

**PGA'S 32<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL FORUM**  
**“Empowering Women: Building Human Security”**  
**Istanbul, Turkey**

<b>1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>
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On October 23-24, 2010, Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) held its 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Forum in Istanbul, Turkey, on the theme of ***“Empowering Women: Building Human Security.”*** Over 100 Parliamentarians participated in the 2010 Annual Forum, along with representatives from several international organizations, academia and civil society. The Forum was formally called to order on October 23, 2010 by Ms. Shazia Z. Rafi, Secretary-General, PGA.

The Annual Forum was structured in panels covering the following issues:

Panel I:	Health and Education
Panel II:	Land, Property and Inheritance Rights
Panel III:	Employment, Equal Opportunity and Income Equality
Panel IV:	Gender Justice and Women's Rights
Panel V:	International/National Commitments: Beijing, CEDAW and the MDGs
Panel VI:	Parliamentary Progress Forward
Closing Session:	The New UN Women's Agency: Potential and Challenges

The Forum also benefitted from keynote addresses by Mayor Kadir Topbas, the Mayor of Istanbul and Ms. Serpil Timur, the CEO of Vodafone Turkey and member of the Turkish Industrialist and Businessmen Association.

Forum participants recognized that women's empowerment is integral to any successful strategy for human security. Comprehensive security recognizes and responds to women's diverse roles as not only victims, but as important agents during times of uncertainty. Providing a localized, national security for women creates a more secure and stable international environment for everyone. The framework of human security helps to reveal the interconnectedness of violence against women, poverty, health care, social and economic situations of women and also how class, race and nationality cross-cut these situations.

Perceived threats to human security, such as economic crisis and climate change, affect all States, making women's empowerment in all sectors crucial. These pressures can intensify existing food insecurity, shortage of safe, clean water; resource scarcity that can lead to economic drawbacks; disease; displacement; and conflicts due to growing competition over scarce resources. Women are at particular risk as they make up the majority of the poor and constitute the majority of workers in the agricultural sector - rural women alone are responsible for more than half of the world's food production and between 60 and 80 percent of food production in most developing countries. They are more likely to depend on natural resources and live in areas vulnerable to risks such as climate change. Current socio-economic and political constraints that they face are consequently only exacerbated.

Women's socio-economic empowerment is critical to ensuring human security. Survival, dignity and livelihood form the basis of establishing a secure society not only for women, but in the so doing, for all. There has been much progress in key areas of health care and education for

women, but work remains. Maternal mortality ratios have shown little change over the last two decades and though gender disparities have narrowed considerably in primary education, the statistics for secondary education reveal less success. The material aspects of women's empowerment need to be addressed with equal vigor – these include women's land and property rights, inheritance rights, access to credit and employment. It is estimated that women own between 1% and 10% of land internationally, limiting their ability to make socio-economic decisions related to their and their families' futures, while the gender pay gap on average internationally remains significant at 17%. Important developments have been made in the area of gender justice, but domestic abuse and sexual violence, particularly increasing in armed conflict and civil war contexts, continue to be grim realities for many women.

Participants to the Forum acknowledged that access to health care, education, property rights, credit and employment opportunities are all interlinked and mutually enhancing not only for women's individual empowerment but for their children, communities and future generations. Strengthening women's land and property rights through the transformation of land use, marital property and inheritance regimes improves their access to credit. Increased access to education and health care enhances their employment prospects, providing women with the opportunity to improve their livelihoods, that of their families and their capacity to live with dignity.

Women's security is legalized and promoted through a number of international treaties and frameworks. Two international statutes laying out the foundations for gender equality are the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA). These have been signed by 179 and 189 countries respectively. In 2000, Security Council resolution 1325 on women and international commitments to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were agreed upon. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) of 17 July 1998, entered into force on 1 July 2002, is the first legally binding instrument that criminalizes all the inhumane acts labeled as gender-based crimes within the framework of crimes against humanity and war crimes. PGA members called for the ratifications of the above conventions and/or the creation of complementary national legislation.

Participants recognized that this year 2010 is an important time to reflect and recommit to progress towards gender equality. It marks the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the BPfA at the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), and the 10th anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, and of the international commitment to the MDGs (2000). Of significant note, also, this year commemorates the creation of UN Women which finally gives women's equality a seat at the key decision making table, adequate resources and an integrative structure at the international level. Participants urged their colleagues to keep up pressure to ensure that UN Women receives the increased funding it needs to play a major role.

Participants to the Forum acknowledged that these times present opportunity as the institutional possibilities exist to engender human security, thereby tempering human insecurity. The work of gender mainstreaming has begun with considerable achievements, much being observed and learned as the process develops. Most countries have made a commitment to synergize existing international commitments with those at the national level and can continue to build upon their work to date. The integration of gender mainstreaming into national development plans and the development of gender budgets are two important mechanisms which PGA members discussed to more effectively enhance women's empowerment.

## **2. FORUM OUTCOMES**

### **Goal**

- To address issues central to women's role in human security with global participation and input recognizing the need for a global policy dialogue.

### **Outcomes:**

- Adoption of the Forum Declaration, which outlines the consensus-based commitments made by Parliamentarians.
- Increased awareness among Parliamentarians of the importance of issues related to women's socio-economic empowerment.
- Acknowledgement of the need for effective policies and legislation, and strategies for implementation, to promote women's empowerment and advocacy at the national level.
- Promotion of strengthened partnerships between government and the relevant UN and civil society organizations to more effectively and strategically address issues of women's empowerment.
- Promotion of partnerships internationally and regionally to address common concerns related to women's rights.
- Promotion of adoption of appropriate legislation and advocacy towards governments to sign and become party to relevant international conventions and treaties
- Promotion of strengthened parliamentary capacity to address the socio-economic empowerment of women effectively.
- Exchanges of experience and best practices in gender mainstreaming with a view to more informed drafting of legislation and policy-making in this area;
- Strengthened political consensus among parliamentarians to advocate for women's empowerment internationally, including commitment to the success of the new UN Women.
- Affirmation of the significance of political will and leadership.
- Productive networking sessions solidified new friendships among parliamentarians that should facilitate international communication and coordination going forward.

