

March 2004 Issue

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International Women's Day 8 March 2004

Statement by Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director, UNIFEM

International Women's Day 2004 marks a crucial year for women. Everywhere, women are confronting the challenges of our global world, from deepening poverty and economic uncertainty, the rising toll of HIV/AIDS on their lives and those of their children, to the violence they experience in everyday life. At the same time, in all regions, the gains that women have made over the last two decades are under attack. On International Women's Day this year, we declare our determination to meet these challenges, and move forward.

This year marks the beginning of worldwide preparations to commemorate, in 2005, the 10th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference of Women in Beijing. The largest conference in the history of the United Nations, the Beijing conference mobilized the global women's movement in dynamic new ways, channeling the demands and protests articulated over the Decade for Women into strategic alliances and collective power. The result was the commitment of all nations to the advancement of women as outlined in the Platform for Action for Development, Equality and Peace. In 1995, women's voices were heard.

A decade later, these voices must be heard again. UNIFEM came into being because women worldwide demanded a voice at the United Nations. As we prepare for Beijing +10, the voices of women in all parts of the world must continue to be sought out, to be heard and

to be heeded. This has been the guiding principle behind all UNIFEM programmes since its inception.

Too often I have listened to women describe how their experiences are not part of the policy discussion. Whether talking about the unequal impact of globalization, the ravages of war and armed conflict, or the reality of living with HIV/AIDS, they feel marginalized and excluded from decision-making that affects their lives. And yet, it is well-known that the most effective policy approaches come from listening to those who have experienced such problems first hand, who can provide needed perspectives, improve understanding and offer creative solutions.

In recent years, there has been a proliferation of women's networks across the world, proof that women are banding together and fighting to be heard - on the frontlines in their communities, in government and national institutions, in schools, in international fora and through the media, their voices are not only those of victims, but of survivors, leaders, advocates, and change agents.

This year, women are coming together at the CSW to make themselves heard on HIV/AIDS, which is increasingly affecting primarily women and girls. Ten years ago, women worldwide made up 38 per cent of people infected with the disease. Today they make up 50 per cent. In some regions this ratio has tilted further towards women: in the Caribbean it is 52 per cent, in Africa, 58 percent. Ten years ago, women seemed peripheral to the epidemic. Today, the disproportionate effects on women have put them at its epicenter. For young women the situation is particularly alarming. Young women in the developing world already outnumber young men among newly infected 15-24 year olds by two to one. Women, especially girls, are biologically more susceptible to HIV infection than men. In addition, the social impact of HIV/AIDS on women and girls is greater—they are the ones who assume the burden of care when family members are affected by the disease, putting severe constraints on their access to education, employment, food cultivation, and often treatment. Violence against women, both a cause and a consequence of the epidemic, adds another major risk factor for transmission. Rape, sexual assault and women's inability to refuse unwanted sex or to demand safe sex are serious factors in the rampant spread of the epidemic.

Women living with HIV/AIDS are not suffering in silence however. Extraordinary work is being done by HIV-positive women's networks such as the International Community of Women living with HIV/AIDS, a global network run by and for HIV positive women. These women are demanding that they be listened to and their needs taken seriously. Building on their own experiences, they are demanding visibility and understanding of the issues related to the epidemic, identifying innovative solutions and advocating for a future in which they can live without stigma and violence, where they have easy access to drugs and treatment, where they can continue to contribute to their national economies, and where they, and their children, can live healthy and meaningful lives.

We know the power of women's voices. This year we especially applaud the power of women in Africa, who succeeded in securing adoption of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of African Women. Women now make up 50 per cent of the Commissioners of the African Union (AU), in line with the AU policy decision on equal participation of women in decision-making positions. Most recently in Rwanda, women succeeded in winning 48.8 per cent of seats in Parliament, ranking Rwanda among the highest countries in the world in terms of women's shares of seats in Parliament. In addition, 50 per cent of Rwanda's High Court judges are now women. Elsewhere, too, women are finding ways to be heard. In Afghanistan, at the recent Constitutional Loya Jirga, Afghan women succeeded in inserting a provision in the new constitution that safeguards and holds equal the rights of men and women.

Women have also made their voices heard on the issue of violence against women. As a result of constant advocacy by women's rights groups over the last 20 years, more and more countries have some type of legislation concerning violence against women. At least 45 nations have specific legislation against domestic violence, 21 more are drafting new laws, and many others have amended criminal assault laws to include domestic violence.

To make a real difference, we have to transform words into action and results. This requires governments and the international community at large to stand by their commitments and to allocate resources to translate them into action. On International Women's Day 2004, I call on the world community to pay close attention to what women are telling us about the situation they live in – their needs, hopes and visions of a better future. It is our responsibility to amplify their voices and to use them to guide our work and policies. Only then can we hope to achieve a world in which both men and women are able to lead the best lives they can.



Mary Robinson

An Interview with Mary Robinson: Making 'global' and 'ethical' Rhyme

Conference Address by Mary Robinson: Clash or Consensus: Gender and Human Security in a Globalized World

Mary Robinson was President of Ireland (1990-97) and United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (1997-2002). She is now honorary President of Oxfam International and Executive Director of the Ethical Globalisation Initiative which she founded.

In this interview organised and conducted by OpenDemocracy.net, she talks about the 21st century human rights agenda – one that connects universal principles to the daily lives and needs of the world's poorest people. Her interview focuses on the following areas:

- Human rights and national sovereignty
- The American exception in not ratifying three main instruments, the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, or the Convention on the Rights of the Child, or the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women,
- Rights and civil society
- Human rights and faith
- Human rights and international trade
- Iraq

This interview forms part of an ongoing debate on the global forum website www.opendemocracy.net which is an online global magazine of politics and culture.

Making 'global' and 'ethical' rhyme:

An Interview with Mary Robinson by openDemocracy.net

9 December 2003

openDemocracy: You were a lawyer in Dublin and became president of Ireland, recording at one point an over 90% popularity rating. You went on to become the second United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) and gave that role a world profile. Since completing your term as High Commissioner you have been developing a new project – the Ethical Globalisation Initiative ([EGI](#)). In a word, how would you describe what you do?

Read Anthony Barnett's [editor's note](#) on how Mary Robinson's views relate to an emerging world politics

Mary Robinson: I guess you'd call me an activist.

openDemocracy: Your aims?

Mary Robinson: There are many kinds of activists working to make the world a better place. At EGI we want to take human rights out of their box. We want to show the relevance of the universal principles of human rights to the basic needs of health, security, education and equality.

I'm struck by how very few people outside a rarefied world of true believers understand what you mean when you say human rights – that includes development experts and economists who are very keen to implement the [UN Millennium Development Goals](#).

They've told me quite frankly, that they don't know exactly what a human rights approach is.

I see our job at EGI as making the principles of human rights clear and accessible to people around the world. When I am asked, "What, in your view, is the worst human rights problem in the world today?" I reply: "Absolute poverty." This is not the answer most journalists expect. It is neither sexy nor legalistic. But it is true.

We are working for what I call "values-led globalisation". The international human rights framework is a vital component and engine for promoting global values. Governments have signed up to this international legal framework and we should hold them accountable, in all circumstances from environmental or labour standards, to trade talks, arms control and security issues as well as other international legal codes.

openDemocracy: "The international human rights framework" means what?

Mary Robinson: I'm talking about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the six core human rights instruments: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Convention Against Torture; the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.

Every country in the world has ratified at least one of these. Many have ratified more than three. Some have ratified all six. We see them as important tools for holding governments to account and we aim to be rigorous in our analysis of how this can be done.

But our aim is also to try and show young idealistic people who are frequently concerned with the environment, or poverty and inequality – to activists, if you will: "Look, you are interested in trying to make sure that governments keep a clean environment, have regard for the lifestyles of indigenous peoples, and work for fair trade rules. Well, it's exactly the same for human rights – from non-discrimination to the basic rights to food, safe water, education and health care. We are talking rights not needs. There are standards that governments have signed up to – but nobody is holding them to account."

Let me give you an example that stays with me from when I was UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. In April 1999 the civil society groups in Brazil were fed up trying to get the government of Brazil to file its report under the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. So they compiled an alternative report on Brazil. They were a broad coalition of NGOs, churches, trade unions, black Brazilians, the landless, those working in child rights, and they came together and sent a small group to Geneva with their alternative report.

I met them as High Commissioner. We explained they could not have a formal hearing before the UN Committee which monitors implementation of the Covenant because only a government is entitled to that, but we commended them. As it happened, in May 1999 I was going to Brazil. I put the alternative report under my arm. When I got off the plane I met journalists and said, "Here is the alternative report, now where's the government's?"

The government was very embarrassed. They then told me they would bring out a report very quickly. But I said: "No, no, I don't want that. I want to see the government working *with* the civil society groups to bring out a report that reflects reality." And that is what happened. The result was more links between the civil society participants and the government representatives.

Shortly after, Paulo Sergio Pinheiro became minister of state for human rights. When I went back to Brazil two years later government and civil society groups were reporting on similar lines. The process had brought them closer together, not in comfortable dialogue but in real dialogue. So it's a process that reinforces democracy.

openDemocracy: And what difference does that make in Brazil?

