

Iraqi Women. Spanish Women: Learning from Each Other's Transition

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TOLEDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR PEACE

Iraqi Women. Spanish Women: Learning from Each Other's Transition

Madrid. 7- 11 May 2007

In collaboration with:



Iraqi Al-Amal Association



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FOREWORD

As follow-up to the training workshop CITpax held in cooperation with the Iraqi *al-Amal* Association in Sulamaniyyah (Northern Iraq) from 22-26 July 2006, the purpose of this workshop was to strengthen Iraqi women's role, as an essential component of civil society, in conflict management and resolution, advancing gender equality in the context of peace and security. Established international norms and standards promote indeed the protection of women during armed conflict and their participation in peace and security decision-making in conflict and post-conflict situations.

The training workshop (7-11 May 2007) aimed to empower a group of Iraqi women, carefully identified in close cooperation with the Iraqi *al-Amal* Association, and representing the regions of Iraq, from different professional backgrounds, religious and ethnic groups, so that they will become trainers themselves in their own country ("to train the trainers"). The workshop, led by Dr. George Irani, Director of Africa and Middle East Programme analysed and applied conflict resolution techniques fostering a common approach to conflict prevention and resolution; and focused on the development of practical skills necessary for managing and resolving conflicts. The training workshop sessions from Monday to Friday addressed the definition of conflict, the root causes and conditions of conflicts, multicultural approaches to conflict resolution, communications skills, group facilitation and collaborative problem-solving, culture, mediation, and negotiation techniques.

Workshop Proceedings by Monica Martinez, Consultant, Toledo International Center for Peace (CITpax), and Shireen Dajani, Project Assistant, Africa and Middle East Programme, Toledo International Center for Peace (CITpax).

Evening Open Conversations

In the evening a series of open sessions were devoted to an informal exchange of views with the participation of Spanish and Iraqi women on the following topics:

- Current Situation of Iraqi Women.
- Spanish Women and the Democratic Transition.
- Women, Conflict, Peace and Security: Women's role in Conflict Prevention and Resolution.

PROCEEDINGS

Monday, 7 May 2007

The Current Situation of Iraqi Women

Moderator:

Wijdan Mikhail, Iraqi Minister of Human Rights.

Speakers:

Al-Barrak, Sawsan, Director General Department of Women, Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights.

Al-Jawahiri, Jamal, Public Relations, Iraqi *al-Amal* Association, Iraq.

Alquezar, Laura, "Instituto de la Mujer", Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

Dolors Bramón, Specialist in Arabic Studies, Barcelona University.

Corbi, Henar, Representative Religious Affairs, Spanish Ministry of Justice.

del Viso, Nuria, Centro de Investigaciones para la Paz, Madrid.

Flores Cerdán, Patricia, General Director, Women Affairs Directory, Madrid Regional Government.

Kaimawi, Nagham, Representative of the Iraqi *al-Amal* Association and of the Network of Iraqi Women, Najaf, Iraq.

Montagud, Fiona, “Instituto de la Mujer”, Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

Picazo, Paloma, Professor of International Relations, Expert on Women’s Affairs, University for Distance Education (UNED).

Quintero, Raquel, “Instituto de la Mujer”, Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

Río, Ana, “Instituto de la Mujer”, Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

Wijdan Mikhail, Iraqi Minister of Human Rights.

The first evening session on “The current situation of Iraqi women” analysed the challenges currently faced by Iraqi women in their simultaneous fight to survive the ongoing conflict and to defend their liberties and fundamental rights, in particular on matters related to family status, but also with regard to women’s participation in decision-making processes and in the negotiation of a pacific resolution of the ongoing conflict.

Wijdan Mikhail, Iraqi Minister of Human Rights, started the session indicating that the promulgation of new laws and regulations has curtailed the rights of women and imposed obstacles towards women’s struggle for their rights and the improvement of their conditions. The imbalance which exists between women organizations and other members of the civil society from one side, and the members of the Iraqi Congress from the other side, hinders the process of reaching a common ground between both parties. The Minister said that obstacles abound concerning women’s expression in Congress; and added that Iraqi women are very well educated and professional. Many Iraqi families are headed by women, who must ensure that their family’s basic needs are met while their husbands’ fight in wars. Indeed, women have been the engine power for their country during decades of wars: from the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988) to the Iraqi invasion to Kuwait (1990-91) and the US-led invasion (2003).

