

International Women Leaders Global Security Initiative

A project of:



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Call to Action

We, the participants of the International Women Leaders Global Security Summit, share a common vision for a more secure, peaceful and just world. Our different cultures and backgrounds are unified by our common sense of urgency and shared resolve to ensure that all people may live free from fear and want. We commit to supporting effective policies that increase human and state security and challenge affronts to both.

We recognize that the people of every nation deserve an accountable government, and a security system that provides for its own defense and sustains the safety and well being of its citizens. Nevertheless, in a world where threats to peace are not contained by borders, military force must not be the only tool used to address insecurity. An over-reliance on military solutions diverts resources--both financial and human--away from solutions that favor prevention and persuasion over coercion and force. The arms industry and the proliferation of small arms carry a high human and economic toll that undermines human rights, diverts resources and encourages violence. Recognizing that expanding defense budgets do not buy greater security, we call on governments to create a balanced response to security that accurately reflects today's real security threats and creates the momentum for long-term solutions.

The imperative to act could not be more urgent. Tens of thousands of people die each day from hunger and poverty-related causes, including 30,000 children under the age of five from preventable disease. Over 1.6 million people die each year from violence, of which 90% live in developing countries. In every country, women experience and sometimes die from

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gender-based violence and sexual assault, with systematic rape increasingly visible as a weapon of war. Eradicating threats such as terrorism, HIV/AIDS, environmental degradation, grinding poverty and pandemic disease require the energies of *all* leaders—both women and men. Security cannot be effectively discussed or achieved with the involvement of only half of humanity. The accumulated experiences of women leaders now rising to power must be brought systematically to bear on local, national and international security policy. As women leaders, we commit ourselves to ensuring that the realities of women who do not have access to power inform our actions. Anything less would be a waste of resources, and an act of unconscionable neglect.

We call on both governments and individuals to effectively use the local, regional and international tools already in our hands, such as United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, internationally agreed human rights standards including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and evolving norms such as the Responsibility to Protect, which are endorsed by heads of government and the international community. Similarly, policies that address the common ground shared by development and security are widely recognized as good practice, and should increasingly provide the framework for defense and economic strategies.

There is an urgent need to strengthen the application of these tools. We call on leaders to use them as designed: consistently, jointly and in global unison. Policymaking on security will then be squarely rooted in human rights principles and international law. We can also further strengthen their implementation by supporting reform at the United Nations that calls for a stronger, consolidated body for women's rights and empowerment that operates robustly at the global policy and field levels.

We also recognize that global business can play a role in addressing global insecurity. With influence that transcends the boundaries and power of governments, the private sector should be held accountable for abuses and called upon to contribute to the positive objectives of governments, empowering women and fulfilling human rights for all.

As leaders, we now exercise our collective agenda-setting power to detail changes we know will contribute to a more secure and just world. We commit to asserting our individual and collective political will to ensure these recommendations are widely implemented.

We have identified four issues on which to concentrate our collective efforts toward global security.

To address **the economics of insecurity**, we will partner with other leaders to:

- Clearly and consistently articulate that poverty is an affront to human dignity, is a source of global instability, disproportionately affects women and is a violation of human rights for which states and non-state actors must be held accountable.
- Set international standards of reporting on corporate responsibility that incorporate human rights and environmental standards.
- Restructure economic and development priorities to end unfair trade rules and focus more directly on generating productive and decent work opportunities, especially for the poor—the vast majority of whom are women—in insecure sectors such as agriculture and the informal economy.
- Promote core labor standards and decent work, including labor rights for informal workers, business rights for informal entrepreneurs, and property rights and social protection for all.
- Press donors to honor their foreign assistance commitments without conditionalities, especially for fragile states and Least Developed Countries, to build long-term capacity and market access, while addressing urgent threats to livelihoods, life and human dignity.

To catalyze more effective **responses to terrorism**, we must:

- Consistently advocate that appropriate responses to acts of terror bring perpetrators to justice and respect the rule of law and human rights protections.
- Formulate and support policies that address the root causes of terrorism, including despair, humiliation, marginalization, discrimination and lack of opportunity, and ensure that interventions provide viable alternatives.
- Reiterate that the lack of consensus around a definition of terror does not negate the universal agreement that harming civilians for political, ideological or religious ends is an abuse of human rights, dignity and life in all value systems.
- Condemn torture and abuse of international humanitarian law under any circumstances.

To mitigate the harmful effects of **climate change**, we pledge to:

- Reframe climate change as not only an economic and environmental challenge, but also an urgent social and ethical problem that disproportionately undermines the rights of women, the poor and the vulnerable, just as it increases the risk of social collapse and war.

- Publicly reinforce the message that climate change is having a direct negative impact on:
 - Food security for those relying on marginal agriculture, subsistence hunting or the oceans for human survival;
 - Water security in a world of decreasing and polluted fresh water resources; and
 - Disease management as tropical diseases migrate to populations lacking protective antibodies.
- Reinforce policy linkages between energy management and reduced global warming, with an emphasis on conservation, development and use of clean and renewable energy technologies that diminish greenhouse gas emissions.
- Press governments and donors to implement climate adaptation activities with affected populations—the majority of whom are women—based on the principle of equity.
- Call on the December 2007 UN Climate Change Conference in Bali and the wider global community to create a new world compact for the post-2012 period that acknowledges the differentiated burden of all nation states to:
 - Abate greenhouse gas emissions in a fair and balanced way, through systems such as carbon caps and emissions trading for developed countries and expanded carbon markets that provide incentives for developing countries; and
 - Address the damage already incurred by the communities in the world’s most vulnerable regions, including the Arctic, Antarctica and low-lying island states.

To fulfill **the responsibility to protect**, we must:

- Actively reinforce the global consensus that all nations bear collective responsibility to protect civilian populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.
- Clearly and consistently articulate the international community’s responsibility to first take action through diplomatic and other non-violent means when states fail to prevent or respond effectively to the above mentioned crimes, even when committed by non-state actors.
- Press government representatives at the United Nations to articulate a clear threshold for taking military action to prevent these crimes, and to press the UN Security Council to authorize decisive and timely action when this threshold is crossed.
- Insist that women’s views are sought and women leaders are included in all peace and security initiatives, including Track I and II negotiations.
- End impunity for violence against women and promote gender awareness in all stages of peace processes by mandating training for civilian and military personnel on the various ways insecurity

manifests for women, including rape, murder, sexual harassment, unfair treatment and unequal power relations between men and women.

- Call on world leaders to protect the impartial and independent space of humanitarian actors working alongside military forces in areas of crisis.

We realize that taking action to fulfill these goals is our duty to the global community in which we live, and we commit ourselves to fulfilling it. We encourage others – women and men – to join us in strengthening our collective action.