Mary Robinson: The Brazilian government, at federal level and with as much influence as possible at the regional levels, now is committed to progressively implement the right to health, to education, to shelter, in better ways. It wasn't in fact making the changes that were necessary. The international framework helped Brazilians wake up their government to its responsibilities.

Human rights and national sovereignty

openDemocracy: If you are trying to enforce the principles of human rights in a global way, why are you emphasising the role of national governments?

Mary Robinson: I believe that the nation-state level is very important. The whole human rights structure is based on the accountability of governments. It remains the task of governments to implement the fundamental human rights standards which should influence all aspects of globalisation, including even trade talks, and to be answerable for this in a democratic way. The structure is international, but the accountability is national and I would like to see that accountability being more penetrating at regional and local level, especially in federal systems.

In terms of my own experience I'm coming from the principles the European Union has been developing. I think that we have refined greatly our notions of sovereignty in the EU. Its members consider themselves to be sovereign governments, but they have ceded a part of their sovereignty to the Union level, and their sovereignty is now

penetrated by EU law. I used to take cases relying on EU law which found that Irish law was no longer valid because it was in contradiction to EU law.

openDemocracy: Wouldn't you say that Ireland's sovereignty has been undermined by that?

Mary Robinson: No, because it willingly shares its sovereignty and it exercises more power in an EU context as a member-state. And also as a citizen of Ireland I have more sovereignty over our government. Because citizens now have more ways of holding the Irish government to account, not just under Irish constitutional law, but under the European system, at Strasbourg and Brussels. This, I believe, is the benefit for individual citizens.

openDemocracy: The issue of whether globalisation undermines the nation-state and whether this should be welcomed or not is much debated, not least in **openDemocracy.net**. In an important interview with us, [Maria Cattauj](#), who heads the International Chamber of Commerce, made the unexpected argument that for people to reap the benefits of globalisation countries need a big and effective government sector and cited examples. Are you saying something similar?

Mary Robinson: Yes, nations have limited their sovereignty in ratifying the Covenants and in agreeing to report on how they are doing with respect to them. We're saying that this process of accountability should not only be upwards, to UN committees with few or no sanctions, it should also be downwards to civil society and a public opinion that is educated to demand those rights.

It is essential, therefore, to the human rights framework, that governments have the primary responsibility. We want this to be recognised and expanded. So, for example, when globalisation means that many of the services that individual governments used to have direct power over are privatised, in education and health, even prison services, nonetheless national sovereignty still needs to be exercised.

In human rights theory it is very important that governments still have the primary responsibility for the standards and provision of such services even if they no longer deliver them. They must insist that the private sector delivers without discrimination. So governments still have responsibility, including the need to influence business. Indeed, we want the human rights framework to enhance and legitimise government influence.

Business comes in here as a major player but again because government sets and implements the rules. With respect to privatisation we also encourage corporate social responsibility to be expanded to make sure that corporations understand the need to ensure respect for economic and social rights because they're increasingly the providers of the services.

What we are seeking is a new relationship between national states and the international order, in which governments accept that their legitimacy as governments makes them accountable to citizens to defend and deliver basic universal human rights, as codified in the conventions.

The American exception

openDemocracy: But isn't the current of opinion and policy in the United States going against this? There is a strong sense in the United States, especially since 9/11, that America needs to take extraordinary measures and that existing multilateral frameworks and institutions are unhelpful.

Mary Robinson: A passionate sense of national sovereignty and suspicion of international law in the United States predates 9/11, but so does an openness to what I am arguing for. I'm very happy now to be based in the United States. I personally spend a lot of my time in universities and in business communities and in the forums the country has for talking about world affairs. Just over the past months I've been in Kansas, Missouri, Florida, Washington State, Virginia and I speak to quite large audiences, as well as the Ivy League. They've chosen to come and listen to me, and I'm very interested at how receptive they are to this message.

In terms of the Conventions, the United States is the only country along with Somalia not to have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In American constitutional law, in theory in relation to children only parents have rights. But the Convention on the Rights of the Child says children have rights, including rights to information and participation. So this would require that US law would have to be changed because of the treaty. They can't yet accept this. Peter Sutherland has talked to me, as he did in his interview with **openDemocracy.net**, about difficulties he had in the establishment of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), to get the United States to agree to ratify it because it had consequences for their sovereignty.

It is a great problem for the true international agenda of human rights that the United States, uniquely among industrialised countries, has not ratified three main instruments, has not ratified the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, or the Convention on the Rights of the Child, or the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, and we could have so much richer a debate and dialogue on international human rights standards if the superpower would sign up to the agenda.

Harold Hongju Koh, the newly appointed Dean of the Yale Law School, has written convincingly in *The Economist* recently about the need to address this problem of American exceptionalism. He has been involved in a number of briefs for the US Supreme Court that cite European cases. In a recent case, Justice Kennedy for the majority of the Supreme Court referred to European law, including a case that I had brought to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. The fact that the United

States Supreme Court is citing European law may be a chink in American exceptionalism, it means that at the judicial level America is willing to be influenced by international court cases.

Hopefully Congress too will stop being so blinkered and narrow on the sovereignty of the American people, and will instead actually look at the legislation and experience of other systems and will begin to accept that if you live in a global world and you want to champion liberty in it, then you have you got to sign up to that global world.

I'm not interested in scoring points or being over-critical of the US administration. I want to find the entry points to try and get it back on track so that the United States can get out of the present disastrous situation it's in, and back into being a constructive force for human rights in the world.

At present the United States has lost some credibility on civil or political rights because there have been so many erosions of civil liberties. I recommend you look at a report titled "The New Normal" by the Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights. Since 9/11 the United States has been followed by countries with bad records, such as the former Soviet Union countries, into erosions of human rights. Because the United States has changed its standards it is undermining civil liberties elsewhere.

Rights and civil society

openDemocracy: You seem to be putting considerable emphasis on social and economic rights as well as political and civil rights.

Mary Robinson: Yes, it was the great achievement of Eleanor Roosevelt as chair of the UN Commission on Human Rights in 1948, that she knew that the agenda had to bring together strong civil and political rights but also a progressive implementation of economic, social and cultural rights.

That was the universal agenda.

The civil liberties agenda alone would have been seen by the rest of the world as a western agenda. The Universal Declaration has a balance, but then we had the cold war, and unfortunately there are two covenants which divide up the body of rights. We should have had only one covenant. Then we would have kept a single framework. But because we had two covenants the western world by and large didn't take economic, social and cultural rights seriously. Now, I think, Europe is beginning to do so, and this is dramatically important for the credibility of human rights internationally.

openDemocracy: You're trying to get to a one covenant situation?

Mary Robinson: We want to broaden understanding and agreement around the fact that both strands of human rights are equally important, and when you really understand that you understand the universality and the interconnectedness of human rights.

openDemocracy: So ethical globalisation is another way of putting these two parts together?

Mary Robinson: It is in a way, yes. That certainly is an important part of what we're doing.

openDemocracy: But won't this be seen as imposing western values?

Mary Robinson: No. I've just come back from an Arab women's summit, and I saw very bright, motivated Arab women engaged in how they could use the human rights framework. Not all Arab countries have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of the Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), for example. I encouraged them to campaign that those countries should ratify.

Most Arab states are putting very strong reservations both to CEDAW and to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We must encourage those who are working on those governments either to modify or lift entirely those reservations, and expand the understanding that these are very good ways of making your governments accountable. Use this to help remove discrimination against women, such as in marriage laws. Freedom from discrimination for women, ensuring that female children can learn to read, these are human needs for half the human race, not western values.

openDemocracy: Are you saying that governments should be taken to court for social and economic rights violations?

Mary Robinson: There are some court cases on economic, social and cultural issues now. There's Indian case law and South African case law in particular on the right to water, which of course is central to the right to life. In general, I don't think that economic, social and cultural rights are primarily a matter of going to court. They are most useful today as commitments which can help ensure effective and equitable policy-making at every level.

Sharing experience and building public support for the full range of rights is more powerful than legal cases.

A new international network – the International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR-Net.org) – has been created by activists from around the world. They are sharing the experiences of bringing rights arguments to a number of different global challenges.

They are asking one another: “What’s the World Bank doing in your country? What’s the impact? What about the IMF and structural adjustment? How do you demonstrate the impact of international policies on local communities?” “What strategies are you using to hold your government accountable?”

It’s terrific, there is a great momentum with what’s happening in Latin America being shared with Asia, being shared with Africa and Europe. Economists, environmentalists, human rights activists, development people, are for the first time sharing across regions and I think that this is the beginning of an alternative power system which will increasingly oblige governments to implement in this century the legal commitments drafted and refined in the last half of the 20th century.

openDemocracy: But what about the civil society organisations themselves, no one elected them?