### **Declaration Commitments**

Parliamentarians participating in the PGA 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Forum on Empowering Women: Building Human Security agreed to work within their respective Parliaments, Parliamentary Committees, and other regional and international for a in which they participate, to:

1. Seek greater numbers of ratification of, accession to and implementation of the major international rights-based frameworks related to women, including CEDAW, the BPfA and the relevant provisions of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.
2. Strongly encourage fellow parliamentarians to actively promote all legal measures to achieve women's socio-economic empowerment, particularly in the areas of labor laws, personal status, protection and family law, including property rights as well as measures aimed at eliminating violence against women.

3. Incorporate gender mainstreaming into national development plans, poverty reduction strategies and national budgets.
4. Cooperate and exchange best practices in gender mainstreaming at all levels.
5. Encourage governments to bring into public sector those schools that may be vulnerable or subject to possible extremism or militancy tendencies so that they may be more effectively supervised and as a means to ensure greater peace and inter-faith harmony.
6. Incorporate urgently the MDGs as related to women into national plans of action.
7. Facilitate the extension of sexual and reproductive health and family planning services, as well as education and legal services to women in all areas.
8. Advocate vigorously for UN Women to receive the resources it needs to be effective and credible.
9. Increase public awareness of legislation related to women's rights.
10. Strengthen information sharing and outreach to people in all communities as to the importance of women's empowerment for human security.

#### 4. PANEL DISCUSSIONS

##### **Inauguration**

The 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Forum was called to order shortly after 9am by Ms. Shazia Z. Rafi, Secretary-General, PGA.

##### **Welcome Remarks by Ms. Guldal Aksit, Member of Parliament, Chairperson of the Committee on Equality of Opportunity for Women and Men of the Turkish Parliament**

Representative Aksit said that it gave them great pleasure to host this important Forum in Istanbul. She hoped that people would enjoy Istanbul and want to come again. She highlighted some important aspects of women's status in Turkey. Since 2000, laws were passed to give women more rights. With these changes in the law, things have improved. There have been women's rights campaigns and improvement in situations for girls. The Parliament of Turkey has been a great partner to the President in this endeavor. Civil society has improved and contributed greatly to this effort. There is now 80% parity in education. She highlighted that modernization is Turkey's goal. There are many well educated role models, including Feride Acar who was to receive the Defender of Democracy Award – it was a great honor for a Turkish woman to receive this great award for democracy and peace. She hoped this important meeting was productive.

##### **Senator Bassey Ewa-Henshaw (PGA President)**

Senator Bassey Ewa-Henshaw welcomed all those who had travelled so far to attend the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Forum. He stressed that the issues to be discussed in the Forum were of profound significance as even in this century, we continue to commit heinous crimes and women and children are often the victims. He said that many people consider Istanbul to be a birthplace of civilization and that the notion of civilization morality and dignified behavior. We still have a way to go. He acknowledged the great foundation that Mustafa Kemal Ataturk had laid down in Turkey in his pioneering work for women. In 1926, Ataturk abolished polygamy, improved women's rights and their inheritance and introduced a co-educational system. In the mid 1930s, eight women were elected to the parliament and Turkey had the world's first female supreme court judge. And then, just in 2000, there was another great improvement in Turkey's law for women.

He noted that this year 2010 was a good time to commit to women's empowerment, as it marks the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Beijing, the 10<sup>th</sup> year of the Security Council resolution 1325 as well as the commitment to the MDGs. And just in July, the new UN Women was created. Women's empowerment is not exclusionary but inclusive – of benefit to all men, women and children. He called for people to work in the memory of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk and Prime Minister Erdogan and his team and Parliament of Turkey while here in Istanbul. It is a real opportunity to come with some practical ideas to move this work forward. He suggested ideas from the Forum not be a beginning nor an end as parliamentarians go home and push for these issues. He especially thanked the Prime Minister of Turkey, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, the European Union, the Islamic Development Bank, Danida, the Senate of Nigeria, SIDA, SDC, the Stewart Mott Foundation and the UNFPA. He wished all fruitful delegations.

##### **Honorable Selma Aliye Kavaf, Minister of State in charge of Women and Family**

Minister Kavaf opened by expressing joy at the arrival of parliamentarians from all over the world to come together in the name of peace, democracy and human rights as women's rights are not possible outside of this. When there is gender equity, all problems, political and economic, can be solved. She talked of significant improvements for women in Turkey in the last 10 years, including important changes in 2001 and 2004 to the constitution. There is a new work campaign now in all parts of Turkey of which girls' education is an important element. There are now more girls than boys in school. There is also a campaign to help women in the employment sector, including the provision of five years government aid to help employers hire women. In addition, a gender equality commission was established as a fundamental commission in 2009. She declared that women's empowerment had been accepted as a political platform by the current government. As a developed country, Minister Kavaf stated, we are going to rise in the name of peace.

### **The Honorable Nevzat Pakdil, Deputy Speaker of Grand National Assembly of Turkey**

The Honorable Pakdil welcomed the parliamentarians to Istanbul in the name of global action and hoped all would return to their countries with wonderful memories of Istanbul. He pointed to important steps that have been made towards women's empowerment. In Turkey, women received the right to vote before most western countries, like England and France. Women have been a key part of Turkey's development. He stated that girls have especially benefitted from the government's work since 2000, and that there are no remaining legal obstacles to women's rights. Women do, however, still face sexual discrimination in their daily lives and the government is continuing to work to improve this. He said that parliamentarians, politicians, civil society and academics have a great responsibility to work towards women being more equally represented. In modern societies, gender equity is important in all sectors - everyone benefits from this. The Honorable Pakdil ended by thanking the Prime Minister again for his commitment to women's empowerment, and the honorable Guldal Aksit. He again welcomed everyone.