Wijdan Mikhail claimed that the subsequent international economic sanctions that were imposed on Iraq following the Gulf War had a negative impact on Iraqi women’s struggle to obtain more rights. It is not only a matter of maintaining the

rights obtained under the regime of Saddam Hussein, but also of not losing them. Women's movements play a key role in Iraq in light of the critical and chaotic security situation, while men have failed to secure peace in Iraq. Women have achieved important advances towards the defence of their rights and fundamental liberties.

She also explained that Iraq is a country of tribal structure, cobbled together from various traditions and firmly cultural. The Islamic law, which includes rights for women, is applied and interpreted in a different way by religious experts pertaining to different groups. Therefore, it is important to highlight the impact of culture and tradition on the Iraqi society. Civil society organizations, together with the Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights, are in the process of implementing training courses and workshops aimed at promoting the protection and respect of human rights. The same applies to children, who also suffer systematic abuses and violations of their fundamental rights. For this reason, the Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights has also included relevant topics on human rights education while teaching at all levels. The Iraqi al-Amal association collaborates with the Ministry in this respect.

Dolors Bramón, Specialist in Arabic Studies, Barcelona University, referred to the role of Spanish women during the democratic transition and their continuous fight for their rights achieving important advances in different areas. She also mentioned existing inequalities, in particular with regard to women's access to a remunerated job and in the amount of such remunerations. In her view, many atrocities are being committed in the name of religion, and not specifically related to Islam. In this connection, Muslim women have the advantage to have their sacred book, the Koran, which includes rules of behaviour relevant as guidance to improve women's situation. Women and their fundamental rights, such as the right to life, and economic rights, are indeed explicitly quoted. Consequently, Dolors Bramón takes the view that Muslim women should take advantage of such explicit recognition in their fight to materialise their rights in practice.

Sawsan al-Barrak, Director General Department of Women, Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights, addressed a series of questions to the Spanish participants. She expressed interest in the structure of the Spanish society, the role of Spanish civil organizations in promoting human rights and a culture of peace, as well as the level of independence civil society organizations have from political parties, and the Spanish democratisation process, which has the potential to learn from the Spanish experience for Iraq.

She added that *sharia* (Islamic law) is subject to different interpretations. The problem is not with Islam as such, but rather with the dozens of interpretations of their rules and principles. The Sunni and Shia ideologies represent the two major branches of Islam in Iraq. Possible ways of interpreting Islam come from neighbouring countries, deciding which religious rules and interpretations are to be implemented. She mentioned that the Iraqi Ministry of Interior issued an Order that prevents women from travelling abroad without a male relative, which severely restricts the mobility of women. In addition, the Order contradicts Article 44 of the Iraqi Constitution that permits the equal freedom of movement for all Iraqis.

Patricia Cerdán, General Director, Women Affairs Directory, Madrid Regional Government, mentioned the important advances achieved by Iraqi women, far beyond their neighbours in the region, during the 1970s and 1980s. However, such development was jeopardised by armed conflicts, which leads to the analysis of the role women should have in societies undergoing a conflict, taking into account their limitations to fully participate in the social, political and economic life in their countries. Patricia Cerdán considers that women should have a leading role in peace processes, with the caveat that representative women should not lose their connection with the real situation and concerns of all women. Representation should thus be a real one and not purely symbolic. In her opinion, it is important the tradition of women's active participation in civil society as well as in political parties. She referred to the importance of reforming the area of women's personal status, in particular the access to training and education. The example of Colombia, she found revealing, where the role of local women councils has been instrumental in fostering political participation and in achieving legal equality.

Given the influence that religious laws have on civil norms, Patricia Cerdán suggested to review Islam's interpretation to make it compatible with civil laws in order to achieve an effective equality. Finally, the representative of the regional Government suggested the adoption of two strategies to achieve women's effective influence in decision-making processes and in the interpretation of applicable laws via: 1) the influence of religion and its values; and 2) the interpretation of relevant civil norms. She emphasised the importance of women's effective participation in all processes to become the actors of their own progress.

Nagham Kaimawi, Representative of the Iraqi *al-Amal* Association and of the Network of Iraqi Women, Najaf, Iraq, indicated that women movements under Saddam's regime were politicized for the influence of the Ba'ath government contrary to the post regime in year 2003 following the fall of Saddam regime. Women movements started to flourish all over the country and to promote women's rights and participation in the new government, as well as in the redaction process of the new Constitution. In spite of the insecurity situation in Iraq, women activists continue to make their demands be known, particularly in protest to provisions of the new Constitution regarding the family status that curtail women's rights and freedoms in areas such as marriage, divorce and inheritance.