Mary Robinson: That’s a very good question. I’m concerned that NGOs become much more accountable as they become more influential. One of our partners, the International Council on Human Rights Policy, has prepared a draft report encouraging NGOs to become more transparent and have better accounting systems, saying who are their members, where their money comes from. Some NGOs resent this and say: look, we don’t have the resources for this, we don’t have the professionalism. I’m actually talking to foundations now about helping NGOs to have the extra cash flow to professionalise themselves.

Also, of course, as well as NGOs there are false non-governmental organisations, that are in fact Government Organised NGOs or GONGOs. Various developing countries are now breeding GONGOs which are a corrupt way of saying we have freedom in our country: “Look at all the NGOs, look at all the newspapers”, when actually they are controlled by the government which has packed its GONGOs with tame acolytes and controls the funding.

openDemocracy: In July 2003 you mentioned a linked problem of government influence, with the millennium challenge account and the Bush administration’s expressed commitment to increasing support, for example, for fighting HIV/Aids.

Mary Robinson: The millennium challenge account stipulates criteria for countries to receive development aid, and some are civil liberties criteria on human rights. The way this has been done does cause enormous problems. In fairness to the Bush administration, we are talking about a lot of additional money. It has done far more than the Clinton administration in providing funding for development and to tackle HIV and Aids.

But the criteria for accessing this funding is very worrying because it’s a different set of criteria than that established for the dispersal of global funds for Aids or development

which puts the focus on a balance between the civil, the political and the economic, social and cultural. I hope there will be a conference sometime in 2004 at a venue such as Stanford University's Centre for Democracy, Development and Rule of Law ([CDDRL](#)) on this as they have some of the people who drew up the criteria for the millennium challenge account. We need an open, constructive discussion on why the criteria may be seen as damaging to development policy and whether they could be broadened.

Human rights and faith

openDemocracy: You say you are working to make the world a better place, as you put it; what are the forces that are opposed to what you're doing?

Mary Robinson: I think the main source of opposition is power, the vested interests of existing power that wishes to keep its power. Take for example traditional, religious male establishments.

openDemocracy: Your framework is universal and secular and you are from Ireland which was one of the first places to witness the armed expression of religious differences in its modern form. Is this why you also mention religion as part of the opposition to human rights?

Mary Robinson: No. My concern is different kinds of fundamentalism, to use a shortcut. This can be as damaging when it is Christian as anything else. Thus Christian fundamentalists seek to roll back women's right to choose in the United States, and then also insist that money against Aids must not go to organisations that help people obtain their reproductive rights. These are extremely worrying trends. In Johannesburg at the world conference on sustainable development a paragraph 47 on women's health nearly put the women's movement back to before the UN's Fourth World Conference on Women ([FWCW](#)) in Beijing in 1995.

A compromise was reached at the last minute. There are no plans for a tenth anniversary conference to mark Beijing because the women's movement is too afraid that if we had a meeting now we would go backwards because of this terrible alliance of, in effect, fundamentalist Christians, fundamentalist Jews and fundamentalist Muslims.

Happily there is also a progressive alliance on the other side. I've been invited to [Sweden in 2004](#) to a big international conference that the Christian, Muslim and Jewish institutions are organising to consider the role of religions in conflict, under the title "Tools for Peace?".

So I agree with those who argue that it is possible to distil from the religions of the world their common values and relevance. As far as I'm concerned I am involved in a

complementary process with people who have a moral or spiritual commitment to human rights.

openDemocracy: So you don't see terrorism as religious?

Mary Robinson: No. When 9/11 happened I guessed immediately that the shock would put human rights under more pressure than ever before.

I sat with my colleagues to assess the impact. Already the response from the White House and the Pentagon was, understandably, that "we have been attacked and we are at war." But I argued against using the language of war.

The attacks on the World Trade Center using civilian planes with full tanks to kill as many people as possible were a crime against humanity. Under the statute of the International Criminal Court, under existing jurisprudence, the world should unite. Everything that happened immediately afterwards actually fitted that: UN Security Council resolution 1373, even going into Afghanistan because the Taliban were protecting the perpetrators of crimes against humanity, could have been done in that framework. Instead, we are now being offered an "endless war" with no peace in sight. An endless war against terrorism can tend to inflate the terrorists, because being at war is attractive to some angry, unemployed, disaffected youth.

Human rights and international trade

openDemocracy: In your recent Deneke Lecture you extend the human rights agenda to issues of trade, which came to the forefront in a different, but also dramatic way with the showdown at the WTO ministerial in Cancún in September 2003.

Mary Robinson: I am no expert in trade law. But as President of Oxfam I helped to lead its delegation at Cancún and learned a great deal. The "Doha Development Round" of trade negotiations, launched in November 2001, was intended to help poor countries by lowering trade barriers, especially in agriculture. It stalled dramatically in Cancún. This will impact on poverty and therefore it is a human rights issue.

Regardless of who was to blame for the breakdown I believe there is an opportunity now for reflection on how the international trade system measures up against the values at the heart of human rights. These are shared values like participation, accountability and equality with which most people throughout the world intuitively identify. Those values seem to be far from centre-stage in trade negotiations today.

Take participation. Powerful interests often have access to information on trade negotiations or are able to create opportunities for input while smaller countries that are members of the WTO are not always able to participate fully in the WTO decision-making that affects them.

The structures of the WTO need to be reformed to increase participation. There must be a greater sense of shared ownership of the substance of the trade negotiation agenda. Decisions about issues to be negotiated, and in which sequence they should be taken, should rest with *all* WTO members, not only the most powerful.

There's a widespread perception that the WTO is a secret and non-democratic institution which is unresponsive to civil society. I believe the new Consultative Board on the future of the multilateral trading system should consider such issues. I hope it will make broad recommendations on how the structure of the WTO can reflect the need for greater participation by all governments as well as by civil society.

For example, the term 'human rights' has been too often associated with conditionality, and with concerns of developing countries that in order to benefit from open trade they would be required to implement immediately labour and environmental standards of a comparable level to those applied in industrialised countries. At the same time, debates about the primacy of trade as against human rights legal codes have contributed to maintaining the unfortunate impression that the two bodies of law are pursuing incompatible aims.

One of the main ways the WTO carries out its function of oversight and accountability is by reviewing all aspects of each member's trade policies through something called the Trade Policy Review Mechanism (TPRM).

The trouble is that TPRM tends to focus narrowly on a member's trade liberalisation policies, as well as on the impacts on other members, rather than on the broader impacts on its own citizens. If used more creatively, these reviews could help bring human rights concerns and issues of accountability into the debate over trade policy at the national level.

For instance, it is now beyond dispute that the patent rules of the WTO – contained in the agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (Trips) – have had a negative impact on the price of medicines in poor countries, and have contributed to the lack of access to treatments for diseases such as HIV/Aids. The agreement required all WTO members – other than the poorest countries – to uphold twenty-year pharmaceutical patents, thereby delaying the entry of cheaper drugs into countries where they are needed most. These are literally life or death issues.

Just before the Cancún ministerial meeting a further agreement was reached to relax these patent rules. Unfortunately, the agreement is so riddled with red tape, restrictions and conditions that governments may be deterred from using it. Experts – especially from the World Health Organisation (WHO) – agree that it is vital that this new agreement be fully implemented, and that developing countries be encouraged to make use of it. It is vital that the TRIPS Council, the WTO body in charge of monitoring these

patent rules, closely monitor and encourage the application of this new agreement, and find ways to improve cooperation with the WHO in this area.

Using human rights commitments more effectively, either as part of negotiations in the WTO or as part of the trade policy review process, poses issues of equality in a practical venue. At EGI we want to help level the playing field. We will provide rigorous human rights analysis of specific trade issues which can be used by developing countries as part of their negotiation strategies at the WTO. We also plan to develop greater dialogue and understanding about how human rights commitments can be used as a constructive element of trade policy review and dispute settlement with the aim of creating a WTO which works fairly for everyone and does indeed help end world poverty.

Iraq

openDemocracy: While the impact of trade on poverty and basic rights will continue for the long term, can we finish with a question about the immediate situation in Iraq. What is your view of the overthrow of the Saddam Hussein regime and its aftermath?

When I was High Commissioner I frequently called on the world community to oppose the numerous, terrible violations perpetrated by Saddam Hussein in Iraq. I also strongly supported the UN special rapporteur on Iraq who drew attention both to these continuing violations and to the impact of sanctions and the terrible further burdens these imposed especially on the economic and social rights of the Iraqi people.

So I am very happy that the regime has gone. I feel my record in opposing it has been vindicated by all that we have learnt since, such as the public exposure of mass graves. Everything we have learnt confirms the appalling nature of a regime which the international community failed to condemn adequately in human rights terms prior to 2001. I do not support, however, individual countries taking military action against another country because of its human rights record, or subsequently justifying taking such action on human rights grounds.

The question now is how best to help the Iraqi people build a democratic and free Iraqi society that ensures respect for the rights of all Iraqis.

In my view this will demand a fundamental change in the configuration of power in Iraq. We will not see a satisfactory human rights situation when the ruling power in the country is perceived as an occupying power because it is, indeed, an occupying power.

We need a different approach. All countries are particular and no models are perfect. But we need a similar approach to that adopted in Afghanistan and East Timor, where the supreme power was exercised by the United Nations mandated to oversee as swift a transition as possible to genuine self-government. That is what is needed in Baghdad.

