

## A Glimpse into WFWP'S History and Its Work with the UN

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Good evening!

Thank you for choosing to spend your time and your weekend here at this conference in our nation's capital exploring the many ways women of all ages can and do contribute to building a world of genuine and sustainable peace.

I've been asked to introduce WFWP International, as well as our work at the United Nations. I'd like to start with the founding. WFWP was founded in 1992 by Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon in Seoul, South Korea with the full support and active participation of her beloved husband Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon. Together they founded numerous organizations--religious, civic, educational, for-profit and not-for-profit. As a couple and as a family, they lived in the US for almost 50 years. Reverend Moon passed away in 2012 at the age of 92. He is dearly missed. His wife is now leading the movement and has set her mind to completing their life's work in her lifetime.

Their founding footprint is embedded in WFWP. It is embedded on the level of mission—and I'll read in a minute several excerpts from her founding speech as well as from the 10th anniversary speech—but it's also embedded in the level of their example or role model. The example of her life and the example of their lives together as a couple are a profound source of inspiration for WFWP. As individuals and as a couple, they led with a depth of parental heart that defined their relationship and set them apart in terms of the quality and expression of their leadership.

In WFWP's inaugural speech on April 10, 1992, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon said, "In the age of women that is now dawning, our members must embrace our husbands and properly educate our children so that we may be a model movement for practicing true love throughout the world." She went on to say, "Our women's movement is not for women alone. First, a movement of true love for our husbands and children must bear fruit in ideal families. The ideal families formed in this manner will come together to form ideal nations and an ideal world. And finally, for the sake of world peace, we women must take the lead in government, finance, culture, and society."

During WFWP's tenth anniversary celebration, Dr. Moon said, "A woman does not exist to be a man's assistant or simply as an object of his protection, but rather as an independent entity who brings completion to a man by standing in a position that represents the other aspect of God. In the ideal of true love, a woman exists as a man's noble partner, as the recipient who can reciprocate his love. From the perspective of value, a man and a woman are equal. Because a man and woman belong to each other, their relationship is designed to be one where all their qualities, as well as possessions, are shared with each other so as to bring each to completion and perfection; and thus, together, become something greater than the sum of the two. As the future unfolds, humanity will have no option but to live interdependently in a pluralistic global society. A culture of peace will be established all across the globe. When this happens, the precious role of women who are grounded in the love of God will be recognized as an absolutely essential ingredient; not only for the family but also for society, for the nation, and on the global level as well."

WFWP's mission, on the international level, is, "WFWP is an NGO that empowers women with the knowledge, skills, and support needed to discover their unique value, realize genuine and sustainable peace on the individual, family, community, national and world levels."

As an organization, WFWP speaks to women about leading with their uniquely feminine inherent nature whether they are serving in the United States Congress or serving at home in quiet ways that fill everyday lives. In this sense, WFWP is not just about what women do. It also represents the striving to become. WFWP is about becoming women of peace. This organization pays particular attention to the family, and views the family as a cornerstone for peace in the world. WFWP's mission is also expressed through the commitment to service, with 100 service projects in 50 countries that reflect the tradition of living for the sake of others. WFWP has been involved with peace and reconciliation activities, beginning with its signature project, the Bridge of Peace ceremony, which I understand you will be learning a lot more about tomorrow.

Let me introduce to you to two projects on the international level which I think really represent the heart of WFWP's mission and work.

In 1997, influential women leaders from various Middle Eastern countries came together in Istanbul at the invitation of WFWP International. This was the first in a series of twenty conferences known as the Women's Conference for Peace in the Middle East, and it was held with the theme: "Women and the Future of the Middle East." Women from areas with a history of conflict, separation, and conquest, such as Israel and Palestine, Northern and Southern Cyprus, Kuwait and Iraq, rarely have an opportunity to get to know one another, to sit at the same table, or exchange ideas and opinion on topics of mutual interest. To be expected, because these women came from countries that have been hostile to one another, at times, feuds could not be avoided. However, in every instance, these exchanges were guided toward mutual understanding, going way beyond deep-seated anger.