### **Inaugural Keynote Address**

#### **His Excellency Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey**

In the name of global action, the Prime Minister welcomed everyone to Istanbul in their work for women's empowerment and human security. He called this work beneficial for all women and for all people and congratulated the parliamentarians for their international efforts to work on such an important issue. It gave him great joy for this to be discussed on an international level in Istanbul with people from such different perspectives and backgrounds. The Prime Minister described his recent trip to Pakistan with his wife and daughter in the wake of the terrible tragedy there on August 5 and how they were deeply affected by the tragedy of what they saw. Houses, employment, and future dreams had been ripped from people. He was affected by the observation that women were carrying all the hope of the children and the loss of their husbands. He saw similar situations in Iraq, where women remain as widows – and the same thing can be said of Afghani, Sudanese and Palestinian women, who carry the weight of their families. Prime Minister Erdogan said solidarity between women was of critical importance to overcome discrimination before men as well as discrimination within women themselves.

He declared that in this male dominated world, a world with war, we know that we want women to be equal because it will improve things for the better. Women need to not wait for men to let them do it. He reported that women have become a bigger part of the employment sector in Turkey since 1983 and that women have always been active in our (the AKP) party. We have

made constitutional changes to improve gender equality – women and men have equal rights in front of the law now. The Prime Minister emphasized the importance of education as being one of the basic essentials for women to become an active and efficient part of the society – it is important they not experience discrimination in education, like in all areas, and because of their social status, clothing or belief systems. He declared that when we create unity between the sexes, we will be able to solve everything. He welcomed all the participants to Istanbul, Turkey and to PGA's 32<sup>nd</sup> Forum and wished them success.

#### **PANEL I – Health and Education**

*Chair:* Dr. Donya Aziz, MP (Pakistan) SDHP Program Deputy Convenor, PGA Executive

- Dr. Thoraya Obaid, Executive Director – United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA)
- Ms. Andeisha Farid, Founder, ACECO
- Sen. Fiona O'Malley (Ireland)
- Dr. Cevdet Erdol MP (Turkey)
- Dr. Arzu Rana Deuba, MP (Nepal)
- Ms. Gifty Eugenia Kusi, MP (Ghana)
- Dr. Yuksel Ozden, MP (Turkey)

This first panel provided an overview of the health and education situation for women and girls. There has been much progress in key areas of health care and education for women, but much work remains. Despite considerable progress in the past decades, societies continue to fail to meet the health care needs of women at key moments of their lives. Women's sexual and reproductive health care needs remain hugely underserved. The obstacles that stand in the way of better health for women are not primarily technical or medical in nature; they are social and political. Panelists discussed different methods to address these issues such as providing free sexual reproductive health services, drafting rights to sexual reproductive health care into constitutions, and working with the UNFPA and NGOs.

A few panelists identified education as the key factor in enhancing women's empowerment. Overall, female education levels have improved considerably, but significant disparities still exist internationally. The gender gap in primary education is closing – but slower than expected. Panelists discussed the vital importance of taking the political decision to financially invest in education for girls, particularly from a country's own spending even when financial constraints exist. They also provided details of successful campaigns.

#### *SUMMARY OF PANELIST PRESENTATIONS: HEALTH AND EDUCATION*

##### **Dr. Thoraya Obaid, Executive Director – United Nations Populations Fund**

- Suggested that the key human rights struggle of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the struggle for equality and the rights of women. When women are educated and healthy, and their rights protected by law, they can contribute to the security of themselves, their children, and men.

- The burden of disease resulting from poor reproductive health can increase the vulnerability of poor women – it is important that they have access to the right programs, at the right time, in the right place.
- Identified the importance of women’s reproductive health not being segmented into development or humanitarian contexts – they get pregnant, miscarry or deliver babies under all circumstances, including crises.
- Highlighted progress made around the world, including heightened awareness to combat violence against women and greater access to health care. Family planning has resulted in abortion rates dropping dramatically. Since 2001, HIV infections are down by 17 % and sex education is expanding amongst young people, which helps them to make informed and responsible decisions for themselves and their future.
- Stressed three important factors needed to improve women’s health and education: tackle widening inequities, both among and within countries; make sure that health and education policies are underpinned with the principles of human rights, equality and inclusion and engage communities in the process; and stronger political leadership and funding
- Called parliamentarians to action, to keep women’s rights high in priority. She asked that all affirm their commitment to the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action of the Cairo Agreement by 2014. Urged them to work together, to expand partnerships and to lead with vision and vigor.
- Emphasized the unprecedented opportunity for growth and transformation by the current youth generation, if supported by a concerted, massive investment in education, employment and health care.
- Stressed the empowerment of women is about real things in daily life – preserving the life of women in childbirth, the end of child marriage, the end of vertical transmission of HIV and the eradication of violence against women.

#### **Andeisha Farid, Founder, ACECO**

- Provided an overview of the suffering of women in Afghanistan, including highly inadequate health care services and the danger girls face in trying to get an education, when even possible.
- Highlighted that while the Afghani government has received billions of dollars in aid, Afghan women still suffer harshly. It recently made the abuse of women legal by not allowing women to seek sexual reproductive healthcare or education without the rights of their husband or a male family member.
- Discussed the work of the orphanages her NGO runs, to create an environment where girls from different backgrounds and ethnicities learn to respect the gift of education, the value of freedom, and heal from traumatic experiences to embody hope for themselves and their families.
- Highlighted education as the key, but an education of greater vision in addition to a school degree - one of learning tolerance and respect for the rights of others, creating an environment where people are not forced to think alike.

#### **Sen. Fiona O’Malley (Ireland)**



- Stressed that in regards to education and health, politics is key – more women need to be involved.
- Noted that education and health are not critical issues in Ireland, but work remains. Significant issues still remain because of the influence of the Catholic Church, particularly in rural areas, for younger women in seeking advice and accessing contraception.
- Highlighted the pivotal moment in the 1960s when Ireland made a decision to invest in free secondary education for all. The country couldn't afford it then, but Ireland has reaped the rewards for it now.
- Laws are always important in establishing equal rights, but what is far more important are the attitudes. What are we going to do about changing attitudes about women in our societies?

**Dr. Cevdet Erol MP (Turkey)**

- Suggested that to understand how civilized a country was, one had to look at the status of its women. Arguably a mother was the most important person to a child.
- Acknowledged work the Turkish government has taken on to improve social security in Turkey by reforming and creating a comprehensive system to standardize the hospitals since 2005, helping women and children ability to access care.
- Noted that healthcare is now free to poor women – whether they need an ambulance, or even helicopter access to be able to reach care.