So my answer goes back to what I was saying about what happened after 9/11. From Iraq to Guantanamo Bay, international standards and the framework of international law are being given less when they should be given more importance. I am pleased that the courts in the United States are beginning to review what has happened to those detained in Guantanamo Bay. Similarly in Iraq we need to bring our strategies back within the framework of international norms and law.

Source: <http://www.opendemocracy.net/debates/article-6-27-1627.jsp#>

At the Women's Learning Partnership (WLP) human security conference, "**Clash or Consensus: Gender and Human Security in a Globalized World**" on October 8-9 in Washington DC, Mary Robinson delivered the keynote address.

While the concept of security has been traditionally concerned with the security of states and the shoring up of borders, the notion of human security encompasses the social, political, economic, and cultural needs and rights of individuals and communities in our increasingly interconnected societies and provides a viable framework for achieving sustainable societal change.

Ms Robinson's address served as a call to action for individuals and organizations world wide who are working to implement human security. Ms. Robinson spoke about conflict and post-conflict situations such as those in Afghanistan, Iraq, Liberia, and Palestine and the particularly dire conditions they represent in terms of basic human security, particularly for women. She identified HIV/AIDS as a primary threat to human security, noting that women are the primary victims, yet they receive the least support at the communal, national, and international levels. As points of action to mitigate the gendered effects of the HIV/AIDS crisis, Ms. Robinson highlighted eliminating gender-based violence, fostering women's economic independence, acknowledging women's burden of care, and finally ensuring equal access to prevention and medical treatment. Ms. Robinson suggested that conference participants form a task force in order to generate innovative policy and programmatic recommendations for building human security around the world. She also spoke of the importance of holding governments accountable for re-defining human security and changing how they implement human security strategies. (Source:learningpartnership.org)

Speech by Mary Robinson

October 8 2003: Clash or Consensus? Gender and Human Security in a Globalized World; Washington D.C.

Dear friends and future friends,

It is an honour to address so many people who have been key in ensuring the human security of women around the world. I am well aware that many of you have had first hand experience at grassroots dealing with threats to women's human security, and, if anything, we have seen that these threats are getting worse. That these dangers are continually present and increasing in the lives of women worldwide was something I recognized as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. This is why it was so important that the Secretary General Kofi Annan decided to appoint Hina Jilani as his Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders, because on the front-line of human security we need a woman who understands the risks faced by women every day.

There is one positive change since Beijing: although women worldwide still suffer from violence, discrimination and lack of power, now, at least, women know this. That knowledge is the beginning of power.

During this conference, as we explore the meaning of human security for women, we must keep that practical experience and the knowledge factor to the forefront of our minds. We must make use of our knowledge of the many obstacles women face, and the many, but sometimes insufficient, solutions that women create.

The theme of this conference, Clash or Consensus? Gender and Human Security in a Globalized World, challenges us to raise difficult questions and find real answers. We must ask ourselves: how can we apply our knowledge and experience to actions that make the world safer for women? How can we translate the varied viewpoints and backgrounds represented at this conference into a coherent and effective plan of action? We must find a way. The threats to women, in every nation, are too great for us to fail. My message today is straightforward: this conference must make a difference. It is time to act.

As we meet here, we are aware of the daily experiences of women in danger around the world. In the New York Times of September 16 we read of an unintended consequence of "liberation" threatening the lives and security of Iraqi women. Rape and kidnapping have increased, while "honour killings" continue to occur. In such murders, a male relative kills a woman who has been raped, a murder incurring a maximum sentence of only three years. Women are increasingly veiling themselves and remaining indoors, while college students, doctors and lawyers who moved freely around Baghdad under Saddam Hussein's rule, now stay inside for fear of violence. Meanwhile the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior appears to think women are not part of its remit. Personal security and freedom from violence are basic human rights, without which women cannot hope to participate in building democracy, peace or sustainable development.

When we talk about security we must begin with safety in one's own home, the difficult topic of safety from violence at the hands of those who often claim to care about "their"

women. Then we must talk about the security to walk out one's front door, to attend classes, to work, to participate fully in the life of a citizen. Conflict and post-conflict situations throw into particularly stark relief the absence of these basic securities, and we will pay special attention over the coming days to the situation of women in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, Liberia and other zones of conflict. In exploring the experiences of women in these apparently extreme situations, we should ask ourselves both what is truly unique, and what, sadly, is all too common in women's experiences, within and outside conflict zones?

Let us not forget what is happening to women in Afghanistan. Amnesty International reports that while more girls are in school and more women are at work, the risk of rape is very high and girls as young as eight are being forced into marriage. Alas, the plight of women in general has not improved much since the fall of the Taleban and women are not well protected by the criminal justice system. Jannat Jalil at the BBC noted that forced virginity tests, kidnap and torture still take place. A Human Rights Watch report states that many Afghan women are frightened to leave their homes. Two years after claims that the war would liberate them, some Afghan women are still being sold by their husbands, for an average of \$3000. As these abuses continue, we must be responsible for continuously calling attention to women's rights, even when global media - and funding attention - has moved elsewhere.

We must also remember that the beginning of safety is the safety to speak out. At the global level, we hear too little from the women of Afghanistan, of Iraq, Palestine, Liberia and other areas of conflict. Too few stories are told in their voices and too little about the solutions they imagine and create. It is up to all of us, but particularly those of us in the global North, to make space and listen more closely to the voices not often heard.

Let those among us from European and US backgrounds be honest and admit we don't listen enough. Differences belong to the field of culture. The problem arises when one culture - any culture - is considered the model for an ethical subject. This is a great problem, a kind of blindness, for many of us from European or US backgrounds. Women from different cultures, at a conference such as this, must be prepared to create that vital space. We must come together to see how to think of the 'sameness' of the ethical subject without slipping in one culture, one history, as the model. I sense, for example, that women in Muslim societies do not want to face the stark choice of an increasingly fundamentalist society or a western "McDonalds" society. Rightly, they seek the space to make their own choices, based on their spirituality and on the universality of human rights. Women's rights grow out of the struggle of women to determine their choices, their priorities, and their vision. An Irish poet friend of mine, Eavan Boland, put it very well when she wrote of women 'finding a voice where they had found a vision'.

Attempting to answer these questions shows us the importance of a broad concept of human security. This involves a move away from concern with state security to a concern with human security - protecting individuals and communities rather than

simply state boundaries. The United Nations Development Program notes that human security encompasses safety from chronic threats of hunger, disease and repression. These are needs that may require a global response to widespread and global threats, as well as strong domestic responses, needs that may not be best met militarily.

The report, "Human Security Now," produced by the Independent Commission on Human Security and presented to the United Nations, states that the concept involves "protecting people from critical and pervasive threats and situations, building on their strengths and aspirations. It also means creating systems that give people the building blocks of survival, dignity and livelihood." Human security connects different types of freedoms: "freedom from want, freedom from fear and freedom to take action on one's own behalf." We may reflect: how well do our societies guarantee these securities to women? What actions must we take, to ensure that all women have the freedom to take action on their own behalf?

For there to be action, there must be resources. I know how necessary it is to have resources for small grassroots activities that reach those women most in need, such as rural women, women who are experiencing violence, women in the informal sector, women living in poverty. I am delighted to see Kavita Ramdas here, the head of the Global Fund for Women, which does crucial work in identifying and supporting women around the world at every level. The desperate need for resources for grassroots human rights work internationally persuaded me to agree to take on the chair of the Fund for Global Human Rights, and I will keep women's rights to the forefront of the activities to be supported by that Fund. Each of us needs to think of how we can address women's need for security in everything we do, and how we can raise the financial support to make those plans happen.

One of the looming threats to human security in Muslim societies – as it has already threatened other societies - is HIV/AIDS. Muslim-majority nations are in a position to tackle this critical threat before it reaches unmanageable levels. We have seen the devastating effects of this disease on the people of nations across the globe, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. We are beginning to see increasing infection rates across Asia, and its effects are felt in every country. Despite low overall levels of HIV/AIDS infection, North Africa and the Middle East is the only region outside of sub-Saharan Africa where a majority of those living with HIV are women.

Human security and HIV/AIDS are trapped in a vicious cycle. HIV/AIDS is fuelled by human insecurity - social disruption, poverty, and inequity - and in turn HIV/AIDS creates further social disruption and exacerbates poverty.

Heterosexual transmission now accounts for the majority of infections worldwide. Where there is gender inequity women are less able to protect themselves from HIV or from the sexual violence that may expose them to HIV. Economic dependency worsens women's vulnerability to infection by partners who they are not in a financial position to

leave, partners who may or may not be faithful to them. Women usually have less access to health care and treatment for themselves but bear the burden of caring for the community. Social constraints may prevent women from speaking out while simultaneously condoning male sexual norms that place women at risk. These are all crucial factors that foster the spread of HIV/AIDS, allowing it to reach epidemic proportions while denial and discrimination prevent it being acknowledged. If any of these social and cultural elements sound familiar, we must ask: how we will act now to protect women from HIV/AIDS?

