This opens the door to violence against women and offends the very dignity of woman. The misuse of woman's body and the degradation of sexuality in media are just the beginning of the most common human rights violation in the world today - the abuse of women.

These are urgent problems in the field of the status of women requiring immediate attention. Considering the amazing God-given human potential in each woman this state of affairs is unforgivable.

The awareness of dignity in the human society, especially regarding the dignity of women is therefore one of the most important prevention aspects regarding all kinds of violence against women, men and children such as trafficking, forced prostitution and domestic violence, physical and /or psychologically.

Goal of Campaign

Building upon the remarkable framework of human rights legislation to prevent conflict and promote peace and prosperity among and within nations and---

Knowing that human trafficking, sexual exploitation, domestic violence and all forms of abuse constitute an unacceptable violence against women and children that damages the whole fabric of the society and is irreconcilable with a culture rooted in the dignity and value of the human being,----

---the goal of the campaign "Dignity of Women" is *creating awareness of human dignity*

How do we define "Dignity"?

The first to have formulated the term 'dignity of the human being' was the Renaissance-philosopher Pico della Mirandola in his speech 'De hominis dignitate' (Latin translation: "About the dignity of the human being") (1486/87).

Dignity is an immanent nature, an innate character of humans, independent from any other characteristics such as age, intelligence, abilities and sex. The philosopher Immanuel Kant spoke of the universal dignity within each human being.

There are two definitions of dignity which complement each other: Dignity as a feature and dignity as commission, in the sense of civic participation.

Dignity as a feature:

Dignity as a feature is stated in the preamble of the declaration of human rights:

- Whereas *recognition of the inherent dignity*, and of the equal inalienable rights of all members of the human family: *is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world ...*,
- Article 1. *All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights*. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Dignity as commission/ civic participation is the idea of ethical autonomy of people as we find in the Enlightenment and also in the philosophy of Kant. Dignity as civic participation can be directed to the individual as well as to society.

Dignity as civic participation directed to the society is defined in the Human rights declaration: "The dignity of human being is inviolable. It is the duty of all governmental institutions, to respect and protect it. "

- In the preamble is stated::the peoples of the United Nations have ... reaffirmed their *faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women* and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.
- Article 7 of the UNHRD says:" *All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law*. All are entitled to *equal protection against any discrimination* in violation of the Declaration and *against any incitement to such discrimination*.

•Aspects of the Campaign

The "Dignity of Women" project has basically two aspects.

- One is restoring the image of womanhood in society. Our slogan is "Let us awaken human awareness fully to the original value and the original beauty of the woman!"
- The other is inspiring women to feel the beauty and value of true femininity, to discover their immanent, God given dignity and to live it.

Practical aspects of the campaign

- Call to action: The Women's Federation for World Peace Europe issued an appeal to both women and men who want to prevent, that under the disguise of increased turnovers through advertisement, not only a product is being advertised but, much more, the dignity of women is being undermined and violated. Leaflets and information materials are distributed in many European countries.
- Seminars: The Women's Federation Europe organizes ongoing educational seminars -

Topics are the understanding of dignity and womanhood, the history of women in Europe, the feminine power, the historical chance of contributing to a culture of peace, reconciliation, women and leadership and feminine values as cornerstone for a peaceful world.
- Signature campaigns were organized and brought to the corresponding UN agencies.
 - Against the rapes in Bosnia
 - Against sex and violence in TV
 - For the Dignity of Women
- Book tables with information material on prevention of trafficking, forced labor and prostitution through understanding and living dignity are always well received
- Special materials, brochures and leaflets for UN days calling on ending violence against women and children, for the conferences and special seminars are available in different languages
- Websites dedicated to this subject and for this campaign help to create awareness
- Networking: Working together with other NGOs which dedicate their efforts to similar purposes.
- Conferences: Four Annual conferences of WFWP Europe have been dedicated especially to this topic, inviting Women's Federation for Peace Germany to present the campaign on a European level
 - 2007: Vienna/ Seebenstein, Austria WFWP Europe launched the Dignity of Women campaign
 - 2008: Vienna. The title of the conference was: *Promoting human dignity to prevent trafficking and addiction*

WFWP Europe committee members consider this conference to have been instrumental for the success of bringing the awareness of the 'Dignity' of women and trafficking prevention campaign to assist each European country. 60 international participants representing 11 European countries, as well as Japan, Gabon, Nigeria, Mongolia, China and India attended this and worked on a joint resolution together, committing on practical solutions as

- 1) to establish hotlines
- 2) to offer assistance to victims and to report trafficking
- 3) to implement international legal procedures for victims protection
- 4) the establishment of a European data base on crime, similar to the Italian model
- 5) governments to improve living conditions of especially the poor and rural populations
- 6) to promote a global awareness about the realities of violence against women and children by civil society actors and the media.
- 7) to address especially the Diasporas of the countries were victims of human trafficking originate
- 8) to support governmental and non-governmental organizations who work on creating awareness of potential victims, their families and local communities in the countries of origin

- 2009 WFPW annual conference took place in Paris. The title was: *Concluding the UNESCO Decade of a Culture of Peace: New Alliances to fulfill MDG 3*

This conference was a step forward especially in creating alliances between the participating NGOs. Awareness creating and educational aspects in preventing violence against women and children were the main focus.

- 2010: This year's conference will take place in Dresden - *Empowering women to form alliances to create a culture of peace, focusing on dignity as a cornerstone for building a culture of peace.*
- As a result of the European conferences, the Dignity of women Campaign was presented in other European countries:
 - In Strasbourg, December 2007 during a French German Friendship meeting, the project was presented to the participants.
 - WFPW Europe presented the „Dignity of Women“ at several events in Maribor, Celje and Ljubljana. 18-20th October 2008
 - On a Live talk radio program,
 - City Hall in Maribor, where WFPW Europe was welcomed by the Mayor, the local UN Human Rights Representative, and several NGOs
 - WFPW Slovenia Charity concert in Celje
 - Cyprus, Event on Women's Dignity held on the 6th of May 2009 in Nicosia, presentations translated into Greek

Meanwhile the project also has been introduced and carried out not only in many European countries but also in other continents, as in the States, Canada, New Zealand and Russia by the respective WFPW organizations

- Dignity project also was presented on International Women conferences
 - Women's World Conference Madrid, Spain, 2008
 - WORLD CIVIC FORUM May 7, 2009 Seoul, Korea: Role of Higher Education for Civic Enhancement "The Dignity of Women and Social Responsibility"

Conclusion

I would like to conclude with some points of the resolutions of the 2009 conference.

Therefore we commit ourselves to:

Seek opportunities to mediate, motivate and monitor our governments at the local, national and international level to fulfill the MDG's, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, SC Resolution 1325 and other commitments in support of the culture of peace,

Use our influence to teach the value of dignity and appreciation of diversity to our children, through words and actions, from the earliest age, especially as concerns the equal value of women and men.

Raise public awareness about violence, seeking to involve men and boys in activities for the prevention of violence against women and towards the empowerment of women and girls,

Take responsibility to solve cycles of enmity by building partnerships and commit together to goals and programs for a common peaceful future,

Promote civic participation by engaging social and government institutions to include peace and character education components in their programs- formal and non-formal education for peaceful resolution of conflicts, mediation and reconciliation-

Promote paradigm changes whereby empowerment comes through cooperation, not confrontation.

Calling for a code of conduct for a responsible media,

Engaging youth as co-planners and partners for the continued work towards a culture of peace and prosperity,

Providing respect and appreciation for our elders that they may "Age in dignity"!

Thank you