

Gender and Human Security Network

Manifesto

We are women from the Earth's five continents. We are moved by profound anger, fear, hope, determination, patience, impatience, stubborn conviction, common sense, the real possibility of change, belief in the miracle of life and human community, and a commitment to justice. To realize justice, we must renounce the war system and adopt alternatives to it.

We believe that human security begins in the home and in our communities. A nation is secure only when its most vulnerable are secure. We want to create and share a new reality of a culture of peace where women have full participation in the decisions that affect our lives, our communities, and our relations with the world.

A culture of peace grows from full democratic participation of all members of society, replacing the top-down system of the present globalizing economic/military structure. These power relationships pervade all levels of our lives, from personal to global, bringing multiple forms of violence into all human relationships.

Women bear the most oppressive weight of the violence from the home to the war zone. Human security calls us to recognize the interconnectedness among all forms of violence and address them in a holistic and systematic way. For these forms of violence are the means by which both women and the natural environment are treated as resources to be controlled and exploited by these same male-dominated structures.

Our security is based on deep respect for life and the right to resist oppression. Our security involves an ongoing commitment to staying connected to each other, to nurturing bonds of trust and caring, and to constructive forms of contention and conflict.

Our security is to live, to think, to love, to choose, to express, to decide, to move, to work, to relax, and to organize.

Human security is our ability to speak about the effects of violence on our bodies, minds, and hearts and those of our children. We cannot tolerate violence in the home, on the streets, in schools and communities.

Human security includes diversity, self-determination and freedom -- freedom from deprivation, all forms of discrimination, and from injustice and oppression; freedom of expression and in establishing personal and social relationships. Security is about accountability and responsibility -- of parents to children; teachers to students; of leaders, governments, and corporations to all people; and people to the chain of life that sustains us.

Our security requires the sharing of resources. It is daily violated by the unequal distribution of wealth, over-consumption and waste by countries of the North and elites in countries of the South, and by inequalities within and between families, communities, and countries.

Human security can be achieved through the wise and just use of the Earth's resources. We can craft ways to share these resources, drawing on people's caring attitudes, skills, knowledge, experience, and creativity, transcending the greed, consumerism, and pursuit of profit that characterize the present global system.

A culture of peace means we are respected and heard; we have education, health care, and a dependable source of livelihood. We have nourishing food, clean and accessible water, clean air, adequate shelter with a good place to sleep, clothing, and physical and psychological safety. We have love and a sense of belonging, and participate in all decisions that affect us. We have time, exercise, rest, peace of mind and spirit. We have music, dance, laughter, joy. To live in a culture of peace, we have a code of ethics that denounces all forms of violence. We have spiritual growth and fulfillment and bodily integrity.

Human security is based upon respect for human life as a foundational principle of politics and economics; just and effective international laws; people-to-people communication; a commitment to peaceful conflict-resolution; equitable distribution of resources (material and information); democratic control of economic institutions; and the health of the biosphere.

Human security in a culture of peace depends on all people from all countries and all walks of life being convinced that it is possible. It depends on us all working to bring this vision closer to reality, and to making choices that honor the sacredness of life.

We pledge to do all in our collective power and call upon our respective societies to forswear militarized security, and to develop alternatives to violence as we struggle toward the realizing a culture of peace.

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