Taking action on HIV/AIDS and women is a key priority in my work as head of the Ethical Globalization Initiative. At a recent conference we co-organized on this issue in Botswana, we identified obstacles such as lack of women's leadership, discrimination and stigma against those living with HIV, lack of research capacity and unfair international trade laws. It became clear that across countries, gender inequity worsens the impact of HIV/AIDS and makes it harder to reach women with treatment and prevention. The Ethical Globalization Initiative has formed strong partnerships with other groups to take action on these problems. For example, we will be organizing a women's leadership conference, coordinating research on women and HIV/AIDS, and producing policy briefs to inform national and international policymakers about women's vulnerability within the pandemic. Now, as I address an audience of individuals that can truly make a difference to this disease, I hope that many of us take the opportunity provided by this conference to form further partnerships and combine our efforts.

We must also ask ourselves whether stigma and discrimination are playing a role in masking the true extent of infection. In every country with high prevalence levels, including those with over 30%, the initial attitude to the disease was "that can't happen here." Every country has denied or played down, or simply failed to look for, the evidence that HIV is spreading among its general population. Every country has made statements that imply that their society is "immune" to this immune-system disease, that their people, and particularly their women, are too moral to be affected. But unfortunately there are circumstances where morality and faith are no protection against this infection.

The almost incomprehensible levels of infection in countries such as Botswana, with 38.8% HIV prevalence, and South Africa, where 5 million people are living with HIV, did not happen overnight. Public reluctance to acknowledge the problem, failure to tackle it immediately and head on, and failure of leadership and political advocacy, allowed the disease to spread to its current disastrous levels. Conversely, relative successes in controlling and treating the epidemic, by countries such as Thailand, Brazil and Uganda, have in common public leadership and openness about HIV/AIDS from very early on in its spread. We must view apparently low prevalence levels in a country as an unparalleled opportunity to avoid calamity, an incentive to act now. At this unique historical juncture in the progress of the disease in the Muslim world, Muslim leadership

has the chance to create a different path and save millions of lives. I invite us to use this conference as a springboard for action in meeting this human security challenge.

A recent assessment of the next wave of HIV/AIDS in China, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria and Russia indicates that HIV/AIDS will go from 14-23 million to 50-75 million in these regions by 2010. Even looking at lowest possible estimates, infections in Nigeria will rise from approximately 4 million to 10 million, Ethiopia from 2 to 7 million, and India from 7 to nearly 20 million. These are all countries with large Muslim populations, and I am happy to see that Ethiopia and India are strongly represented at this conference. With so many countries present here, you as leaders form an invaluable resource of the country-specific and culturally-sensitive knowledge so needed to tackle HIV/AIDS from a gender perspective. The various ways in which women's health is compromised within specific societies are familiar to you. Some of the factors that impede women's access to healthcare include the availability of clinics, the cost of services, control over household resources, decision making power in the family, social isolation and time constraints. Women are often discriminated against in access to education, food, employment, financial resources and primary health care. These are all areas where concrete actions can be taken.

We must recognize that HIV/AIDS is a women's issue. The Global Coalition on Women and AIDS, facilitated by UNAIDS, is an informal association of organizations committed to mitigating the gendered effects of HIV/AIDS. I serve as a member of its steering group, which has identified five key areas for action that can guide us during this conference. The Coalition first aims to prevent HIV infection among women and girls. A second goal is to eliminate violence against women and girls, as violence poses a fundamental threat to women's achievement of human security. It highlights the importance of economic independence through its aim of protecting female property and inheritance rights. It acknowledges the female burden of care and aims to support women and girls in their caring responsibilities. Finally, it aims to ensure equal access to care, support and treatment, emphasizing that an effective HIV/AIDS strategy must promote both prevention and treatment. This Coalition of many organizations gives us a comprehensive, multi-faceted model for tackling HIV/AIDS and other human security issues that affect women. During this conference we may consider how to form similar alliances of groups and identify issues that will improve women's lives.

I would hope that we can find ways to use this conference as a launching pad for action on women's human security. For example, attendees at this conference might consider whether they could work together to establish a follow-up taskforce that would create a plan of action on human security. This taskforce could provide policy and program recommendations suited to protecting and empowering women in Muslim societies.

A successful strategy requires tools. Let us remember that there is an important UN framework, the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) ratified by 173 countries, and its Optional Protocol now ratified by 54

countries. This UN framework is reinforced regionally by a number of legal instruments – most recently the optional Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa – providing a valuable framework for civil society, and women’s groups in particular, to hold governments accountable.

We must think about how each of us, within our own fields of influence, can act to protect women’s human security. For example, this evening I will be taking on the position of Chair of the Council of Women World Leaders. I am not interested in titles, but rather in using this position as effectively as I can to encourage women to change their position and have more choices. We need to think about immediate and sustainable action that each of us can take, in whatever forum we can access, that will ensure human security for all.

Later this month, I will be giving one of two keynote addresses to the Arab Women’s Summit in Amman, Jordan. The other will be given by my friend Mervat Tallawy, Executive Director of the UN Economic Commission in Beirut. It would be very helpful to both of us to get your thoughts about what issues should be focused on. Queen Rania’s presidency is a timely opportunity to push women’s issues to the forefront of concern for Muslim-majority nations. I feel a great deal can be achieved during Queen Rania’s presidency of the Summit, and we should ask ourselves what we would like to help to see accomplished by the end of her 18 month term.

A key area we will be addressing during this conference is the connection between human rights and human security. The Independent Commission on Human Security noted that “protecting human rights are at the core of protecting human security.” In order to protect people in situations of violent conflict, the Commission recommends that human security should be placed formally on the agenda of security organizations. The impunity of perpetrators of human rights abuses must be ended. This will require community strategies and humanitarian assistance. The report also notes that special attention should be given to protecting women and other vulnerable groups. These are suggestions we may bear in mind over the next two days, while we examine the many other connections between human rights and human security.

In her paper, “From Basic Needs to Basic Rights,” Mahnaz Afkhami, President of our generous hosts, Women’s Learning Partnership for Rights, Development and Peace, suggests that women’s modern search for identity is a universal phenomenon, culturally adapted but with certain common values. Mahnaz emphasizes the need to establish the moral priority of universal rights and to communicate these rights in ways that uphold and appreciate the diversity of life styles and culture. Strong involvement of women from the global south is essential to this process. At the same time, respect for multiculturalism and diverse cultures should not be misinterpreted as a “nebulous and contradictory concept of cultural relativism that functionally justifies abuse of women based on cultural norms.” She notes that women’s rights are particularly strained in North Africa and the Middle East, while female genital cutting affects nearly 90m

women worldwide. These are issues directly threatening women's human rights, and areas where civil and political leadership can effect change.

In addressing women's human rights, we must realize that across societies, sexual violence is one of the ultimate taboos. No society is open about it, and none like to admit that it occurs. Yet we know that it does, within and outside of marriage, often between powerful men and economically, socially or culturally less powerful women. If we are concerned about gender and human security, we must pay attention to the most basic security of all, personal integrity. Freedom from violence is a freedom denied to millions of women. Physical and sexual violence are frequently indivisible, as physical force enables coerced sex and sexual control may be enforced through beatings and threats. The epidemic of violence is intimately connected with the HIV/AIDS epidemic, as heterosexual transmission is the dominant mode of transmission worldwide. Women in violent relationships cannot protect themselves or others. Rape in conflict situations is one part of the challenge; rape within relationships and embodied in social norms of sexual acceptability is another. To challenge HIV and ensure women's human security, we must take the difficult step of being open about and challenging gender-based violence, in the many forms it takes in our diverse societies.

Mahnaz notes that educated women possess the power and voice to achieve political change. Once women begin to achieve freedoms and have knowledge, this information cannot be unlearned, and it becomes difficult to dislodge historical realities. Before the revolution in Iran, for example, women had achieved government and ambassadorial posts, were present in institutions of higher learning and women's organizations were spreading around the country. The Islamic Republic's efforts to undo these achievements found resistance because people's minds had been changed. Mahnaz suggests that Muslim women can educate the political elite through empowering interpretations of the Qu'ran and the hadith, providing a basis for legislation and implementation of change. A women's rights literacy programme can use international agreements to motivate grassroots campaigns. She points out that Muslim feminists have the connections and pre-established trust necessary to communicate these ideas to a general population. These are practical suggestions. We must use this conference as an opportunity to discover many more ways to change women's lives.

In essence, I think leadership is about having a vision, the discipline to work out how to achieve that vision, and the capacity to bring others with you. That is the challenge we have set ourselves in this conference: to articulate the vision, set in train the means to work out how to achieve it, and develop the capacity to reach out to our sisters worldwide to join us.

Thank you.

