



**OSCE PA President Christine Muttonen's speech
to the Inter-Parliamentary Union's Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament**

Session 1: United to advance peace and security

**12 December 2016
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates**

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Dear colleagues,

It is a pleasure and an honour for me to address this IPU Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament. I am especially glad to stand here as President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly as I am only the second female president in the 25 years of its existence.

As an Austrian parliamentarian, I am proud that my country was the first to elect a woman as Speaker of Parliament. Olga Rudel-Zeynek was President of the Federal Council of Austria in the early 1930s. As a survivor of the First World War, and as a woman who worked before entering politics as an activist on social issues, she understood well the importance of women's voices in times of war, as well as times of peace.

I am sure you will agree with me that today's topic, particularly being held in this forum of women Speakers of Parliament, is of great importance. Women have always been disproportionately affected by armed conflict – they are the primary adult victims of war.

When a conflict breaks out, men mainly leave to fight and women stay behind. Women try to hold the families together, put food on the table and provide a safe environment for their children. In this already difficult situation women are increasingly targeted for rape and sexual violence as a tactic of war. Often women also have to leave their homes and flee – and today women make up the largest percentage of refugees and displaced persons.

However, women are not just war's victims, but are also primary conflict solvers. The role of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution peace-building and peace-keeping, is crucial. Women bring a gender perspective to the table and can educate others about the needs of women and girls to ensure that these needs are met. Women, as well as men, are catalysts for progress and change – and their involvement, at any level, but particularly at the local level, often leads to the most sustainable solutions.

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 laid the necessary groundwork to enhance women's share in peace and security. Since then six subsequent resolutions and numerous affiliated action plans have been adopted; policies have been developed and trainings have been organized. In the OSCE, our gender-related work is guided by this Resolution 1325. Based on its understanding of the vital role played by women, the OSCE promotes female participation throughout all stages of the conflict cycle. How could a conflict be settled permanently if half of the population is excluded?

In order to create conditions for lasting peace and security, we need to shift towards an inclusive discussion and towards the empowerment of women in the area of peace and security. As female parliamentarians we can push this process forward in each of our countries. This is true in all kinds of conflicts: traditional conflicts, post-conflict scenarios, as well as asymmetrical warfare, including hybrid conflicts and terrorism.

As female lawmakers we must support initiatives from NGOs like Women without Borders, The Mother School Project, and Sisters Against Violent Extremism, the first worldwide anti-terror platform for women.

But as lawmakers we can do more – for example block the funding of terrorist organizations by improving anti-terrorism legal frameworks. Our laws should allow women to live a self-determined life preventing them to be brainwashed and used or abused by terrorists. At the same time our strongest weapon in the fight against terrorism is a good educational system for all, poverty reduction and access to the labour market.

While the mandates, membership and geographical scope of the IPU and the OSCE PA might vary to considerable degrees, we both serve as vital focal points for parliamentary dialogue, working for peace and co-operation among diverse peoples.

In conclusion, let me stress again: No peace without women, no security without women, no development without women.

I thank you once again for inviting me here today, and I look forward to continuing discussions with you all.