

## **Who's making policy? What difference does it make?**

Joan B. Kroc Distinguished Lecture Series  
Women, War, Peace: Politics in Peacebuilding  
Wednesday, October 18, 2006

Over 150 policymakers, practitioners, researchers, experts, and students assembled at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice (IPJ) at the University of San Diego on Wednesday for the panel discussion *Women, War, Peace: Politics in Peacebuilding*. Three women leaders—representing Africa, Asia, and Latin America—opened the conference *Who's making policy? What difference does it make?* co-hosted by IPJ and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

**Irene Santiago**, senior advisor to the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process in the Philippines and chair of the Mindanao Commission on Women, recalled her experiences at the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. While there has been significant progress to recognize and elevate women's role in security and development since that landmark event, political and official power remains primarily in the hands of men. Santiago urges a re-definition of power as “the potency to act for what is good... If this is the definition, will women claim that kind of power? Yes!”

**Alma Viviana Pérez**, consultant to the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and professor at the Universidad Externado de Colombia, discussed the momentum generated at Beijing and the subsequent passage of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000. This groundbreaking document mandated women's participation in all aspects of peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction and is binding on UN member states. While Resolution 1325 is a powerful advocacy tool, implementation is the critical step. As Pérez notes: “It's time for all men and women to start implementation of the spirit of 1325 at home—in your country, your region, your neighborhood.”

**Miria Matembe**, former member of the Ugandan parliament, discussed the work of women in her country to successfully create a national constitution that enshrines gender equality and the rights of women. However, while the existence of such language is critical to advancing women's agenda, it is only the beginning. Women in Uganda continue to face challenges to the passage of laws and policies related to land reform, domestic violence, and a host of other issues, again illustrating the necessity for action and implementation of national and international resolutions if women are to truly serve as equals in the quest for peace and development. Matembe affirms: “Without peace, we cannot develop. Without *equality*, we cannot have peace or development.”

These extraordinary leaders are among over 20 expert speakers that will make presentations on topics of women, peace, and security on Thursday and Friday. Plenary sessions on frontline experiences, governance, security, religion, and economic development are open to the public. For more information, call (619) 260-7509.