A noteworthy exchange occurred during the ninth conference. Her Excellency Ina'am Al-Mufti, who had been a refugee to Jordan from Palestine, and had even served as Jordan's Minister of Social Development, met with Mrs. Judith Carp, former Deputy Attorney General of Israel. Mrs. Al-Mufti said later, with deep feeling, "I met for the first time a Jewish person whom I did not feel angry with." On the other hand, Mrs. Carp said, "I was deeply impressed learning that Korea and Japan, who have a difficult history, are running this conference jointly." Furthermore, she expressed her joy at being able to meet sisters from the Middle East, whom she could not meet, even though being close by; and that she felt welcomed as a member of the family.

This conference series formed practical ties with the United Nations starting in 1999. Dr. Hanifa Mezoui, of the UN Economic and Social Council, took part in the third conference in Cyprus. With the guidance of Dr. Mezoui, a WFWP statement entitled: "Recommendations to Take Action to Eradicate Poverty in the Middle East," was created and submitted to the UN.

In 2004, the eighth annual conference in this series was held at the UN European Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. Following that year, the tenth, twelfth, and sixteenth conferences were also held in Geneva. Numerous UN officials and NGO representatives took part in the discussions. This series is ongoing. The nineteenth annual conference was held in 2015. Venues for this series have included Turkey, Cyprus, Greece, Switzerland, and Jordan.

So in 1994, teams of Japanese volunteers went out to over 100 countries. You saw pictures of this in the presentation. They lived and worked with local women and their families in an effort to understand their circumstances and identify their needs. Out of an assessment of these local needs and a commitment to improve the situation, projects and programs were developed around the world.

Today, WFWP International maintains approximately 100 service projects in 50 countries in the areas of poverty eradication, formal and technical education, humanitarian assistance, AIDS prevention, micro-credit, as well as nutrition and medical support. The Japanese women, who pioneered these projects in this foundation, left their families in Japan for long periods of time. Part of their motivation was the desire to care for those less fortunate, with the heart and mind of a mother, and to contribute to building one global family.

In the US, since the year 2000, WFWP has been raising funds in support of schools in Africa under the name of the Schools of Africa Project.

Actually, my involvement in the Schools of Africa Project resulted in what for me was a transformative moment. I was involved in encouraging and promoting and supporting these benefits for a number of years; I really enjoyed it. I liked setting the goals and seeing the money increase each year. But one year, it occurred to me that this wasn't really about providing money alone. We can raise money and we can donate money, but, ultimately, that is not what is going to bring about peace. I realized that in our effort to

help these children, I really needed to cultivate a heart that wanted as much for them, as I wanted for my own children. And I realized that that is the hard part. It's easy to say that, but to cultivate it so that that is consistently the way you view other people in the world, is a big challenge. But I really understand that that really is the heart of the challenge. So it's not enough to want the best for my children. I need to want the best for other peoples' children, for children I've never met, children in faraway countries, even for children in countries that may be my enemies. We learn many things when we go down this road.

## **Work with the UN**

Finally, I'd like to talk to you about our work in the UN. The director of WFP's UN Office, Mrs. Carolyn Handschin, who lives outside of Geneva, Switzerland, and I serve as the Deputy Director. WFP is very fortunate to be an NGO in General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the UN (ECOSOC). This is the highest level an NGO can associate with the UN and WFP was granted this level due to the breadth of ECOSOC issues that we dealt with as an NGO all over the world, as well as due to a broad geographic reach.

It is a privilege and an honor for WFP to have this status and affiliation. And it comes with both opportunities and responsibilities. As I mentioned, WFP is affiliated with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). This is the principle organ that coordinates all the economic and social projects at the UN. ECOSOC remains the only UN body with a formal framework for NGO involvement and participation. Just to highlight one aspect of this: there are a total of 4,361 organizations, NGOs that have status with ECOSOC. But only 144 have the status WFP has. That is one reason it is really a great honor.

This General Consultative status is given to NGOs that represent large segments of society, representing many countries. The area of work has to cover issues that are important to ECOSOC, and these NGOs tend to be very large, well-established, again, with a broad geographical reach.

