





AT THE PEACE TABLE





Sanam Naraghi Anderlini











WOMEN

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PEACE TABLE

Making a Difference

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United Nations Development Fund for Women

UNIFEM is the women's fund at the United Nations. It provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programmes and strategies that promote women's human rights, political participation and economic security. UNIFEM works with in partnership with UN organizations, governments, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and networks to promote gender equality. It links women's issues and concerns to national, regional and global agendas, by fostering collaboration and providing technical expertise on gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment strategies.

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"Human beings are like parts of a body,
created from the same essence.
when one part is hurt and in pain,
The others cannot remain in peace and be quiet.
If the misery of others leaves you indifferent
and with no feelings of sorrow,
you cannot be called a human being."
—Saadi (C13th Persian poet)

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Lysistrata: In the last war we were too modest to object...

Magistrate:: Quite right too, by Zeus.

Lysistrata: Right? That we should not be allowed to make the least suggestion to you, no matter how much you mismanage the City's affairs? ... That's why we women got together and decided we were going to save Greece...

Magistrate: But the international situation at present is in a hopeless muddle. How do you propose to unravel it?

Lysistrata: Well, take a tangled skein of wool for example. We take it so, put it to the spindle, unwind it this way, now that way. That's how we'll unravel this war, if you let us...

Magistrate: Are you such idiots as to think that you can solve serious problems with spindles and bits of wool?

Lysistrata: As a matter of fact, it might not be so idiotic as you think to run the whole city entirely on the model of the way we deal with wool... The first thing you do with wool is wash the grease out of it; you can do the same with the City. Then you stretch out the citizen body on a bench and pick out the burrs – that is, the parasites. After that you prise apart the club-members who form themselves into knots and clots to get into power, and when you've separated them, pick them out one by one. Then you're ready for the carding: they can all go into the basket of civic goodwill... Not only that, Athens has many colonies. At the moment these are lying around all over the place, like stray bits and pieces of fleece. You should pick them up and bring them here, put them all together, and then out of all this make an enormous great ball of wool – and from that you can make the People a coat.

-From 'Lysistrata' by Aristophenes (c.447 B.C.- c. 385 B.C.)

Preface

"We need to build bridges and strengthen partnerships between the United Nations, governments and civil society organisations in our collective effort to build sustainable peace and human security throughout the world."

—Noeleen Heyzer Executive Director, UNIFEM

Women Making Peace

The end of the Cold War sparked hopes of new possibilities for higher levels of cooperation among countries. Instead, the number of nation-states has increased, breaking along the fault lines of ethnicity, language and religion, and fueling more intra-state conflicts than at any time in human history. The battlefield has moved to the village, the street and the home. Civilians represent the overwhelming majority of the victims of war, with women and girls targeted for special forms of attack. They are raped, forced into marriages, abducted by warring groups and exposed to the scourge of HIV/AIDS.

Even as women around the world are finding many new platforms to express their ideas and concerns, women's priorities in countries suffering armed violence continue to be largely marginalized. This occurs in large part because women's voices are rarely heard at the peace table. To change this situation and to curtail the cycle of poverty and violence that results, we must continue to support women's leadership in times of peace, but we must also make greater efforts to assist their attempts to participate as decision-makers in times of war.

An important first step is to recognize that despite the many challenges they face, women across Asia, Africa, Europe, and North and South America are already at the forefront of many peace efforts. At the grassroots and community levels, women have organized to resist militarisation, to create space for dia-

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