Jamal al-Jawahiri, Public Relations, Iraqi *al-Amal* Association, Iraq, mentioned that the current government represents religious institutions of distinct ideologies which differ in their interpretation to the sharia. Moreover, tribal groups have also increased in Iraq under the previous regime, influencing the rule of law with their interpretation of the Islam, which limits women's rights. Various other groups including journalists, members of the Congress, and Ministers, cooperate with civil society organizations to defend the rights of women. In his opinion, the international community must help and support women's struggle to defend their fundamental rights. He also referred to 1959 Personal Status Law, considered to be the most progressive in the Middle East and the most advanced related to women rights. Several fundamental rights in areas such as marriage, divorce and inheritance, which were included in the provisional Iraqi Constitution, face the risk of being eliminated in the new Constitution.

Paloma Picazo, Professor of International Relations, Expert on Women's Affairs, University for Distance Education (UNED), mentioned the cultural factor in international relations in general and in the context of the evolution that implied the Spanish transition with the changes that fostered in applicable laws after 40 years of dictatorship. The overall democratic changes strictly speaking have to be distinguished, in her opinion, from the structural changes that occurred within the families and in women's mentality in particular. She also referred to a phenomenon that has happened in many cultures: females' cooptation in empowerment processes. In the case of Iraq, after the change that took place in 1993, conservative retrograde political parties co-opted a number of women for influential positions. In any case, the necessary fight for survival jeopardises the existence of a fully free and informed decision-making process.

Moreover, in several regions in conflict where women play an active role in the fight for their rights, such as Colombia, there is a repressive and oppressive intimidation over women, that limits the successful achievement of their projects. Given that there is oppression not only from the government in power but also for other women acting as guardians of the system, enemies of activist women fighting for their rights, there is indeed double or triple discrimination. Finally, Paloma Picazo stressed once more the cultural aspect within the Iraqi society, implying the necessity of preserving existing values and diversities, including the religious component of such a society. She considers that “imposing” is not the solution, but as suggested in the concept of the “Alliance of Civilisations”, rather of “facilitating” a peaceful integration in order to achieve a symbiosis with existing values and traditions. She thinks that democracy has to originate in civil society’s roots and be identified with its values. Iraqi women have indeed a very rich culture and values which should be duly taken into account and respected by the Occident.

There are also a number of legal issues determined by the existence of a strict and repressive specific legal system in force, the Islamic Law or “Sharia”. The political systems should find correctional mechanisms which, without affecting existing traditions and values, religions and norms, slowly achieve lasting changes for the benefit of future generations. In the case of Iraq, civil and political life should be normalised first in terms of security. Women, in the scope of their capacity, should assist the peace-building process by establishing active associative networks to facilitate the initiation of projects to move forward in the fight for their rights and liberties.

Henar Corbi, Representative Religious Affairs, Spanish Ministry of Justice, explained her experience in enhancing Spanish women’s personal status in the 1980s, ultimately aiming at achieving further developments in all areas in accordance with the social and political context at the time. The ultimate outcome was to fully involve and reintegrate women throughout a period of continuous challenges and improvements.

Wednesday 9 May 2007

Spanish Women and the Democratic Transition

Moderator:

Shlomo Ben-Ami, Vice-President, CITpax.

Speakers:

Ahmad, Surood, Representative of the “Iraqi al-Amal Association, Kirkuk, Iraq.
Al-Barrak, Sawsan, General Director, Women Department, Human Rights Ministry.

Alberdi, Inés, Complutense University, Madrid.

Ben-Ami, Shlomo, Vice-President, CITpax.

Blanco, Delia, President, Commission on International Cooperation for Development, Spanish Congress.

García Moreno, Carmela, Director, “Centro de Acción Social del Colegio de Politólogos y Sociólogos”, Madrid.

Goyani, Amina, Representative of the Iraqi *al-Amal* Association and of the Network of Iraqi women, Sulaymaniyah, Iraq.

Kazem, Thoha, Professor, Faculty of Education and Law, University of Maisan, and Director of Female Teacher’s Institution in Maisan Governorate.

Rico, Mercedes, General Director, Religious Affairs Directorate, Spanish Minister of Justice.

Rodríguez Salmones, Beatriz, Deputy and Spoke Person of the Culture Commission, Popular Party, Madrid.

