

Brussels, 4 March 2008

Ferrero-Waldner hosts major international conference - Women: Stabilising an Insecure World

On the eve of the International Women's Day, more than 50 international women leaders will meet in Brussels. The Conference, hosted by Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy Benita Ferrero-Waldner, will bring together female heads of states, ministers, heads of international organisations, business leaders, and civil society activists from all continents to discuss the twin themes of security and women's empowerment. The President of the Republic of Finland, Prime Minister of Ukraine, First Lady of Egypt, the US Secretary of State, the Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations and Commissioners Wallström, Hübner and Kroes are among the participants.

Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner said: "*Women are often the first to suffer when human security is threatened, whether by war, poverty, or natural disasters. We must ensure that we fully address the impact on women of new threats to security like climate change and fundamentalism*".

She added: "*But above all I have wanted to organise this conference not to focus on women as victims, but on the still neglected contribution that strong women bring to stabilising difficult situations all over the world. Women rebuild societies shattered by conflict and disaster, and lay the foundations of local stability without which there can be no global security. We must do more to ensure the potential of women is harnessed at a local, a national and a global level – in the interests of us all*".

The conference will debate how women's talents can be better deployed to contribute to human security, and in particular, conflict prevention and resolution. Discussions will be structured in the following sessions:

Session 1: Women in an insecure world

Women are often among the most vulnerable, disproportionately affected by threats to security. What new strategies are required, given new threats like fundamentalism, climate change and energy insecurity, environmental degradation, international crime and terrorism?

Session 2: From local leadership to global leadership

Women are often key players in promoting human security at a local level. How can their talents be further harnessed to address questions of human rights, social cohesion, education, health and poverty in their communities – and how can this be translated into greater participation of women in national and global decision making?

Session 3: Women as peacemakers: a new governance?

Women's real and potential contribution to conflict prevention, interfaith dialogue and mediation is still not fully appreciated or facilitated. What further measures are required at national and international level? How can implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 be strengthened?

Session 4: Women stabilising an insecure world: exchanges with Condoleezza Rice.

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/ferrero-waldner/women_en.htm

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE – MEDIA ADVISORY

What: **Women: stabilising an insecure world.** This international conference, organised by Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner, will bring together women leaders to discuss the twin themes of security and women's empowerment.

Participants: More than 50 international women heads of states, ministers, heads of international organisations, business leaders, and civil society activists from all continents of the world. The list of participants is available in Christiane Hohmann's secretariat.

Where: European Commission, Berlaymont Building

When: Thursday 6 March 2008 from 09h00 to 16h30

FOR THE PRESS

The Conference will be web streamed live in original sound, English, French and German at: <http://scic.ec.europa.eu/streaming/berl/>

The Conference will be projected live in English in the Commission's press room from 09h00 to the midday briefing and from 14h00 to 16h30.

The **tour de table** will take place at 9h00 in room Schuman of the Berlaymont building and the **family photo** at 11h00 in the Berlaymont ground floor Piazza.

These areas will not be open to the press on 6 March, so journalists wanting to cover both or any of these points should register by midday Tuesday with Christiane Hohmann's office (Donalda Clements 02/2952531 or Christina Mueschen 02/2980373, 0498980373, fax 02/2984495). Please note that, depending of the number of requests, pools might have to be set up.

Europe by Satellite and a **Commission photographer** will cover the Conference.

<http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/ebs/schedule.cfm>

A VNR **video** on the gender issues will be available to the press.

MORE INFORMATION

International Women's Conference web page at

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/ferrero-waldner/women_en.htm