**Dr. Arzu Rana Deuba, MP (Nepal)**

- Provided a detailed picture of the challenges Nepal and its women face.
- Discussed the process Nepal is undergoing in drafting a new constitution with colleagues making a concerted effort to get some key measures regarding women's rights, including sexual reproductive rights into it.
- Stressed that the importance of the government not only looking at donor funding to address women's health issues, but that the government itself make it a key component of its own spending

**Gifty Eugenia Kusi, MP (Ghana)**

- Discussed the active efforts the national policy was making to address sexual reproductive services, especially to improve access at the community level and to skilled staff.
- Noted the government's policy since 2005 of full coverage so that women enjoy free sexual reproductive services.
- Highlighted the HIV/AIDS prevention being implemented through the family planning services in cooperation with NGOs.
- Acknowledged some of the key issues for Ghanaian women and girls include domestic violence, child marriage and child trafficking

**Dr. Yuksel Ozden, MP (Turkey)**

- Discussed the success of the Haydi kizlar okula! (Lets go to school, girls!) campaign in benefitting 350,000 children – particularly noting that the campaign had been well prepared, discussed and institutionalized by the time it was released to villages.
- Described how research showed that girls were often being kept at home to help their mothers raise their siblings because of a lack of financial resources – this was addressed initially by a WB loan which provided mothers with financial help to alleviate this aspect. Importantly, this financial aid was put directly into the accounts of mothers, not fathers and from 2008, the Turkish government took over the World Bank’s project into its own spending.
- Highlighted the importance in determining the different needs and different backgrounds of girls in encouraging them back to school. One interesting example was realizing that teen age girls tended to drop out again if they entered into classes with younger girls – a separate program was therefore adopted so that they could attend classes with girls of a similar age.

## **PANEL II – LAND, PROPERTY AND INHERITANCE RIGHTS**

*Chair:* Mark Pritchard, MP (UK)

- Ms. Diana Fletscher, Senior Land Tenure and Gender Expert, Rural Development Institute
- Dip. Minou Tavaréz Mirabal (Dominican Republic), PGA Executive Board
- Dep. Latifa Jbabdi (Morocco)
- Dr. Bernadette Lahai, MP (Sierra Leone), PGA International Council
- Ms. Senol Bal, MP (Turkey)
- Ms. Sapana Pradhan Malla, MP (Nepal)
- Dep. Eve Bazaiba (Democratic Republic of Congo)

This second panel provided an overview of fundamental material issues necessary for women’s empowerment – women’s land, property and inheritance rights. Women’s land and property rights have been recognized as integral to human security by international agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Bank and locally situated women’s NGOs around the world. Data is inconclusive, but estimates suggest women own from as little as 1% to 10% of land globally. Panelists emphasized the importance of these issues to securing gender equality. They identified culture and history as important to understanding the struggle to bring these rights to fruition. Panelists all highlighted the need for more effective implementation – formal laws exist in many places, but reality on the ground is often different

### *SUMMARY OF PANELIST PRESENTATIONS: LAND, PROPERTY AND INHERITANCE RIGHTS*

**Ms. Diana Fletscher, Senior Land Tenure and Gender Expert, Rural Development Institute**

- Emphasized the importance of property rights for women for economic and social reasons – having access to land gives the right to produce/control income that results from production, can rent/sell in case of emergency, access to collateral for investment or

consumption, influence family decisions in a different way and are in a better position community wise to contribute and in old age.

- Articulated the findings of studies in the last years that when women have better access to property and land – children do better in education, have better nutrition and are more likely to be underweight; more likely to escape domestic abuse; reduce the rate of HIV-AIDS as they can leave partners who refuse to use contraception; women can make and enforce decisions community wide, are healthier and better fed and there is increased labor force participation and greater agricultural productivity.
- Stressed the importance of access to land being secure – rights need to be recognized legally and socially; need to withstand changes in family (i.e. divorce or taking a second wife); need to be able to make longer term decisions via production on land; and it needs to be enforceable.
- Highlighted the importance of harmonizing laws, as many countries have contradictory and complex laws, and of implementation.
- Other complementary actions need to take place in addition to laws, budgeting and implementation such as curriculum changes and community conversations valuing girls as land owners.
- Identified the need to include people who understand land, and its use, in the design of land and property laws.

**Dip. Minou Tavaréz Mirabal (Dominican Republic), PGA Executive Board**

- Noted the difficulties in what has been a patriarchal system based upon an authoritarian and misogynist culture in the DR for women's rights – until 1997, women were directly left out of laws for property ownership and inheritance.
- Since 1997, and then just recently in 2010, laws have recognized women's rights to land ownership for the first time, but there is still a large gap between the formal law and reality on the ground.
- Highlighted the difficulty of accessing gender aggregated data for land ownership.

**Dep. Latifa Jbabdi (Morocco)**

- Discussed some successes that had been achieved in Morocco in a favorable climate – the transformation of the family code, children's rights, the enforcement of criminal laws and specific sanctions against violence in the family and the ability of more than 3000 women elected to various level of politics have now all been addressed in the legal framework.
- Noted that despite certain successes being achieved in Morocco, big discrepancies exist between the law/the constitution and reality.
- Discussed some of the efforts she and her colleagues are making to transform Islamic succession rights common to all Muslim countries, not only in Morocco but further into the Islamic region. It is still somewhat of a taboo subject, met with resistance. Their efforts include generating discussions about how to rise above the literal translation of the Koran – to look at how the situation has evolved since the Koran was written and the situation of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Dr. Bernadette Lahai, MP (Sierra Leone), PGA International Council**

- Highlighted the preferability of having one land rights laws as the discrimination women face in their land rights in Sierra Leone are considerable, especially given the complexity of the laws - both of the two systems of law that exist, for the protectorate and for the free slaves, and the property distribution laws within those which are both general and customary.
- Highlighted the work they are doing in the drafting of a new land reform law, pushing for a gender equality section of the act which emphasizes that men and women are equal, and have equal rights to resources.

