



**INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES FEMMES
(Founded 1888)**

**Statement to Mark the International Day of Peace
21 September 2020**

"Shaping Peace Together" – as profoundly simple as it is profoundly important. Chosen by the United Nations this year to mark International Day of Peace, this theme strengthens the notion of cooperative commitment in the pursuit of peace. The call is for solid global engagement in building the peaceful and prosperous future that people deserve, especially today, when millions of people around the world struggle to overcome the turmoil, hardship, and disequilibrium caused by COVID 19.

To respond to the UN Secretary-General's appeal, in a spirit of solidarity and compassion, unity and mutual assistance, the International Council of Women (ICW-CIF) partners proudly in the global work we undertake and emphatically in the pursuit of peace. Our approach is one of inclusiveness and empowerment. Clearly, peace can only grow, and stand the test of time, if it has deep roots in our societies. For that, women are needed more than ever, because each woman herself can be a fundamental agent of change regardless of her societal status. This element of inclusion is essential for shaping values of peace and tolerance and is a key component in preventing violence and conflict. It is also extremely important in the struggle against the unprecedented global health crisis we are facing now, a crisis which has made vulnerable people even more vulnerable and weaker... and which has unfortunately contributed to increased violence, racism and hate.

This year also marks the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325. The resolution addresses not only the inordinate impact of war on women, but mainly the pivotal role women should, and do, play in conflict management and achievement of sustainable peace. Through our national council affiliates worldwide, ICW-CIF plays a vital role by mobilizing public opinion and by initiating programs for training, providing information and suggesting courses of action. This effort also incorporates a focus on the whole concept of Peace – what it is, and how we all have to work together in shaping it.

Meeting basic needs and development objectives, together with promoting gender equality and social justice, is an essential step toward peace, but human needs are not limited to food and shelter. They include freedom, self-determination and proper balance between individual and collective rights. What is required therefore is a climate of mutual understanding, respect for others' rights and a high degree of equality in which individuals and communities can develop

and cooperate rather than function in a confrontational mode. Bearing in mind the fact that, as stated in the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 "...civilians, particularly women and children, account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict..." our commitment to peace must be an on-going element in all our activities, and an underlying basis for providing assistance to women in need whenever possible. We thus continue to demand gender-responsive approaches based on equality which help transform the gender roles, norms and structures which act as barriers to achieving well-being for everyone.

Let us remind our ICW-CIF members around the world, and others who share our resolve, of the wisdom of Mother Teresa of Calcutta when she said: "Women are bound to be the tools of peace, the workers and I should even say the tireless fairies striving for Peace and Development. It is up to us women, to answer this challenge..." This is our responsibility and we, women of the world, will continue to dream and to act in ways that will make those dreams come true. Let us pledge to do our utmost to contribute to the achievement of all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and specifically to SDG 16, which puts the emphasis on peace and justice.

Let us shape Peace together!