Sauquillo, Paca, Director, “Movimiento por la Paz, el Desarme y la Libertad” (MPDL), Madrid.

The second evening session on “Spanish Women and the Democratic Transition” debated the implications that the Spanish democratic transition has had on women, particularly with regard to the acquisition of a better social status and additional economic and political rights. The democratic transition is to be widely understood, not only from a political point of view, but in all its dimensions of respect to

human, social and political rights. Moreover, the role played by women in the different political parties and other associative movements established at the time was discussed, as well as the influence of the religion in the achievement of a democratic regime after four decades of dictatorship.

Sawsan al-Barrak, General Director, Women Department, Human Rights Ministry, appreciated the opportunity given to the Iraqi group of participants to meet with Spanish women highly qualified with a high professional profile in different areas. She referred to the period between 1958 and 1990, in which Iraq acknowledged more rights and freedoms for Iraqi women than most of its neighbouring countries. She added that Iraqi women have played significant roles in society, being among the most educated in the region. They work and are organised politically, and enjoyed the broadest legal rights in the Middle East. The first Iraqi women Minister was appointed in Iraq in 1959.

Al-Barrak mentioned that the 1970 Iraqi Constitution gave Iraqi women unprecedented equality and liberties. However, since the occupation by the United States, Iraqi women's situation has deteriorated more than ever in the history of Iraq. After 2003, civil society organizations increased its activities and Iraqi women living abroad contributed to the advocacy and mobility of women's movements. Some of these women activists integrated in these movements currently hold political positions as well.

The Transitional Administration Law (TAL) declares equal rights for all Iraqis regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion or nationality. However, Article 41 of the new Constitution annulled this declaration by dividing the Iraqis according to their religion, ethnicity, and beliefs. Furthermore, the TAL contains a provision calling for a target of 25 per cent representation for women in the Transitional National Assembly, despite women's demand to fill 40 per cent of the seats. The constitutional quota for female representatives is the result of intense lobbying by women's groups.

According to al-Barrak, the new Iraqi Constitution does not guarantee women's rights; it is to be considered to be a major step backwards for Iraqi women and severely jeopardises the implementation of the 1959 Personal Status Law that granted equal gender rights. The Jordanian Parliament and women's movements demanded to amend their Personal Status Law in conformity with the 1959 Iraqi Personal Status Law which proved to be the most advanced Law, providing

women with some of the broadest legal rights in the Middle East, as a consequence of more than 50 years of mobilizing Iraqi women. In Iraq, unfortunately, it has been replaced by another Law.

She further stated that pressure undoubtedly increased on women in Iraq to wear the hijab or abaya, and women are being harassed, and sometimes even assaulted, for not covering themselves. Thus minorities and even Christian women have resorted to wearing the hijab even though this did not exist before since they were free to practice their relevant religious rituals. Al-Barrak concluded by mentioning that Iraqi women are facing the challenge of daily survival as well as having to defend their rights.

Inés Alberdi, Complutense University, Madrid, mentioned the reestablishment of civil and political rights during the transition, as well as the overall improvements that brought Spanish membership of the European Union after 1986. She referred to women leftist wing movements fighting for equality with the support of political parties opened to different kinds of social movements. Women benefited from a favourable atmosphere due to the existence of a majority in favour of modernisation and European ideas since the last years of the Spanish dictatorship.

Both the remittances of Spanish emigration to Europe and the benefits of the tourism, constituted the two pillars of the Spanish economic development in the 1960s and the 1970s, which also fostered improvements for women. The 1978 Constitution, as well as the new Family Laws (1981), introduced important developments, such as the recognition of full equality between women and men. The applicable legislation at the time, actually defined a status for women more advanced than the one reflected by social reality.

Delia Blanco, President, Commission on International Cooperation for Development, Spanish Congress, referred to the 1931 Constitution (adopted during the Second Spanish Republic), establishing already, along with the legislative reforms of 1934, full equality between women and men. The Civil and Penal Codes were also amended at the time. Achievements such as the legislation on abortion, divorce and women's access to the judiciary, were withdrawn during the dictatorship and they were not fully re-established until the 1970s. In fact, the dictatorship left women without any of the rights previously acquired. She also noted the particularities of the Spanish dictatorship and democratic transition in view of the favourable conditions given the support provided by Europe, inexistent

for instance in the case of Iraq. Blanco mentioned the recent promulgation of innovative legislative measures in Spain, which imply effective equality between women and men concerning electoral candidates, women's access to positions of responsibility in private business, the conciliation of personal and working lives, and the prevention of domestic violence and the trafficking and sexual exploitation of women. She concluded that there is a lack of women's effective participation in peace-building negotiations, and referred to UN Resolution 1325, requiring all UN members to promote women's participation in such processes.