**Ms. Senol Bal, MP (Turkey)**

- Provided a chronology of evolution of women's property rights in Turkey with the most recent 2000 changes to the Civil Code.
- Noted that even though there is now no discrimination against women legally in regard to their property and inheritance rights, it is still not completely true in practice.
- Highlighted the importance of improving aspects of social and cultural life for women to be able to improve their situations, and to know of and take advantage of their rights.

**Ms. Sapana Pradhan Malla, MP (Nepal)**

- Highlighted some of the parallel issues to be addressed to ensuring women's equal land and property rights in Nepal such as dealing with the effects of the insurgency for the last 12 years and the issue of public vs. private land in and of itself, as 6 % of the people own 60% of the land.
- Emphasized that a program for the implementation of the law is equally important to passing it – parliamentarians need to promote the law and help to build the capacity of women to enact the law.

**Dep. Eve Bazaiba (Democratic Republic of Congo)**

- Stressed the highly insecure situation of women living in the DRC, highlighting the trauma they suffer from rape and the poor access they have to sexual reproductive health services.
- Called for more to be done to address the victims of rape in the DRC, including a strategic action plan that puts women at the center of all activities.

**PANEL III – EMPLOYMENT, EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND INCOME EQUALITY**

Chair: Dr. Ermelinda Meksi, MP (Albania) SDHP Program Convenor, PGA Executive Board

- Mr. Riaz Khan Fatyana, MP (Pakistan)
- Sen. Edmonde Beauzile (Haiti)
- Ms. Rola Dashti, MP (Kuwait)
- Ms. Ozlem Turkone, MP (Turkey)
- Ms. Elsa Papdemetriou, MP (Greece)

This third panel provided an overview of key issues related to employment issues for women. There is a significant gender differential in employment globally, though it varies across countries. Women are still vulnerable in the world of work. They make up at least 60% of the working poor internationally and a gender pay gap on average of 17% still exists internationally. The labor market remains gender-segregated, and female dominated positions tend to be characterized by inferior status, lower pay and poorer working conditions in both the formal and informal sectors. Unemployment estimates also exclude people referred to as “discouraged workers” who want to work but may not be actively seeking work because they feel none is available, have restricted labor mobility, or face discrimination or structural, social or cultural barriers. Panelists reflected on these issues in their own countries and described some of the tools they used to address them.

*SUMMARY OF PANELIST PRESENTATIONS: EMPLOYMENT, EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND INCOME EQUALITY*

**Mr. Riaz Khan Fatyana, MP (Pakistan)**

- Provided an overview of some of the key employment difficulties women face in Pakistan – highlighting two groups who face discrimination – low paid agricultural workers and domestic workers.
- Stressed the importance of effective implementation and the enforcement of laws in Pakistan, given that many related laws have been formally passed in recent years regarding employment issues.
- Called for strong leadership and political will for gender equity and women’s empowerment; for increase in awareness of parliamentarians, political parties, religious and civil society organizations; and a need to improve the infrastructure for training.

**Sen. Edmonde Beauzile (Haiti)**

- Discussed the great difficulties Haiti faced since the recent natural disaster tragedies.
- Noted the problem of the brain drain – most educated and skilled Haitians go abroad to work, including women as there are limited opportunities.
- Acknowledged the role women play in supporting Haitian society, especially during crisis – 90% of women are unskilled but are resourceful and engage in the commercial sector and trade in any manner they can to support their families.

**Ms. Rola Dashti, MP (Kuwait)**

- Provided an overview of the situation of women in employment in Kuwait, which showed improvements, for examples in participation in the teaching and medical fields, but remains significantly limited.
- Discussed the problematic nature of ‘over rights’ in Kuwait, such as women receiving financial benefits to stay at home to have children and the right to retire after 15 years, which hinder their labor incentives.

**Ms. Ozlem Turkone, MP (Turkey)**

- Emphasized the positive effect of women's economic empowerment on households.
- Acknowledged the low level of participation of women in the labor force in Turkey, particularly in Southeastern Anatolia and attributed this in part to a shrinking of the agricultural sector and difficulty of transition to the urban sector.
- Highlighted training and education as keys to overcoming issues of women's underemployment.

**Ms. Elsa Papdemetriou, MP (Greece)**

- Identified three areas of continuing discrimination of women in Europe: access to labour market; the wage gap; and the glass ceiling.
- Noted that in regards to the labour market, there is strong regional variation; more women work in part-time work, many overqualified for what they do; and there are many 'discouraged workers' who do not actively seek work because they feel no work is available to them.
- The wage gap is still on average 13% in the EEC, ranging up to 25% and education is no safeguard – the wage gap widens the more educated women are.
- Highlighted difficulties regarding women continually passed over when it comes to promotions and reaching decision-making positions. Women are still often excluded from formal and informal 'good old boys' networks.
- Articulated the findings of a study that showed it is a misrepresentation that women largely leave work for their families – only 13% left because of family, 87% were forced.

**PANEL IV – GENDER JUSTICE AND WOMENS RIGHTS**

Chair: Sen. Alain Destexhe (Belgium), Deputy-Convenor, PGA International Law and Human Rights Programme

- Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago (Philippines)
- Dip. Felipe Michelini (Uruguay), Former Secretary of State for Education, Culture and Human Rights
- Mr. Kula Segaran, MP (Malaysia), Deputy Leader of the Opposition; Member of the Malaysian Bar Association
- Dip. Margarita Stolbizer (Argentina), Chairperson of the GEN party (opposition)
- Ms. Kathleen Ferrier, MP (Netherlands)
- Dep. Sabine Bintu (Democratic Republic of Congo)

The fourth panel provided an overview of gender justice and womens rights. Rape and other gender-based crimes have increasingly become a prominent feature of contemporary armed conflict, especially civil wars. Sexual violence against women, girls, boys, children and men is perpetrated by military and militia commanders (men), who are often using enslaved children to advance their criminal plans. The international community has realized that urgent and determined action to stop gender-based crimes is necessary to prevent the repetition of these atrocities, which causes inter-generational trauma for the victims-survivors and represents a threat to the survival of the communities affected by these inhumane acts. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) of 17 July 1998, entered into force on 1 July 2002, is the first legally binding instrument that criminalizes all the inhumane acts labeled as gender-based crimes within the framework of crimes against humanity (i.e. widespread or systematic attacks

against any civilian population) and war crimes (the most serious violations of the law of armed conflict).

