

International Women’s Day Observed in Washington, D.C.

Susan Fefferman and Tomiko Duggan
March 31, 2015



Washington DC, USA—The UPF Public Affairs Office in Washington, D.C., partnered with the 93-year-old Woman’s National Democratic Club (WNDC) to host an International Women’s Day commemoration for 70 guests on March 31, 2015.

WNDC President Anna Fierst gave the welcoming remarks in the tradition of her grandmother Eleanor Roosevelt. Tomiko Duggan, director of UPF’s office in Washington, introduced the UN tradition of commemorating International Women’s Day and presented a video on the international work of the Universal Peace Federation.



WNDC Vice President Linda Diane Kandel was the emcee of the event, which took place at the club’s headquarters in the Whittemore House in Northwest Washington. She introduced the three speakers.

Dr. Sahar Khamis, associate professor at the Department of Communication of the University of Maryland, is an expert in Middle Eastern media. Her presentation, “‘Cyberfeminism’ and Socio-Political Transformation,” showed how social media can be used to advance social causes.



Using social media, women played an essential role in the “Arab Spring,” the popular grassroots effort to change the political landscape in the Arab world, Dr. Khamis said.

UN International Women's Day 2015
The Era of Women: 'Make It Happen'
 Tuesday, March 31, 2015
 Woman's National Democratic Club
 1526 New Hampshire Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20036

Program:
 11:30 am—Open bar
 12:00—1:00 pm Lunch
 1:00 pm—Program
 2:00 pm —Appointment of the
 “Ambassadors for Peace” &
 Group Photo

Speakers:



Dr. Sahar Khamis:
 Associate Professor, the Department of Communication, University of Maryland



Dr. Davina P. Durgana:
 Senior Technical Advisor on Human Trafficking, SeraphimGLOBAL



Dr. Marcia Dyson:
 Founder and CEO of Woman's Global Initiative and Open Global Hearts



Ambassadors for Peace Appointment by Mrs. Caroline Audjaba Spouse of Ambassador Martin Audjaba of Namibia

Sponsored by: Universal Peace Federation & Woman's National Democratic Club

She interviewed women from her native Egypt, as well as from Libya, Syria and Yemen, and found that, across the board, women were at the heart of the Arab Spring, expressing their own voice for the first time, and doing so with the same determination and self-sacrifice as men.

Dr. Davina Durgana, a senior technical advisor on human trafficking at SeraphimGLOBAL, was the next speaker. Her findings helped to define those who are the most vulnerable and where they are found by traffickers. Human trafficking is a powerful commercial business. Sexual slavery and slave labor are prevalent in the United States and other nations, she said.

There are two reasons for the increase in sexual kidnapping and slavery, Dr. Durgana said. The first is that women often are used to get young girls and boys to trust them and then lure them into this vicious practice. The second is that when unemployment goes down, with parents working again,

their children are left alone and vulnerable. An additional problem is that the culture of teenagers is not to “tell” on anyone who gets into trouble.



When young people live in poverty and in dangerous areas, have no strong family protections and no religious or civic organizations in the community to protect them, they are lonely and extremely vulnerable. The situation of foreigners is far worse than for Americans, as they are more isolated and ignorant of the laws of the state and have fewer options for a support structure.

Dr. Marcia Dyson, founder and CEO of Women's Global Initiative and Open Global Hearts, was the final speaker. One of the biggest problems in the advancement of women, she said, is that other women try to hold them back. Whether due to jealousy or rivalry, they erect blocks against the success of other women.

“Wounded-ness’ exists in so many women who need to be healed in order to work well,” she said. Women need to “become an awakened Eve.” She said, “Authenticity, integrity, purposefulness and profitability” are the themes she emphasizes.



The appointment of new Ambassadors for Peace was next. Mrs. Caroline Andjaba, wife of the Namibian ambassador, led the appointments on behalf of UPF, as she is an Ambassador for Peace herself. Framed certificates were presented to: Ms. Linda Diane Kendal, vice president of WNDC; Dr. Sahar Khamis; Dr. Davina Durgana; and Mrs. Phindile Ntshangase, wife of the ambassador of Swaziland.

Gifts were given to the speakers by both sponsoring organizations: origami from UPF and appointment books from WNDC.