Amina Goyani, Representative of the Iraqi *al-Amal* Association and of the Network of Iraqi women, Sulaymaniyah, Iraq, stated that Iraqi women were presently active in many areas in their society prior to the occupation, after which this situation has dramatically changed. Although women in Iraqi Kurdistan have made gains since the US invasion, in the rest of the country women currently face violence and hardships in their daily lives, as well as fear and uncertainties about the future. Historically, the laws of Iraq, such as the 1959 Personal Status Law were more liberal than the ones in any other neighbouring country. In her opinion, that Law should be considered as the model and current laws be reformed accordingly to grant additional rights to women.

Goyani added that the Spanish Catholic Church initiated a reform movement with positive consequences. In Iraq instead, the political religious reform is a long process which requires a change in mentality, laws, politics and administrative institutions. She considered that Iraqi women should have an active role in politics and in the reconstruction of the country; and asserted that the Iraqi authorities should apply effective measures in order to guarantee the political representation of women and modify the discriminative legislation which prevents women's access to politics. She said that Iraqi women hope the international community will support the appeal of Iraqi women to guarantee their basic human rights. She concluded that Iraqi women have started to mobilize against the new Constitution and are pressuring Iraqi policy-makers and government officials to respond to their demands.

Mercedes Rico, General Director, Religious Affairs Directorate, Spanish Minister of Justice, mentioned the initial failed initiative of democratisation in Spain in the 1930s, due to the interruption of the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), and the success however of the transition to democracy in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The success of this second democratic process, she claimed, was due to a great extent

to the activism and pressure from women. She also mentioned the debate that took place in the 1930s regarding women's suffrage in a mainly rural and poor society largely influenced by the Church. Most women at the time fuelled the general atmosphere of social discontent that right wing and monarchic parties fostered in Spain during the First Republic. The process of democratisation gained momentum after the Civil War and particularly with the end of Franco's dictatorship in late 1970s, with the achievement of important developments. Such a process benefited of a new social opinion, influenced by tourism, urbanization, and economic development. The Catholic Church was also internally reformed at the time, which made the Church an ally of the Spanish transition towards democracy. Indeed, as in the Iraqi context, there is a parallel between the secularisation of society and improvements for women's status and the achievement of a full democracy.

Paca Sauquillo, Director, "Movimiento por la Paz, el Desarme y la Libertad" (MPDL), Madrid, stressed a number of crucial moments in Spanish history in relation to the achievements of women: 1) in 1961, the Law on professional rights was promulgated enabling access for women to certain professions which were forbidden until that time; 2) post-1975, declared by the United Nations as International Women's Year, the promulgation of the 1978 Constitution; and 3) the decade of the 1980s and women's suffrage. Between 1961 and 1978, the conscience of the existence of discriminatory laws and, consequently, the lack of recognition of women's rights, gave rise to the establishment of activist women's movements, either linked to political parties secretly created, or to women's associations from different social groups, such as housekeepers, divorcees, and jurists. Such movements played an essential role in demanding rights and liberties to amend the applicable legislation. This process concluded in 1981, with the recognition of women's right to vote. Sauquillo emphasised the role of women in thwarting religious fundamentalism and their important contributions to reconstruction and peace-building in post-conflict situations, which should continue and be strengthened with the support of the UN.

Surood Ahmad, Representative of the Iraqi *al-Amal* Association, Kirkuk, Iraq, indicated that the women in Iraq constitute more than 55 per cent of the population. Women's role in peace-building therefore has a high potential, contrary to men who have failed in achieving relevant advances with regard to security in Iraq. She appealed to the Spanish government and its institutions, as well as to the international community to help the Iraqi women in defending their rights.

Toha Kazem, Professor, Faculty of Education and Law, University of Maisan, and Director of Female Teacher's Institution in Maisan Governorate, addressed the Spanish women asking whether access to Parliament was via an independent list or a quota. She stated that Iraqi women were brutally attacked, captured and threatened in order to prevent them from participating in society. She talked about her personal experience during her access to the Parliament as an independent candidate and not through the system of quotas, for which reason she received several threats.