Panelists discussed key aspects of the Rome Statute of the ICC, particularly the aspects that moved beyond previous conventions in protecting women and girls' rights and issues of gender justice as presented from different countries. Panelists also discussed the quickest growing form of crime – human trafficking, particularly women and girls, from both origin and destination countries.

#### *SUMMARY OF PANELIST PRESENTATIONS: GENDER JUSTICE AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS*

##### **Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago (Philippines)**

- Described developments in the Philippines regarding gender justice and women's rights including that gender justice is now a declared policy in the Constitution; the Philippine government actively pursues a GAD (Gender and Development) program.
- Described 'gender justice' as centered on the formal justice system and on engendering the system to make it more sensitive, particularly for women victims –gender bias continues as violence against women is still held as a private matter and the courts themselves demonstrate bias.
- The Rome Statute now explicitly identifies rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence as crimes against humanity which is an expansion of the Geneva Convention which mentions rape and enforced prostitution.
- Noted that the continuing relevance of 'gender' in 'gender justice' may need examination soon given the growing recognition and protection of the rights of marginalized minorities.

##### **Dip. Felipe Micheline (Uruguay), Former Secretary of State for Education, Culture and Human Rights**

- Highlighted that the criminalization of violence against women in the Rome Statute allows us to take action on specific conditions laid out in the Vienna Conference and that of Beijing.
- Described how the process of ratification of the Rome Statute in Uruguay also provided the opportunity to advance other important aspects of human rights, such as bringing up administrative, judicial and other services to international standards. It helped Uruguay to resolve justice issues related to its own previous history of state terror.
- Noted that the Rome Statute is not only concerned with the effect of violence against the victim, but also for those affected - pregnant women and family groups. It also establishes that the sexual behavior of the victim beforehand cannot be taken into consideration as an excuse.
- Called on fellow parliamentarians to ratify the Rome Statute or to establish complementary laws nationally.

##### **Mr. Kula Segaran, MP (Malaysia), Deputy Leader of the Opposition; Member of the Malaysian Bar Association**

- Acknowledged that Malaysia has been a country that is involved in the trafficking of women and girls as a supply and a traffic point.
- Highlighted that the government is now undertaking more serious effort to address the issue of trafficking – previously a lack of willpower prevented more progress, not a deficiency in the laws. Deportation of trafficking victims hasn't been successful, as they keep suffering and return to the trade.
- Lamented that Malaysia is not party to the ICC and the Rome Statute, but hopes that will change.

**Dip. Margarita Stolbizer (Argentina), Chairperson of the GEN party (opposition)**

- Proclaimed that gender justice can bring about a change by not just addressing claims, but be a justice that has the capacity to prevent the crimes against women in the first place.
- Highlighted one of the main successes of the ICC as the selection of the court panel with broad geographic representation and equal representation of men and women.
- The Rome Statute establishes protection for the victims in the juridical process including to dignity and a private life. Reparation to victims includes restitution, rehabilitation and guarantee of no repetition of the crime.
- Called on countries to implement gender justice legislation both locally and nationally and to encourage the empowerment of women to take advantage of their rights.

**Ms. Kathleen Ferrier, MP (Netherlands)**

- Stressed the urgency of having a specific focus on human trafficking, specifically that of women and children. It is estimated that there are at least 27 million victims a year of trafficking and 22 billion dollars earned from trafficking – the fastest growing form of crime today.
- The Netherlands has made this a national priority – laws have been adopted to protect victims and their witnesses, including making it easier for them to stay in the Netherlands.
- Called on other European countries to ratify security resolution 1325 as only 6 out of 27 member countries have.
- Emphasized that it is better to prevent trafficking by actively educating people, specifically women and girls.

**Dep. Emmanuel Adubango (Democratic Republic of Congo)**

- Provided an overview of some of the atrocities and violence women and girls are experiencing in the DRC.
- Acknowledged that as a people, the DRC needs to say mea culpa because they are not able to help the victims, but the peacekeepers need to, also.
- Called for the end of impunity and involvement of national and international justice and enforcement to uphold the law.
- Highlighted the difficulty for victims in the international courts – there are often contradictory processes.

This **Question and Answer Session** was characterized by lengthy discussion and debate. Representatives from many countries shared their experiences with the issues of gender justice and trafficking and called for either ratification or domestication of related legislation regarding



Security Resolution 1325. A representative from Burundi discussed issues facing countries transitioning out of conflict, and expressed concern at the concept of impunity, that crimes that cannot be pardoned are going unpunished. A representative from Senegal called for a closer discussion of the nature of institutions required to domesticate the Rome Treaty.

Representative Ferrier addressed the issues raised by the representative from Nepal by saying that issues related to appropriate protective legislation for citizens working in other countries can be bilaterally addressed with the receiving country of labor. She also acknowledged that the peacekeeping missions that are sent to countries culturally very different from their own need very good training and the UN is not able to provide them with that at this time. Resolution 1325 asks for special attention for women and girls, but Representative Ferrier argued that more than that, women need to be involved in the solutions, including the peacekeeping missions.

The Chair, Sen Destexhe ended the session by explaining that PGA has played an important role in assisting countries to ratify the Rome Treaty. He suggested that parliamentarians interested in assistance in pushing their own countries to ratify the ICC can contact David Donat-Cattin or Stefanie Kueng about strategies. There are many questions that should be answered so you feel comfortable to move forward on the treaty to move forward the process

#### **PANEL V – INTERNATIONAL/NATIONAL COMMITMENTS: BEIJING, CEDAW AND THE MDGs**

Chair: Hon. Nimal Siripala De Silva, MP (Sri Lanka)

- Ms. Margareta Cederfelt, MP (Sweden)
- Sen. Eme Ufot Ekaette, (Nigeria), PGA International Council
- Ms. Youngah Park, MP (South Korea)

Panel V provided an overview of how countries have progressed with the commitments they have made to international agreements and programs of action that legalize and promote rights for women. Two primary international statutes laying out the foundations for gender equality are the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action. These have been signed by 179 and 189 countries respectively. The international commitments to the Millennium Development Goals of 2000 are also a step towards enhancing women's empowerment vis-à-vis measurable criteria. Panelists reflected on progress of women's rights in their countries, and work that remained to be done.