Advocacy by Dr John Murphy

Advocacy, Workshop Paper by Dr John Murphy, Mornington Peninsula Community Connections, at the Network of Inner East Community Houses Inc, Victoria, 17th June 2003

Dr John Murphy worked in the printing industry for 10 years prior to obtaining a Bachelor of Social Work in 1981 and a PhD in 1992, both from Monash University. He is a former lecturer in management and community work at the Department of Social Work and Human Services, Monash University. Dr Murphy is manager of Mornington Peninsula Community Connections, an independent, non-profit and free management advisory service for grass-roots community groups in Australia. Together with Barrie Thomas, co-owner of the Australian franchise of The Body Shop, Dr Murphy founded the Mornington Peninsula Community Connections.

In this Paper, Dr Murphy explains what 'Advocacy' is.

"For community workers, taking on an advocacy role generally means acting on behalf of the community, a group or an individual within the community. It means that the community worker is representing the interests of the person, the group or the community and putting their case for a better deal (Ife, 2002).

Most commonly, this might involve appearing at hearings and tribunals, lobbying politicians or other people who have decision-making power, and lobbying government departments."

Murphy gives a range of advocacy examples and explains the methods of advocacy. When doing advocacy, groups can employ a number of methods such as writing letters to or having conversations with politicians, government departments, service provider groups and influential community people and organisations; public speaking and using the media.

A critical point made by Murphy relates to how effective you are with advocacy will depend on your "power to influence people."

A ONE-DAY CONFERENCE PRESENTED BY THE NETWORK OF INNER EAST COMMUNITY HOUSES INC.

Tuesday 17 June 2003

Workshop Paper Advocacy Presented by Dr John Murphy

Mornington Peninsula Community Connections

I have been asked to speak to you today about advocacy and lobbying. I will mainly be speaking about advocacy, because for the most part, lobbying is one of the steps in the advocacy process. I will say more about this shortly.

I could provide you with an A – Z of advocacy from a text book, but instead I have decided to share with you some of my personal thoughts and experiences on the topic which are based on my experiences as a community worker over the last 22 years.

It would be good, too, if you would share some of your experiences when we get to the discussion stage of this session.

It has been suggested by the conference organisers that I spend about a third of this session on a formal presentation to you and that the remaining two-thirds of the session be devoted to discussion.

Before we get into advocacy, however, I would like to tell you something very briefly about my work because, among other things, a large part of what I do is advocacy, especially supporting others to do advocacy.

I manage an independent and free advisory service for grass-roots community groups on the Mornington Peninsula. It is called Mornington Peninsula Community Connections.

It was established by Barrie Thomas and I six years ago with support from The Body Shop in Australia. It is now funded by a private foundation which was established by Barrie Thomas.

Barrie Thomas was the person who, with a partner, brought the successful Body Shop retail chain here to Australia in 1983. From a very humble beginning 20 years ago, now there are over 80 retail outlets of The Body Shop in Australia and New Zealand.

As you know, The Body Shop has built a reputation as a socially responsible business, with its interest in human rights, environmental and other community concerns.

Before moving to New Zealand a couple of years ago, Barrie Thomas lived in Frankston.

Barrie and I are both trained in social work. I came from the business sector into social work and Barrie went from social work into business. Despite our social work beginnings, our main interest now is community work, with a community development emphasis.

Mornington Peninsula Community Connections came about from when Barrie and I were on the committee of a grass-roots community group in Frankston. I chaired the committee for five years and Barrie was on the committee for three years before he left for New Zealand. During our time on the committee we developed a stronger appreciation of the important role of small community groups and felt that we might be able to contribute in some small way to the development of the grass-roots sector.

As you may know, there is an increasing amount of research that shows that grass-roots groups play an incredibly important role in contributing to the development of strong communities.

We support community groups that are involved with:

- Self-help
- Neighborhood support
- Community information
- Conservation
- Education
- Employment training
- Arts and culture
- Recreation and sport
- Community services
- Church
- Animal welfare

Generally we support the smallest of the small of groups to:

- Plan their projects
- Develop their policies
- Resolve their problems
- Recruit their staff (most of whom are volunteers)

- Evaluate their services
- Do public relations and fundraising
- Form partnerships with business, government and other community organisations and
- Help them to be politically active, if that's what they want to do.

We do not provide funding directly to groups, but over the last five years we have helped little community groups to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for their projects.

Because we want to help groups empower themselves, our emphasis is on encouraging them to do things for themselves. So, education is the cornerstone of our work.

We help groups to gain the necessary knowledge, skills and reputation to do the things that they want to do.

Our project has been well received and we have supported a wide cross-section of grass-roots groups on the Mornington Peninsula, other parts of Victoria and in other States of Australia.

In two weeks time I am going to New Zealand for a week to speak to community, government and business groups about the benefits and the pitfalls of partnerships between community groups and business groups.

A growing part of our work is to help small business groups and small community groups to work together effectively, if that is what they want to do. One of our recent projects has been to encourage small business groups to become involved in their communities through employee volunteering. Another project has been to write a book called *Partnerships with Business – A Guide for Small Community Groups*, to assist small community groups to form productive partnerships with small business groups.

Our literature is listed on our website, and if any of them strikes your fancy, some of them are downloadable, or I can email you copies of others. The website address is www.communityconnections.com.au

If you want copies of the book *Partnerships with Business*, the order forms are on our website.

Now to advocacy. I am going to speak for another 15 minutes or so, and then we will have some group discussion.

What I would like you to do in the meantime is to have a think about situations where you have done some successful advocacy. What did you do which contributed to your efforts being successful? Also have a think about some situations where you were not so successful with advocacy and what were the reasons why you were not successful?

What I would like you to do when we get to the discussion section is for you to share some of your experiences - the good ones as well as the not-so-good ones.

Can you tell me what comes to mind when you hear the word advocacy.

- Influencing
- Pressuring
- Changing
- Advancing
- Soliciting
- Supporting
- Promoting
- Defending
- Arguing for
- Advancing the interests of
- Championing
- Upholding

For community workers, taking on an advocacy role generally means acting on behalf of the community, a group or an individual within the community. It means that the community worker is representing the interests of the person, the group or the community and putting their case for a better deal (Ife, 2002).

Most commonly, this might involve appearing at hearings and tribunals, lobbying politicians or other people who have decision-making power, and lobbying government departments.

Active community workers do advocacy all the time – probably every day. Almost every day in my work I am trying to influence a person or a group to develop or change their thinking on some issue or other.

For example, the kind of ongoing advocacy that I am involved in in my work involves:

- encouraging different groups in the community to work together rather than compete
- encouraging governments and community institutions to consult the community widely when planning community projects and services
- educating people from government and community organisations about the important role that people from the grass-roots sector have in building stronger communities
- highlighting to service providers how they can improve their services and how people can have better access to them.

An interesting area of advocacy that I have just become involved in is working with some local government community development workers who want to produce a video for their managers and their elected councillors about what community development is.

The workers are concerned that their councils have lost their understanding and their appreciation of the important role of community development in local government and, as a result, the workers believe that community development is rapidly losing ground in local government.

Another example, is that there is a fellow on the Mornington Peninsula who wants to establish a performing arts school for young people struggling with mainstream education. He has an entertainment and hospitality background.

I have been advocating on his behalf with the local council to get him support for the project as well as providing him with advice about how he can do his own advocacy and lobbying with government and education institutions.

Some of my advocacy work is done directly by me. Some of it I do in co-operation with other organisations based on a collective action or strength-in-numbers approach.

Some advocacy I get other people or organisations to do because they have more influence than I have with certain decision-making organisations and individuals. And, finally, I assist people to do their own advocacy.

When doing advocacy, groups can employ a number of methods such as:

- writing letters to or having conversations with politicians, government departments, service provider groups and influential community people and organisations.
- public speaking is another – for example, today I am advocating that you consider doing advocacy - if you are not already
- using the media

The most common media that come to mind are newspapers, radio and television, but media for community workers also incorporates things like advertising, newsletters, brochures and pamphlets, all of which can be designed to influence people.

Using the media can also include writing books and conference papers which can be targeting particular decision-making audiences. For example, late last year with the community services director from the Mornington Peninsula Shire I wrote a paper called *What's Wrong With Community Building* for the Western Australian Local Government Community Services Association conference in Perth (the paper is available for download from our website).

Our aim was to get all levels of government to reflect on their current community-building policies and programs, because we felt that many of them are flawed.

We used the conference to legitimise and promote what we had to say on the topic, so it is not just a paper containing the thoughts and the ideas of a couple of unknown community workers from the Mornington Peninsula. It is a paper given at a major conference which was attended by people from various parts of Australia.

The paper was put on the conference website and we distributed copies of the paper to all levels of government.

Interestingly, governments have refused to acknowledge the paper publicly, but we do know in Victoria, for example, that they are distributing it to their staff and we know that they are giving it to people who are involved with major government-funded community-building projects.

So, we feel that our advocacy efforts using this particular strategy have had some impact.

We rarely miss an opportunity to get our message across and over the last couple of years we have written many conference papers. We have written books and had chapters printed in a range of other people's books.

Usually, when a community group or a community worker advocates on behalf of individuals and families it is because the serious nature of the people's problems or because their limited knowledge and abilities prevent them from advocating on their own behalf.

Sometimes community workers might have to advocate for clients with a number of different organisations, especially if the client's life is in substantial disarray.