Carmela Garcia, Director, "Centro de Acción Social del Colegio de Politólogos y Sociólogos", Madrid, added that the Spanish transition implied the willingness to move forward with a persistent process of continual political and social reforms, based on a valid social consensus and support from all political parties. She reiterated mention to the 1978 Constitution, promulgated by the Legislative Assembly ("Cortes Constituyentes"). Given the scarce representation of women in the Assembly, women introduced their demands through the associative movements of activist women. Additional legislation enacted then tackled existing inequalities, included the law decriminalising adultery and the legislation on the use of contraception. The democratisation process took place in a context of searching for consensus: on the State's model as a Constitutional Monarchy, its territorial organisation (divided in autonomous regions) and on the role to be played by the Church vis-à-vis the State. In this context, she concluded that occasional concessions should be made as a precondition to achieve further developments.

Shlomo Ben-Ami, Vice President, CITpax, referred to the polarisation of Spanish society in the 1970s which gave raise to the further marginalisation of extremes elements and to a transformation of the social "centre", which became an ideological political centre wing. This is very different, in his view, from what happened in Spain in the 1930s.

Beatriz Rodríguez, Deputy and Spokesperson of the Culture Commission, Popular Party, Madrid, encouraged "patience" in the context of democratic transitions in post-conflict settings referring to the success of the Irish peace process after 40 years of conflict. She mentioned different possible approaches to democratic transition processes: religious, politic, from activist feminist movements, stressing the important role played by the media, in particular by the written press. In her

view, the media go indeed hand by hand with free political movements, the same way democracy goes with the fundamental right to freedom of expression.

Shlomo Ben-Ami, Vice President, CITpax, reemphasized the particularities and character sui generis of the Spanish transitional process, which makes it difficult to replicate in other contexts. With regard to the importance of religion in relation to the phenomenon of immigration from Muslim countries, he claimed that the capacity to integrate such social groups within the Spanish society will depend on the possibility of achieving their secularisation. He referred to the situation of some Arab countries in the Middle East, such as Egypt and Iraq, with consolidated socio-political structures, which also enjoyed democratic regimes before becoming dictatorships, and concluded that the Spanish transition was a slow and gradual process, which ensured continuity, compared to more violent ones that resulted exclusively from wars and military coups.

Thursday, 10 May 2007

Women, Conflict, Peace and Security: Women's Role in Conflict Prevention and Resolution

Moderator:

Jumana Trad, “Tribuna de Casa Árabe”, Madrid.

Speakers:

Alemany Rojo, Ángela, former President, Association of Jurists Women (Themis), Madrid.

Duran, Paloma, Professor, “Filosofía del Derecho”, Complutense University, Madrid, Former Advisor on Social Affairs, United Nations.

Escobar, Silvia, Ambassador on Special Mission (Human Rights), Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Mejia, Aurora, Ambassador on Gender Issues, Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Pérez-Llorca, Carmen, General Director, Employment Directorate, Regional Government of Madrid.

Suárez Leonardo, Eva, Project Manager, European Integration, Embassy of Spain in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The third evening session on “Women, Conflict, Peace and Security: Women’s role in conflict prevention and resolution” addressed the importance of involving women in decision-making and peace negotiation processes. Women’s participation, in addition to facilitating such processes by bringing new perspectives, would also foster women’s rights and ultimately assist in achieving sustainable peace and reconciliation in the country. Countries should therefore ensure compliance with the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

Aurora Mejía, Ambassador on Gender Issues, Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, mentioned that in light of the continuous denouncing of sexual exploitation and abuses practised by staff of UN missions, recommendations were made to train the missions’ members in terms of equality and gender-related matters as well as to include more female members. She added that most of the security institutions are indeed dominated by men. She opined the international community should favour all initiatives aimed at fostering the participation of women in peace and democratisation processes and decision-making, both in political and in economic matters, as well as the principles of non-violence and equality. She stressed Iraqi women’s concerns that the response to sexual violence during and after conflicts is not being addressed adequately compared to the magnitude of the phenomena. Preventive actions should be considered and effective responses require coordination between the different parties in order to efficiently address the exploitation of women. The lack of systematic political actions and the absence of reliable financial resources to tackle sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations are obstacles to protecting and responding efficiently to the needs of those being exploited.