#### *SUMMARY OF PANELIST PRESENTATIONS: INTERNATIONAL/NATIONAL COMMITMENTS: BEIJING, CEDAW AND THE MDGs*

**Ms. Margareta Cederfelt, MP (Sweden)**

- Acknowledged that Sweden has reached many of its gender equity goals, but is important to keep reaching further, particularly in the areas of economic equality between the sexes and equal distribution of unpaid care and household work.
- Attributed Sweden's success to making clear decisions and supporting those decisions. People need the will to act.
- Observed that a key indicator to measure women's rights is whether, at the local level, the relationship between the municipality and the individual supports women's rights – that the system works for women's rights at all levels.
- Noted the importance of families and civil societies taking responsibility for women's rights, not just parliamentarians.

**Sen. Eme Ufot Ekaette, (Nigeria), PGA International Council**

- Discussed the difficulties of ratifying CEDAW the way it is presented given the multireligious nature of Nigeria, they lack the numbers and voices to push ratification but instead have picked out vital parts of it to legislate into law, such as issues related to health and employment.
- Highlighted the value of regional cooperation and support in issues related to women's empowerment, for instance the West African ECOASS and the Commonwealth.
- Noted the importance of international support from organizations like PGA to help to talk to authorities and the government about women's rights given the complex nature of Nigeria.

**Ms. Youngah Park, MP (South Korea)**

- Provided an overview of significant progress South Korea has made since Beijing, including the abolishment of the CCC in March 2005 that registered men as head of the family, a code that had dominated Korean society for more than 500 years.
- Noted that issues yet to be addressed include proactively adapting laws that will help women not sacrifice their careers when they have children and increasing their participation in political life.
- Stated that the advancement of South Korea's society depends on how much it encourages the participation of women.

**FORUM ADDRESS**

**Ms. Serpil Timur, CEO of Vodafone Turkey and member of the Turkish Industrialist and Businessmen Association**

- Urged a shift in the corporate world from gender equality to gender blindness where companies look at everyone as an individual – not a man, not a woman.
- Called on governments to ensure women's equal rights – to childcare and maternity leave.
- Stressed that in order to have a broader pool of talent to choose from, companies need to employ women.

- Identified studies in business practice that suggest that women generally have leadership skills such as social and emotional intelligence which are skills that are increasingly being called for in modern society.
- Noted that to not have gender equity in employment leads to both wasted talent and frustrated citizens.
- Wished parliamentarians the best with their work, and looked forward to having an ‘empowered society’.

## **PANEL VI – PARLIAMENTARY PROGRESS FORWARD**

Chair: Sen. Rida Azimi (Afghanistan)

- Dr. Yvonne Herta Gilli Stocker, MP (Switzerland), PGA International Council
- Ms. Edibe Sozen, MP (Turkey)
- Dep. Maurice Bangayassi (Central African Republic)
- Ms. Fatima Hajaig, MP (South Africa)

Panel VI provided an overview of how parliaments are moving issues of women’s empowerment forward. Panelists discussed issues around the nature of their parliamentary work and action, and specifics such as some of the issues related to establishing a specific ministry for gender issues in government.

### *SUMMARY OF PANELIST PRESENTATIONS: PARLIAMENTARY PROGRESS FORWARD*

#### **Dr. Yvonne Herta Gilli Stocker, MP (Switzerland), PGA International Council**

- Provided an overview of progress regarding women’s rights in Switzerland, from women receiving the right to vote in 1971 to currently having more women ministers than men for the first time.
- Stressed the importance of not resting now, as Switzerland is in danger of suffering a backlash against progress for women’s empowerment as the Department of Gender Equality is seriously underfunded and there is an effort to shut it down.
- Noted that racism and sexism go hand in hand, and courage and international solidarity are called for in the face of growing populist rightwing parties with policies that are against human rights, similar to the sexist campaigns against women of the 1920s.

#### **Ms. Edibe Sozen, MP (Turkey)**

- Proclaimed that the one key issue regarding women’s rights is that there be equality in the public sphere, and this is lacking for women, the poor and Muslims.
- Pointed to the changes that the current government in Turkey has made, in solidarity with the women’s movement, to reform laws along the lines of international agreements, such as to enter into the European Union, improving women’s status.

#### **Dep. Maurice Bangayassi (Central African Republic)**

- Discussed the importance of gender equity to social justice and described how the protection of human rights, and women's rights (participation in CEDAW), is essential to the reconstruction and economic development of CAR.
- Highlighted two major successful initiatives of the parliament of CAR to improve women's rights – the drafting legislation for both reproductive health and against sexual violence, addressing key challenges women face in CAR.
- Noted that parliament had worked closely with civil society NGOs in drafting this legislation.

#### **Ms. Fatima Hajaig, MP (South Africa)**

- Acknowledged the great solidarity women have demonstrated in South Africa despite differences, and the resulting progressive legislation in major areas addressing key social and economic aspects of women's rights.
- Major progress has been made at the public sector level of gender mainstreaming, but the private sector lags behind.
- Discussed the process related to establishing a gender based ministry. First, one wasn't established so as to avoid that issues being placed there as if in a separate, underfunded basket, with emphasis instead on making sure gender mainstreaming took place in all ministries. As mainstreaming has become a more established process now, a decision has been made to create a ministry that specifically oversees mainstreaming activities in all ministries.
- Highlighted the important role parliamentarians play in raising awareness through public participation in South Africa. Every year, they hold a women's parliament and a youth parliament so that vulnerable groups can share their needs and constant consultation with women helps to include their lived agenda in that of the Parliament's and to explain the impact legislation has for them.

This **Question and Answer Session** also generated discussion and debate. Representatives from Malaysia, the Netherlands, France, Mali, Uganda, Pakistan and South Africa contributed perspectives from their countries. There was discussion about the strength and importance of women's caucuses in parliament, but also how important it was that men were involved. Emphasis was brought to the significance of having more equity in political representation and gender budgeting. A representative from Uganda stressed that it is not only about the number of women in parliament but the quality – how many can stand up in the name of women's rights. She described how in Uganda the women's caucus works to build the capacity of women who have come to parliament for the first time to train them in public speaking and procedures of parliament – and also at the local government levels. There was a question as to whether PGA has specific measures to help the countries to increase their commitment or back up MPs to have more commitment to CEDAW so they could return to their countries better equipped.