Whenever possible, though, clients should be assisted to advocate or negotiate for themselves which is part of helping them to be more self reliant.

In his book *Community Development* (which I recommend all community workers read), Jim Ife raises some serious concerns about advocacy.

He says that the very act of advocacy assumes that the person doing the advocacy is better able to represent the case than the person or the people who are directly affected. As such, it is potentially disempowering rather than empowering.

Jim Ife maintains that advocacy can reinforce the assumption that people cannot speak up for themselves which, of course, is not always the case and this can establish a power relationship between the community worker and the community.

Ife does say, however, that this does not mean that community workers should not do advocacy, because sometimes it is essential, especially when they are supporting a particularly disempowered community that has very immediate needs. For example, if there is an urgent need for an essential service in a community, the community worker might not have the time beforehand to teach people from the community about how they can do their own advocacy.

But what the community worker can do is to be ever mindful of the fact that people need to be given opportunities to do their own advocacy. This means that the community worker should take every opportunity to teach the people on whose behalf they are advocating to do their own advocacy.

This might mean that when doing advocacy the community worker is accompanied by some of the community people that they are representing. For example, when they meet with politicians or with representatives of government departments.

It involves the community worker explaining to the people that they are representing what they are doing with their advocacy activities and why they are doing it that particular way.

Another issue for workers doing advocacy is to make certain that they are actually representing the interests of the people on whose behalf they are advocating. It is very

easy for a community worker to misinterpret what people say they want or what they need, and to commence the advocacy process before having a good enough understanding of the relevant issues.

So, the point I would like to emphasise here is that just because we are doing advocacy work, we should not assume necessarily that we are working to empower people. We can, in fact, be doing quite the opposite.

What I want to do now is to say something about some of the factors that will influence the effectiveness of your advocacy efforts.

Firstly, how effective you are with advocacy will depend on your ***power to influence people***. This personal power to influence others is based on a number of things such as:

- If you are very well versed on the topic that you are speaking about
- Your ability to speak clearly and with authority, and
- Your reputation in the community.

The last one, your reputation, is possibly the most important. This is because you might know your topic back to front. You can be super confident and a really good speaker and you might be able to put your case logically and clearly to the decision-makers, but if you are not recognised as an authority on the topic or you are not recognised as someone from the community who needs to be listened to, then you might not have as much impact with your advocacy as you would ideally like to.

It is often the case that your position in an organisation will enhance your reputation. For example, if you are the manager of the organisation, you might have more influence in doing advocacy with decision-makers than if you are a project officer.

The reputation of your organisation is another important factor in doing advocacy. Your personal reputation might not be well known, but if you are representing an organisation which is well known and well respected, then this could help you.

On the other hand, if you work for an organisation which has a poor reputation, then this might disadvantage you.

The success of your advocacy activities often will also depend on your influential friends. If you or your organisation have a low profile, it might be helpful if you recruit the assistance of someone who has a higher profile and is well respected.

This can be someone from a well-known organisation - maybe a senior staff member and preferably someone who is well known to and respected by the organisation that you are approaching to do your advocacy.

However, it is very helpful, too, if you are well known in your community and have good relationships with the decision-makers there. When you already have a good relationship with the people that you are advocating to often you can be more informal or direct with them. Also, you may not have to grovel as much!

Of course, networking is one of the best ways to become known in your community. Networking is common sense, but for a range of reasons nowadays workers in the community are less inclined to work in co-operation and collaboration with each other than they did in the past. Often it is the case nowadays that workers maintain very narrow networks which focus specifically just on their own area of service and they do not move very far outside that.

In relation to advocacy, though, when you know lots of people in your community and lots of organisations you are much better equipped to get people and organisations to listen and take notice of what it is that you are saying.

There is much more that I could say about advocacy, but now it is your turn.

Reference

Ife, J. (2002) *Community Development* (2nd Edition). Pearson Education Australia Pty Limited. Frenchs Forest, NSW.

What are Tomorrow's Leaders Thinking Today?

What are today's young people thinking and what are the implications for today's and tomorrow's leaders? Commissioned by Leadership Victoria and prepared by Quantum Market Research/YouthSCAN, a special Report on attitudes of young people to home and family life along with self-appraisal and aspirations was released in 2003.

The Report featured Key Findings on the following areas:

Home and Family Life -

Parents concern about young people; Parents and young people: discussion; How I'd like my family to change; How I'd like my parents to change

Self Appraisal and Aspirations -

How happy are young people? How would young people change themselves? Who do young people admire? Things to worry about; Important aspects of a job; Future expectations; Signs of success and accomplishment

Confidence in Leadership Figures -

Level of Confidence in Traditional Leadership Figures

Social Values

To view this Report see:

What are Tomorrow's Leaders Thinking Today?

V' in V-Day stands for Victory, Valentine and Vagina.

Jane Fonda's Speech at the National Women's Leadership Summit Washington , D.C. June 12, 2003

In August 2003, 460 women gathered in Rhinebeck for the second annual Women & Power Conference to explore self-transformation and world healing. In a wellspring of enthusiasm, the group, featuring speakers from Alice Walker to Jane Fonda to Gloria Steinem, decided to hold a national convention next June. The purpose? To adopt a women's platform for the 2004 election.

The idea took root when a college student stood in the main hall of the Omega Institute and declared, "I want this to be the next Seneca Falls." The 1848 gathering in the Finger Lakes was a landmark convention that sparked the women's suffrage struggle.

"I feel like I've been searching for a movement," said Dina Pasalis, of Cleveland, echoing others' sentiments. "This is it. It's like we are starting a revolution."

For Alice Walker, who won a Pulitzer Prize for her novel "The Color Purple," the revolution is about peace, now, before the human species self-destructs. "We're too intelligent to think that war is the answer to anything," she told the group.

Each woman in the Omega meeting hall is a leader, says playwright Eve Ensler, who won an Obie for her modern female anthem, "The Vagina Monologues." "I believe, in my heart, mind, vagina and soul, that a new time is about to emerge."

It was Enslar who brought the conference to life and set the theme of a female approach to power. Having interviewed Pakistani acid-burn victims and African girls who suffered genital mutilation, Enslar said women react differently to violence than men. "They take that violation and they hold it in their bodies and they grieve it and they transform it," she said. "Rather than getting AK-47s (or) weapons of mass destruction, they go out and make sure it doesn't happen to anybody else."

The two-time Academy Award winner and exercise video magnate, Jane Fonda afraid that she has nothing to offer this audience, transformed the low-lit hall into a giant living room. Women began to share stories of marriages won and lost, of tension with daughters, of eating disorders and of smothering one's own voice.

"You did more than help (me) lose weight," Samu-t ShepRa tells her. A home health care operator from Trenton, N.J., ShepRa works out with her daughter to Jane Fonda exercise videos. "In my home," she says, "you are known as Sister Girl Jane."

Why not a female president? someone asks Fonda. "It's not about: When can we get a woman candidate?" Fonda replies. "It's about: When can we get the consciousness?"

Here is the core of that "female" consciousness: To lead with one's heart as well as one's mind, even in world affairs. It was Robert S. McNamara, defense secretary during the Vietnam War, who told The New York Times, "I try to separate human emotions from the larger issues of human welfare," Fonda noted.

Changing that consciousness will also save young boys from increasingly macho, violent American culture, she said. "It's the absence of heart that is at the heart of most of our conflicts." Empathy is the true revolutionary act.

Jane Fonda announced the launch of a large-scale women's political convention for June 2004 that will serve to mobilize and inspire women and girls around the 2004 election. This WHP partnership with V-Day will ensure that women's concerns will be on the radar screen of Republicans and Democrats alike - and will build a spirit and energy that will hold the candidates accountable to women. We are inviting everyone to get on board and will keep you updated on developments.

V-Day is a global movement to stop violence against women and girls. V-Day is a palpable energy, a fierce catalyst that promotes creative events to increase awareness, raise money, and revitalize the spirit of existing anti-violence organizations. V-Day generates broader attention for the fight to stop worldwide violence against women and girls including rape, battery, incest, female genital mutilation (FGM), and sexual slavery. V-Day provides funding to create and nurture innovative programs to stop the violence.

The 'V' in V-Day stands for Victory, Valentine and Vagina.

<http://www.vday.org>

Source: Women of the world A weekend empowerment conference inspires its participants to think big By KATE GURNETT 06/08/03 Times Union

Jane Fonda's Speech at the National Women's Leadership Summit Washington , D.C. June 12, 2003

Before I turned sixty I thought I was a feminist. I was in a way - I worked to register women to vote, I supported women getting elected. I brought gender issues into my movie roles, I encouraged women to get strong and healthy, I read the books we've all read. I had it in my head and partly in my heart, yet I didn't fully get it.

See, although I've always been financially independent, and professionally and socially successful, behind the closed doors of my personal life I was still turning myself in a pretzel so I'd be loved by an alpha male. I thought if I didn't become whatever he wanted me to be, I'd be alone, and then, I wouldn't exist.

