

Causes of Conflict and Violence

Speaking on *Patience and the Long Term*, **Élisabeth Barot** underlined the importance of patience and education in developing a culture of peace. "At this moment the most dangerous threat for peace is impatience with a system that is under the stress of change." Education guided by democratic and participatory principles should lead to long-term management of change to replace crisis management, particularly in three areas of critical importance: biodiversity, cultural diversity, and access to information.

Ms. Barot stressed that "exclusion in all its form has a potential for violence. In a world of increasing diversity, we must be aware of the dangers of exclusion and marginalization, which diminish our capacity to live together in peace." In face of growing disparity between the communications capacity of the deprived and affluent worlds, "the ethical imperative ... is to formulate a concept of the public interest and take a balanced view of the needs of the users and communicators of information and of access-providers and content-providers the world over. Further, the corresponding practical problem is to identify and develop organizations capable of giving this concept effective voice."

The New Diplomacy: Peace-building

Janis Alton focused on the movement to incorporate women's insights and activism in the field of demilitarization and security. Her account goes from Hague to Hague: the 1899 Hague conference of 29 nations to "fight for world peace and abandon all wars", inspired in part by the advocacy of Baroness Bertha von Suttner and her book *Lay Down Your Arms*, and the 1999 Hague conference, with 10,000 non-governmental and governmental delegates, which led to the "Women Building Peace" global campaign. In between, the Congress of Women opened at the Hague in 1915 in the midst of World War I, bringing together some of the best known radicals of the day; their call to the nations for mediation to end the war ran up against the fatalism of the military imperative. But they created the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), whose president today is Bruna Note, a member of Canadian Voice of Women (VOW) for Peace.

The formation of VOW in 1960 was an effort to overcome the continuing isolation of women from the political mainstream. It called on Canada to declare itself a non-nuclear country and to urge the U.S. to stop atmospheric nuclear testing. Over the years VOW campaigned for the broadening of the concept of security. On the international scene, the Fourth World Conference of Women in Beijing in 1995 was the largest gathering of women in history: 40,000. Canada's failure to live up to commitments at Beijing has been sharply criticized by the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA), a 40-member coalition including VOW. Women still have a long way to go to win systematic inclusion of women in UN processes dealing with political conflict.