Paloma Duran, Professor, “Filosofía del Derecho”, Complutense University, Madrid, Former Advisor on Social Affairs, United Nations, talked the role of women in wars and their participation in armed groups. She stated that basic human rights are subject to the same international standards without distinction between Western and Oriental human rights. Active participation of women and the articulation of gender equality are essential ingredients from the early

stages of peace negotiations until the implementation and monitoring of peace agreements. Women have their own views and perspectives on political solutions and priorities, as well as on national recovery and reconstruction. Women have worked to build and maintain peace in their communities, and have contributed with their knowledge and experience to enhance the discussions at the negotiation table. Consequently, she concluded that lasting peace and sustainable development will be easier to achieve if women's comprehension of the challenges confronting civil society are considered and if adequate measures are taken to properly tackle these challenges.

Carmen Pérez-Llorca, General Director, Employment Directorate, Regional Government of Madrid, stated that Spain, and in particular the Community of Madrid, has recently become in a short period of time, since the 1990s, an area that receives a huge number of immigrants. In the Community of Madrid, women occupy 14 per cent of high ranking positions and 70 per cent of the labour force in rural areas.

Eva Suárez Leonardo, Project Manager, European Integration. Embassy of Spain in Bosnia and Herzegovina, referred to the question of sexual abuses practiced against women in conflict zones, particularly during the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. She indicated that these abuses should be considered as war crimes as they violate the International Humanitarian Law. She said UN Resolution 1325 was historical because for first time the Security Council seriously considered the role to be played by women and human rights abuses committed with a gender motivation in the context of armed conflicts. UN Resolution 1325 not only addresses the issue of protecting the women's rights in armed conflicts, and thus ending the impunity of the crimes in which women are victims, but it also requires the participation of women in the negotiation and decision-making processes and the integration of a gender perspective in the reconstruction and consolidation of peace.

PARTICIPANTS

Iraqi Participants

Ahmad, Suhood, Representative of the “Iraqi al-Amal Association, Kirkuk, Iraq.

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Wijdan Mikhail, Human Rights Minister, Baghdad, Iraq.

Spanish Participants

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Alquezar, Laura, “Instituto de la Mujer”, Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

Blanco Terán, Delia, President, Commission on International Cooperation for Development, Spanish Congress.

Bramón, Dolors, Specialist in Arabic Studies, Barcelona University.

Corbi, Henar, Representative Religious Affairs, Spanish Ministry of Justice.

del Viso, Nuria, “Centro de Investigaciones para la Paz”, Madrid.

Durán, Paloma, Professor, “Filosofía del Derecho”, Complutense University, Madrid, Former Advisor on Social Affairs, United Nations.

Escobar, Silvia, Ambassador on Special Mission (Human Rights), Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Flores Cerdán, Patricia, General Director, Women Affairs Directory, Madrid Regional Government.

García Moreno, Carmela, Director, “Centro de Acción Social del Colegio de Politólogos y Sociólogos”, Madrid.

Mejía Aurora, Ambassador on Gender Issues, Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Montagud, Fiona, “Instituto de la Mujer”, Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

Pérez-Llorca, Carmen, General Director, Employment Directorate, Regional Government of Madrid.

Picazo, Paloma, Professor of International Relations, Expert on Women's Affairs, University for Distance Education (UNED).

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Rico, Mercedes, General Director, Religious Affairs Directorate, Spanish Minister of Justice.

Río, Ana, "Instituto de la Mujer", Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

Rodríguez Salmones, Beatriz, Deputy and Spoke Person of the Culture Commission, Popular Party, Madrid.

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ABOUT THE TOLEDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR PEACE

(www.toledopax.org)

The Toledo International Centre for Peace (CITpax) seeks to contribute to the prevention and resolution of violent or potentially violent international or intra-national conflicts and to the consolidation of peace, within a framework of respect and promotion of Human Rights and democratic values. Thus, the CITpax contributes to the establishment of cooperation pathways and communication channels between the parties involved, governments, NGO's and representatives of all sectors in the civil society.

ACTION PATHWAYS

In order to achieve its objectives, the CITpax employs various tools specially designed for each particular situation, including the following:

- **Second Track Diplomacy**, through the direct facilitation in negotiation processes between relevant political and economic actors, in conflicts where a dialogue pathway becomes necessary to complement or break the deadlock in the official track.
- **Multi-Track Diplomacy and Dialogue Facilitation**, through the creation of dialogue platforms among scholars, experts, activists, local authorities and governing bodies, as well as assisting the development of peace-building capacities in conflict areas.
- **Field Projects**, aimed at improving the capacities for conflict prevention and resolution through confidence-building, research and advocacy of feasible peace policies.
- **Research and Policy Development** of peace-related issues.
- **Professional Development and Training**, seeking to enhance the capacities of practitioners from different institutions working on peace-related issues.
- **Public Awareness and Advocacy**, through information dissemination, policy-oriented publishing and participation in the public debate.