There is not the time nor is this the place to explain why this was true, or why it is such a common theme for so many otherwise strong, independent women. Nor is it the time to tell you how I got over it (I'm writing my memoirs, and all will be revealed). What's important is that I did get over it. Early on in my third act I found my voice and, in the process, I have ended up alone but not really. You see, I'm with myself and this has enabled me to see feminism more clearly. It's hard to see clearly when you're a pretzel.

So I want to tell you briefly some of what I have learned in this first part of my third act and how it relates to what, I think, needs to happen in terms of a revolution.

Because we can't just talk about women being at the table - it's too late for that - we have to think in terms of the shape of the table. Is it hierarchical or circular (metaphorically speaking)? We have to think about the quality of the men who are with us at the table, the culture that is hovering over the table that governs how things are decided and in whose interests. This is not just about glass ceilings or politics as usual. This is about revolution, and I have finally gotten to where I can say that word and know what I mean by it and feel good about it because I see, now, how the future of the earth and everything on it including men and boys depends on this happening.

Let me say something about men: obviously, I've had to do a lot of thinking about men, especially the ones who've been important in my life, and what I've come to realize is how damaging patriarchy has been for them. And all of them are smart, good men who want to be considered the "good guys." But the Male Belief System, that compartmentalized, hierarchical, ejaculatory, and centric power structure that is Patriarchy, is fatal to the hearts of men, to empathy and relationship.

Yes, men and boys receive privilege and status from patriarchy, but it is a poisoned privilege for which they pay a heavy price. If traditional, patriarchal socialization takes aim at girls' voices, it takes aim at boys' hearts - makes them lose the deepest, most sensitive and empathic parts of themselves. Men aren't even allowed to be depressed, which is why they engage so often in various forms of self-numbing, from sex to alcohol and drugs to gambling and workaholism. Patriarchy strikes a Faustian bargain with men.

Patriarchy sustains itself by breaking relationship. I'm referring here to real relationship, the showing-up kind, not the "I'll stay with him cause he pays the bills, or because of the kids, or because if I don't I will cease to exist," but relationship where you, the woman, can acknowledge your partner's needs while simultaneously acknowledging and tending to your own. I work with young girls and I can tell you there's a whole generation who has not learned what a relationship is supposed to feel like - that it's not about leaving themselves behind.

Now, every group that's been oppressed has its share of Uncle Toms, and we have our Aunt Toms. I call them ventriloquists for the patriarchy. I won't name names but we all know them. They are women in whom the toxic aspects of masculinity hold sway. It should neither surprise nor discourage us. We need to understand it and be able to explain it to others, but it means, I think, that we should be just about getting a woman into this position or that. We need to look at "is that woman intact emotionally," has she had to forfeit her empathy gene somewhere along the way for whatever reason?

And then, of course, there are what Eve Ensler calls Vagina-Friendly men, who choose to remain emotionally literate. It's not easy for them - look at the names they get called: wimp, pansy, pussy, soft, limp, momma's boy. Men don't like to be considered "soft" on anything, which is why more don't choose to join us in the circle. Actually, most don't have the choice to make. You know why? Because when they are real little (I learned this from Carol Gilligan), like five years or younger, boys internalize the message of what it takes to be a "real man." Sometimes it comes through their fathers who beat it into them. Sometimes it comes because no one around them knows how to connect with their emotions (This is a generational thing). Sometimes it comes because our culture rips boys from their mothers before they are developmentally ready.

Sometimes it comes because boys are teased at school for crying. Sometimes it's the subliminal messages from teachers and the media. It can be a specific trauma that shuts them down. But, I can assure you, it is true to some extent of many if not most men, and when the extreme version of it manifests itself in our nation's leaders, beware!

Another thing that I've learned is that there is a fundamental contradiction not just between patriarchy and relationship, but between patriarchy and Democracy. Patriarchy

masquerades as Democracy, but it's an anathema. How can it be democracy when someone has to always be above someone else, when women, who are a majority, live within a social construct that discriminates against them, keeps them from having their full human rights?

But just because Patriarchy has ruled for 10,000 years since the beginning of agriculture, doesn't make it inevitable.

Maybe at some earlier stage in human evolution, Patriarchy was what was needed just for the species to survive. But today, there's nothing threatening the human species but humans. We've conquered our predators, we've subdued nature almost to extinction, and there are no more frontiers to conquer or to escape into so as to avoid having to deal with the mess we've left behind. Frontiers have always given capitalism, Patriarchy's economic face, a way to avoid dealing with its shortcomings. Well, we're having to face them now in this post-frontier era and inevitably - especially when we have leaders who suffer from toxic masculinity - that leads to war, the conquering of new markets, and the destruction of the earth.

However, it is altogether possible, that we are on the verge of a tectonic shift in paradigms - that what we are seeing happening today are the paroxysms, the final terrible death throes of the old, no longer workable, no longer justifiable system. Look at it this way: it's Patriarchy's third act and we have to make sure it's its last.

It's possible that the extreme, neo-conservative version of Patriarchy which makes up our current Executive branch will over-play its hand and cause the house of cards to collapse. We know that this new "preventive war" doctrine will put us on a permanent war footing. We know there can't be guns and butter, right? We learned with Vietnam. We know that a Pandora's box has been opened in the Middle East and that the administration is not prepared for the complexities that are emerging. We know that friends are becoming foes and angry young Muslims with no connection to AlQaeda are becoming terrorists in greater numbers. We know that with the new tax plan the rich will be better off and the rest will be poorer. We know what happens when poor young men and women can only get jobs by joining the military and what happens when they come home and discover that the day after Congress passed the "Support Our Troops" Resolution, \$25 billion was cut from the VA budget. We know that already, families of servicemen have to go on welfare and are angry about it.

So, as Eve Ensler says, we have to change the verbs from obliterate, dominate, humiliate, to liberate, appreciate, celebrate. We have to make sure that head and heart can be reunited in the body politic, and relationship and democracy can be restored.

We need to really understand the depth and breadth of what a shift to a new, feminine paradigm would mean, how fundamentally central it is to every single other thing in the world. We win, everything wins, including boys, men, and the earth. We have to really understand this and be able to make it concrete for others so they will be able to see what

Feminism really is and see themselves in it.

So our challenge is to commit ourselves to creating the tipping point and the turning point. The time is ripe to launch a unified national movement, a campaign, a tidal wave, built around issues and values, not candidates.

That's why V-Day, The White House Project and their many allies are partnering to hold a national women's convention somewhere in the heartland, next June of 2004. Its purpose will be to inspire and mobilize women and vagina-friendly men around the 2004 elections and to build a new movement that will coalesce our energies and forces around a politic of caring.

The convention will put forward a fresh, clear, and concise platform of issues, and build the spirit, energy and power base to hold the candidates accountable for them. There will be a diversity of women from across the country who will participate in the mobilization. There will be a special focus on involving young women. There will be a variety of performers and artists acknowledging that culture plays a powerful role in political action. There will be a concurrent internet mobilization. Women's organizations will be asked to sign on and send representatives to the convention.

There will be a caravan, a rolling tour across the country, of diverse women leaders, celebrities and activists who will work with local organizers to build momentum, sign people up, register them to vote, get them organized and leave behind a tool kit for further mobilization through the election and beyond.

This movement will be a volcano that will erupt in a flow of soft, hot, empathic, breathing, authentic, vagina-friendly, relational lava that will encircle patriarchy and smother it. We will be the flood and we'll be Noah's ark.

United Nations Awardees for the 2003 Prize

in the Field of Human Rights

On December 2nd, 2003, the UN announced six recipients for its quinquennial (5 years) prize in the field of human rights. The six awardees were honoured at ceremonies that took place at UN Headquarters in New York on December 10, 2003, International Human Rights Day. Three of the awardees were women and/or women's groups. They are:

1. The Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET), a network of women's organizations from Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea working for regional peace and security through advocacy, conflict prevention and resolution and peace building.

MARWOPNET has been active at both the grassroots level and the highest levels of government and in 2001 played an instrumental role in bringing the three leaders of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone to the peace table, thus averting the outbreak of hostilities between the three countries. More recently, MARWOPNET was a delegate, mediator and signatory to the Liberian peace talks in August 2003.

2. **Ms. Shulamith Koenig**, honoured for creating a global human rights culture through her establishment of the People's Decade for Human Rights Education. Specific attention is drawn to her work to support the UN Decade for Human Rights Education; her initiation of the "Human Rights Cities" project, a 3-year global program to be implemented in 30 cities and train 500 young community leaders in strengthening human rights, civil society and democracy; and her tireless work with human rights advocates and community leaders in more than 60 countries to promote societal change through human rights education.

3. **Sra. Enriqueta Estela Barnes de Carlotto** for her work as President of the Association of Plaza de Mayo Grandmothers. The association was established in response to the forced or involuntary disappearance of hundreds of children following the military coup in Argentina in 1976 when children were either abducted with their parents, or born in clandestine detention centres for young pregnant women. Since then, Sra. Barnes de Carlotto and the Association of the Plaza de Mayo Grandmothers have located many missing and kidnapped children and restored them to their rightful families.

Source: www.un.org, IWTC Women's GlobalNet