I looked up again the job description of an NGO when you have this status. I'd like to read to you these points. This is really quite remarkable. These are the benefits we get because of this status:

- Provide expert analysis on issues directly from our experience in the field
- Help monitor and implement international agreements
- Help raise public awareness of relevant issues
- Play a major role in advancing UN goals and objectives
- Contribute valuable information at events
- Attend international conferences and events
- Make and submit written and oral statements
- Organize side events
- Enter the UN premises
- Have the opportunity to network and lobby.

That's a lot of benefit and it also takes a lot of work to do it well and fulfill it. I thought it would be helpful to explain a little about the main project of the UN now so that we can understand that whatever we are doing is in the context of this greater agenda at the UN.

Since the year 2000, the United Nations community has been focused on a set of 8 international goals that are known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). I'm sure you have all heard that phrase. They were adopted at the Millennium Summit in September of 2000 with a timeframe of 15 years which will actually end this December 2015. The MDGs represent a commitment by the UN to establish peace and a healthy global economy by focusing on the major issues that humanity faces. They are the world's targets for addressing extreme poverty in all of its forms. The 8 MDGs are to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality and improve maternal health; combat HIV AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability, and develop a global partnership for development. That's a pretty bold agenda.

For each goal, specific targets were identified. We don't have the time now to review the targets or the results; it's very interesting to research the specific goals and what was accomplished over the past 15

years. So from the point of view of the UN, the MDGs are considered by the UN to be the most successful anti-poverty movement in history. They established a framework which helped to lift more than one billion people out of extreme poverty and made significant progress in the realms of gender equality, hunger, and education. However, the MDGs did not fulfill all their goals. So the member states of the UN decided to look forward to the next 15 years, with a new set of goals known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Sustainable is a very good term this year, sustainable.

The SDGs were first considered in a summit in Rio de Janeiro in 2012. A committee was put into place, known as the UN's Open Working Group for Sustainable Goals, which for a period of two years developed a proposal on how to move forward. This proposal was forwarded to the General Assembly in 2014, and this document, along with a report from the Secretary General are the foundation of what is now known as, "Transforming Our World, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development."

On September 23, 2015, the member states of the UN unanimously ratified this new set of 17 goals. And now the hard work begins to achieve them all over the world. This is the context within which WFP works within the UN. WFP has three UN Offices: New York, Geneva, Switzerland, and Vienna, Austria. The office in New York is considered the main office. Each office has UN representatives: a total of 17 who are designated to represent WFP at the UN. The UN team in New York focuses its work in several areas including: the annual commission on the status of women, eradication of poverty, as well as participation in several NGO committees on topics related to sustainable development, women's empowerment, and gender equality, the family, violence against women, and spiritual values and global concerns.

The team in Geneva works in the areas of human rights, elimination of discrimination against women, as well as the culture of peace. The team in Vienna has done excellent work in the area of human trafficking and education. Many of these areas I just mentioned are very complex. It's our job to carefully, thoughtfully, and wisely apply the principles that guide WFP to these areas. The UN is a place where governments represent and lobby primarily for the interests of their nations through their diplomats. To a large extent, the NGOs that affiliate with the UN do the same.

With the SDGs there is a strong push for both governments and NGOs to go beyond their specific agendas and work together to try and resolve issues on the global level. I'm pleased to say that WFP is known for its support of the UN as well as for working well with other NGOs to advance its agenda. The UN Office in New York is currently working on a program with the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) to commemorate the 21st anniversary of the International Year of the Family. We are also looking to next spring and the 60th session on the Commission on the Status of Women.

CSW brings more than 6,000 women to the UN each year for a two-week period which includes more than 400 events. For CSW 60, WFP is planning to host a forum with the theme already established: "Engaging Women in Sustainable Development, Family Transformation, and Co-Prosperity." We will also hold our annual luncheon at the UN. In addition, we are in the early stages of considering a leadership component for young women during that time, and we will keep you posted about that development.

In July 2012, just two months before he passed, Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon convened women leaders from all over the world to establish what he referred to as the Abel Women's UN. In his words: "In the 21st century, women need to play a major role in world history, by serving, together with men, in the construction of a peaceful world. Women will be the central axis in building a new century characterized by a loving, peaceful culture."

Thank you very much.