



FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Betty Williams, Ireland - 1976  
Prof. Máiread Corrigan Maguire, Ireland - 1976  
Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Guatemala - 1992  
Prof. Jody Williams, USA - 1997  
Dr. Shirin Ebadi, Iran - 2003  
Prof. Wangari Maathai, Kenya - 2004

# Women Redefining Peace

in The Middle East & Beyond  
GALWAY IRELAND 29-31 MAY 2007

## CLOSING STATEMENT TO PARTICIPANTS AT THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE NOBEL WOMEN'S INITIATIVE:

### WOMEN REDEFINING PEACE in the Middle East & Beyond

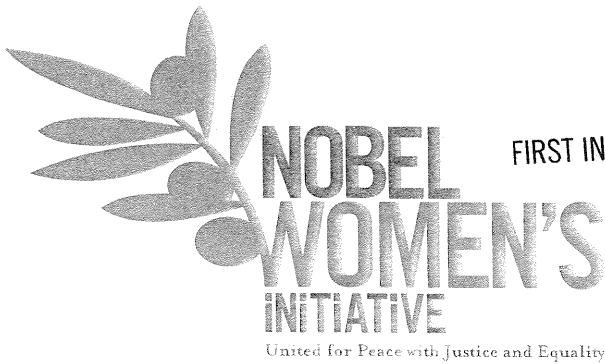
We would like to thank each and every one of you for taking the time to come to Galway to participate in our first international conference. We have come together here out of our shared concern for the state of the world today – the spiraling violence, terrorism and anti-terrorism begetting more violence, always and increasingly borne by women and children.

We have been here together to share our experiences and the lessons learned in our various responses to violence against women. We know that our ability to confront this violence depends upon our ability to understand the causes and linkages as well as learn from the hope, the positive responses of resilience and nonviolent creativity of women in the Middle East and beyond.

We have talked about the continuum of violence – at the local, national, regional and international levels – and that we respond to that continuum of violence on the local, national, regional and international levels as well. We know that all of our work is linked, whether we acknowledge the linkages or not, and that all of our work is contributing to building cultures of peace.

Listening to you all, sharing together, we have heard many not liking the word “peace.” We have discussed how “peace” has been hijacked as a meaningful word and has become synonymous with “weak.” We know that working for peace is anything but “weak” – it is hard work every single day.

We have heard women from throughout the Middle East that conflict will not end without dialogue – dialogue built on inclusion, human rights, justice and equality – and we heard of the dialogue that you are engaged in daily – proving that it is not only possible but necessary. Indeed it is impossible for countries under occupation – Palestine, Iraq – to meaningfully participate in that kind of dialogue. As one participant said, “In order to co-exist, we must first exist.”



FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Betty Williams, Ireland - 1976  
Prof. Mairead Corrigan Maguire, Ireland - 1976  
Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Guatemala - 1992  
Prof. Jody Williams, USA - 1997  
Dr. Shirin Ebadi, Iran - 2003  
Prof. Wangari Maathai, Kenya - 2004

# Women Redefining Peace

in The Middle East & Beyond  
GALWAY IRELAND 29-31 MAY 2007

We have heard you ask that people of the United States work on real democracy at home. Even when the people of that country vote the party of invasion out of the control of Congress, the Democratic Party has stepped back from legislation to bring an end to the occupation of Iraq.

We would also like to thank all of the women here for sharing with us your ideas as to how the Nobel Women's Initiative can use our combined visibility and access to power to advance some of the issues addressed here. We will take these suggestions will us so that the NWI can assess how we can respond to the broad array of action we might take.

We would also like to ask all of us who have shared this experience together to think, perhaps, about "peace" in terms of human security. That all of the work that we do individually and collectively contributes to human security. Human security is a world where people recognize that sustainable peace, human rights, and sustainable development are indivisible parts of global security – security based on meeting the needs of the peoples of the world and meeting their needs with justice and equality.

More weapons will only make us less secure; meeting the needs of the peoples inhabiting this tiny planet is what will make us more secure. Human security not national security.

We also ask that when we talk about violence we recognize that violence is not "just part of human nature." Violence is a choice. Whether it is the violent choice of a man to beat the woman he supposedly loves; or the violent choice of a community ghettoize people who are "different" racially or ethnically; or the violent choice of illegal invasion; or the violent choice of occupation. Building a culture of peace is learning and teaching that there are different choices. We as individuals do not have to choose violence. We as societies do not have to either support violent choices or participate in making them.

We as women can and must redefine peace – in the Middle East and beyond.

#####