A representative from the Netherlands called for more attention to the responsibility of the media's role in perceptions about women, particularly in cases of sexual violence.

#### **Adoption of Forum Declaration**

The drafting session was chaired by **Dr. Ruth Widjenbosch, MP** (Suriname) with assistance during the negotiations from Peter Barcroft and Shazia Rafi. PGA members were overall very

supportive of the Draft Declaration prepared by the Drafting Committee. The most significant addition requested, and agreed upon by PGA members, was to include language more specifically addressing the negative effects of armed conflict and civil strife on women. Ultimately it was a matter of semantics – not ideological differences – and was resolved through a revision process.

The requested revisions were made, and PGA members passed the Declaration unanimously.

### **Closing Session – The New UN Women’s Agency: Potential and Challenges**

- H.E. Amb. Jorge Arguello, Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations
- Ms. Shazia Rafi, Secretary General, PGA
- Ms. Marietje Schaake, MEP (The Netherlands)
- Ms. Carmel Sepuloni, MP (New Zealand)
- Ms. Tamera Gugelmeyer, Executive Director, Sisterhood Is Global Institute
- Dr. Sema Ramazanoglu, Islamic Development Bank’s Women Advisory Panel

The Closing Panel discussed the new UN entity, UN Women. The UN General Assembly took a major step of political will towards investing in women’s equality by creating a new agency, UN Women, on July 2, 2010. The new Gender Equality Entity to be headed by the former president of Chile, Michele Bachelet, as a Under-Secretary General, will consolidate the four existing UN bodies on women, increase operational capacity at the country level and have gain increased funding for work on women’s empowerment and advancement. The UN currently has four separate entities dedicated to women’s issues which will be combined in the new entity: the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), and the Office of the Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI). It will enhance, not replace, efforts by other parts of the UN system (such as UNICEF, UNDP, and UNFPA) that continue to have responsibility to work for gender equality and women’s empowerment in their areas of expertise. Panelists discussed the history that contributed to the development of UN Women, potential for its future and recommendations for ways forward.

#### **H.E. Amb. Jorge Arguello, Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations**

- Noted the significance of the decision of the UN, which can be a conservative environment, to move forward with the new entity UN Women with an almost altogether new institutional framework committed to gender equality and the rights of women.
- Described the process of the creation of UN Women from the High Level Panel convened by Kofi Annan in 2006, including the active role of GEAR (a network of over 300 women’s, human rights and social justice groups around the world).
- Identified four key new attributes of UN-Women that define its potential to make a difference: a strong high-level leadership will full political support both from the Secretary-General and from the wide membership; a dual nature that allows it to

- effectively and closely link the operative work in the field with the normative developments; a dedicated, specialized Executive Board that reunites donor countries and representatives from all regions and perspectives; and an international commitment to scale-up available funding, up to twice the existing levels for 2009.
- Highlighted the importance of avoiding the danger of ‘recessive responses’ in times of financial crisis. Some societies might be tempted to go back to conservative or ‘traditional’ patterns in the face of uncertainty. This is certainly not the time to decrease funding for the promotion and protection of the rights of women, but to strengthen them. Political will, technical expertise and great energy can’t be successful without a budget and financial resources behind it.
  - Acknowledged the disappointing results of the recent report on the situation of women in the UN. The UN must lead by example and for the first time, the newly created UN Women will be a strong institution with a formal mandate to further oversee and promote these goals.

**Ms. Shazia Rafi, Secretary General, PGA**

- Noted the importance of the new UN Women, which replaces the formerly four piecemeal agencies and the process which led to its creation.
- Recounted PGA’s role in the creation of the women’s caucus at the Beijing Conference, creating the strongest wording ever produced by any governments and their active continuing work on returning to their countries, including within the UN.
- Highlighted the importance of PGA’s role in the process of the drafting of the MDGs which have helped women get into second and third level tiers of agencies, although still only 19% of government representatives to the UN are women.
- Remarked on the work of GEAR, made up of 400 organizations across the world, to push for UN Women on a very small budget.

**Ms. Marietje Schaake, MEP (The Netherlands)**

- Stated that women’s rights and women’s freedom are not women’s issues and the problems we face will not be solved by solidarity amongst women, a solidarity that often does not even exist.
- Called for parliamentarians to not talk too much but to lead by example.
- Noted that the greatest hypocrisy lies in the gap between legislation regarding women’s rights (when it exists) and the reality of daily lives, the gap rendering progress not as credible.
- Highlighted the value of new technologies to break old taboos regarding women’s issues and the new opportunities they offer.

**Ms. Carmel Sepuloni, MP (New Zealand)**

- Acknowledged that New Zealand has made great progress in closing the gender gap, but still struggles with issues of pay equity and noted that recent legislation was deemed discriminatory against women by New Zealand’s own attorney general.

- Provided an overview of women's issues in the Pacific Islands area, particularly effort being made in the area of reaching the MDGs related to maternal mortality rates.

**Ms. Tamera Gugelmeyer, Executive Director, Sisterhood Is Global Institute**

- Called for parliamentarians to have systematic and meaningful civil society consultation at all levels.
- Stressed the importance of funds for the UN Women – it has been allocated a budget initially of 500 million, but it is vital that it reaches 1 billion quickly, within the next few years.
- Highlighted the importance of ending the false dichotomy of North - South to better understand the world's problems.
- Called for greater connectivity between issues, to stop categorizing issues into silos – internationally there is connection between everything.
- Stated that technology is key in keeping connected and making progress.

**Dr. Sema Ramazanoglu, Islamic Development Bank's Women's Advisory Panel**

- Noted the knowledge that has built up regarding Turkish women's problems and the progressive work that is being done in all sectors, especially education.
- Highlighted the importance of having good men that support the process.
- Discussed the limitations of focusing too much on number outcomes.