PROGRAMMES

Notwithstanding a progressive extension of its working field to other areas, such as Southeast Europe, the CITpax current activities and projects are divided into three main programmes: two geographical programmes, one centred on Africa and the Middle East, and the other on Latin America, and the Conflict Prevention and Resolution Programme, which thematically complements and supports the regional programmes.

Africa and the Middle East

In the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, CITpax is exploring Track II diplomatic tools to enhance ongoing negotiations and the status of the peace process. The Programme also intends to progressively address some of the core challenges of the region, such as the conditions for the establishment of a cooperation and security system in the Middle East. Addressing regional conflicts, discreet efforts are being made to bring regional parties to explore venues for strengthening local peaceful resolutions. Focusing on the reconstruction of post-war Iraq and the enhancement of civil society in several countries in the Middle East, such as Syria and Lebanon. CITpax is also engaged in

the North Africa context, with an emphasis on the Western Sahara conflict and the future of economic integration in the Maghreb. Lastly, the programme is engaged in exploring conflict management tools related to natural resources such as water and oil.

Areas of Activity:

- Regional Stability in the Middle East
- Emphasis on the Palestinian Israeli conflict
- Economic Integration of the Maghreb
- Transition to democracy

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Latin America

The programme has the following fields of activity: (1) in Colombia, CI Tpax facilitates dialogue between various groups on key issues emanating from the armed conflict and promotes the consolidation of institutions and mechanisms relevant to the pursuit of peace; (2) in the Andean region, it undertakes initiatives of a subregional scope to deepen the understanding of, and promote respect for, political, cultural and ethnic diversity and to foster confidence; (3) it promotes “benign borders” and good neighbourly relations between countries in Latin America in areas that are subject to tension or particularly vulnerable, primarily through initiatives that foster confidence among neighbouring communities; and (4) encourages political dialogue among Latin American countries as a means to ease bilateral and intra-regional tensions and to

support understanding and consensus-building at the regional and subregional levels. In order to identify specific areas of intervention and strengthen cooperation with its Latin American partners and interlocutors, CI Tpax undertakes missions to countries in the region.

Areas of Activity:

- Encouragement of political dialogue at the regional and subregional levels
- Institutional stability in the Andean Region
- Alternatives to the Colombian conflict
- Promotion of “benign borders” and good neighbourly relations

Conflict Prevention and Resolution

The focus of this programme is threefold: 1) to analyse and support peace processes through the means of Track II diplomacy; 2) to monitor and assist countries undergoing situations of transitional justice while promoting peace-building and democracy; and 3) from the perspective of conflict prevention, to promote the adoption of concrete measures to mitigate the underlying causes of conflicts.

The projects and activities of the programme are embedded within the broader concept of human security and aspire to its realization. Within this framework and via the practical study of international responses to crisis situations, including international armed interventions, the programme aims at strengthening the civil dimension of international crisis management and the establishment of frameworks to permit

adequate coordination with the military dimension.

Areas of Activity:

- Peace processes and peace-building
- Crisis management and regional and international responses to conflict
- Transitional justice and strengthening of the Rule of Law
- Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and Security Sector Reform (SSR)
- Strengthening of civil society and support for the most vulnerable sectors
- Role of the media in peace processes

STRUCTURE AND PERSONNEL

Shlomo Ben-Ami, Executive Vice-President
Emilio Cassinello, Director General, Ambassador of Spain
Claudia Medina, Projects Director

Latin America Programme

Patricia Pérez-Gómez, Projects Coordinator
Alba Marcellán, Colombia Programme Assistant

Africa and the Middle East Programme

George E. Irani, Director
Stuart Reigeluth, Desk Officer
Shireen Dajani, Programme Assistant

Conflict Prevention and Resolution Programme

Luis Peral, Director
Gabriel Reyes, Desk Officer
Alvaro García-Ormaechea, Projects Coordinator
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Nuria Ayarra Burgos, Communication and Web
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ABOUT THE TOLEDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR PEACE
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Excmo. Ayuntamiento de Toledo



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Federico Mayor Zaragoza, former Director-General of the UNESCO

* In absentia, while in office

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