

WFWP S. Africa: Launching Global Women Peace Network - South Africa Chapter

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On August 10, 2024, the Women's Federation for World Peace South Africa (WFWPSA) officially launched the Global Women Peace Network South Africa (GWPNSA) through a hybrid event that combined both virtual and in-person participation. Themed "Women Empowerment: A Catalyst for Sustainable Peace," the event had 20 online participants, while others gathered at the June 16 Memorial Acre in Central Western Jabavu, Soweto. Funded by the Women's Federation for World Peace International, the launch aimed to unite women and NGOs to collaborate on peacebuilding from the grassroots level.



The key objectives of the event were:

1. Presenting the Global Women Peace Ambassador's Award to women leaders committed to fostering peaceful communities.
2. Promoting healing and reconciliation for women affected by racial discrimination during Apartheid through the symbolic Bridge of Peace Ceremony.
3. Supporting WFWPSA membership growth and sustainability.
4. Honoring the legacy of the 1956 Women's March against Apartheid, a momentous event

commemorated annually by South Africans from all walks of life.

The event was moderated by Ms. Jina Kuse and Ms. Hayong Wonderlik from WFWPSA Young Professionals. The program began with an opening prayer led by Mrs. Safi Mbengeni, setting a solemn and positive atmosphere for the event.



Local Councilor Lineo Tsotetsi delivered the welcoming remarks, emphasizing the importance of the launch in light of South Africa's legacy of women's activism. This was followed by opening remarks from Mrs. Gwen Tshimbana-Mtiti, President of WFWPSA, highlighting the organization's dedication to peacebuilding and the empowerment of women.

Dr. Sallyann Goodall Franklin from WFWP UK delivered the founder's address, sharing a speech by WFWPI co-founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon titled "Women as a Turning Point for Peace." The speech outlined the global mission of the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) and emphasized the crucial role GWPNSA would play in achieving that vision. Dr. Franklin quoted from Dr. Moon's memoir, "Mother of Peace," sharing the phrase, "I am here to give my wedding ring to everyone," symbolizing the selfless nature of women.



The event featured a series of insightful speeches from distinguished speakers:

1. Mrs. Dorothy Motubatse Hounkpatin from the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) South Africa, who spoke about the intersection of peace and development and the crucial role that women play in society.

2. Ms. Esther Padi, a dynamic young activist and Chairperson of the Innovating Kasi Organisation, who shared her personal experiences on grassroots innovation and its impact on communities. She highlighted two initiatives under the organization's umbrella: Generation Am Woke and the Mother and Daughter Movement.
3. HRH Princess Khushe Mtirara from the Royal Kingdom of Abathembu, representing the African Royalties Network, discussed the role of traditional leadership in fostering peace.
4. HRH Princess Tshepi Motloun, Founder of the FutureLift Foundation, emphasized the importance of sustainable development and the empowerment of young women, focusing on community upliftment through skill enhancement and knowledge acquisition.



Following the speeches, Mrs. Gwen Tshimbana-Mtiti and Mrs. Vilma Kuse honored ten community women leaders with the Global Women Peace Ambassador's Award for their contributions to community-building and advocacy in women empowerment, education, politics, and health.

Cultural performances were interspersed throughout the program, including a soulful musical rendition by Ms. Kgosigadi and her mother, and a traditional dance by the Mmangwana Youth group. The Bridge of Peace Ceremony, led by Flory Ledwaba and Mrs. N. Mositoane, served as a symbolic act of unity and reconciliation, reinforcing the event's overarching theme.

Ms. Salome Lebepe from WFWP Limpopo issued a call to action, urging all participants to continue their efforts in promoting peace and empowerment in their communities. The event concluded with closing remarks by Dr. Debbie Raphuti from World Women Leading Change Africa, who reiterated the importance of collective action in achieving sustainable peace. A commemorative tree planting ceremony followed, symbolizing growth, unity, and a commitment to nurturing peace for future generations. The event concluded with refreshments, providing attendees an opportunity to network and reflect on the day's impactful proceedings.

WFWPSA looks forward to holding bi-annual GWPNSA Forums moving forward.