



EVENT REPORT

*A Private Luncheon with the
Honorable Margot Wallström
Vice President, the European Commission
Chair, Council of Women World Leaders' Ministerial Initiative*

Introduction by

Laura Liswood

Secretary General, Council of Women World Leaders

**Tuesday, October 13, 2009
12:00pm – 1:30pm**

**The Aspen Institute
One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On Tuesday, October 13, 2009, the Council of Women World Leaders hosted Honorable Margot Wallström, Vice President of the European Commission, in a discussion on violence against women and girls used as a weapon of war as well as on the United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889 which condemn this type of violence and prescribe policies to combat it. The discussion was introduced by Laura Liswood, Secretary General of the Council of Women World Leaders and moderated by Vice President Wallstrom. Attendees came from the public, private and non-profit sectors.

Vice President Wallström provided a brief description of UNSCR 1325, 1820, and 1888 and discussed the necessity to ensure that the plight of women and girls in areas of conflict is known worldwide and that the adoption of the UN resolutions is followed by action. At the meeting, attendees provided concrete action recommendations to build on the exiting international political momentum in order to implement lasting solutions to enduring violence against women and girls.

SUMMARY OF DIALOGUE

Laura Liswood, Secretary General of the Council of Women World Leaders, introduced Honorable Margot Wallström, Vice President of the European Commission and Honorable Ann Veneman, Executive Director of UNICEF. The attendees briefly introduced themselves followed by which the Vice President depicted the challenges of achieving a higher level of collaboration among international organizations and pushing for the coordinated implementation of UNSCR 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889. She stressed the need to create a stronger link between Resolutions 1325 and 1820, and the importance of implementing these resolutions in areas of conflict. According to the Vice President, organizations and governments need to provide women with a role in the peace-making process and in decision-making. It is a positive step that the US has pushed for UN resolutions that follow up on UNSCR 1820, but the UN commission needs to move the debate forward.

The Vice President urged attendees and the international community to give women and children a voice and to bear witness to the atrocities they have experienced. Furthermore, she noted that there is a critical need to have the support of high-level international leaders in implementing these UN resolutions. Men, military leaders and NATO officials need to be engaged and involved in this discussion as well. To this end, the Vice President's office is working to coordinate an event in January 2010 in Brussels, which will engage military leaders and NATO officials. Additionally, the new architecture at the UN, the body which will coordinate the work of existing gender and women's offices, should help the process of implementing these resolutions. Vice President Wallstrom reminded the audience that this issue is timely and pressing: we have the momentum with the 10th anniversary of 1325 coming up next year and with the passing of resolutions 1888 and 1889, and that we must act now.

Haleh Esfandiari, Director of the Middle East Program at the Woodrow Wilson Center, asked about EU national action plans for the implementation of the UN resolutions. Vice President Wallström noted that there is no national action plan blueprint from the EU, and that the European Commission ought to push states to write their own action plans. Many EU member countries have moved forward with implementing their own action plans.

Michael Wasco, Policy Associate for the Institute for Inclusive Security at the Hunt Alternatives Fund noted that since UNSCR 1325 passed, 17 countries have implemented national action plans. INSTRAW (the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women) has a blueprint on national action plans. Additionally, many regions, especially in Africa, are developing regional rather than national action plans. Collaboration need not be only nation to nation; regions within countries have also partnered to develop plans. Partnerships between universities could be useful as well. UNIFEM has put out a call for proposals to provide support for national action plans with funding provided by the Spanish government. The process of putting action plans together is as beneficial as the action plans themselves. International and regional high-level talks on the action plans have brought leaders and groups together for a common goal. Nonetheless, additional high-level political support is needed for these action plans to succeed.

Evelyn Thornton, Policy Associate at the Institute for Inclusive Security: Women Waging Peace at the Hunt Alternatives Fund, pointed out that national action plans must be tied to funding and means to provide resources in order to be effective.

Honorable Ann Veneman stated that we must use the current momentum and make the economic case for investing in girls and women. The business case for women is taking priority on multiple agendas such as the Clinton Global Initiative, the World Economic Forum, the White House, and the US State Department.

Veneman also remarked that because men are a big part of the problem, they must be made part of the solution. Patricia Ellis, President of the Women's Foreign Policy Group, reiterated the need to engage prominent men, not just "token" male advocates. Vice President Wallström noted that instances of men being raped in the Congo have changed public perception of sexual violence in conflict. Rape is now viewed as a human rights issue, and no longer as a women's issue. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology has conducted research on successful case studies of women working in peace and security which can serve as a model for future peace-keeping operations, commented Thornton.

Mahnaz Afkhami, President and CEO of the Women's Learning Partnership, called the attendees' attention to the need to support the bottom-up movement for the implementation of UN resolutions to ameliorate women's situation in war-torn areas. There is a need for greater grassroots momentum and for women to be involved in the peacemaking process from the bottom-up as well as from the top-down. In addition, integration of young men and women is crucial and is beginning to happen even in gender-segregated nations. For example, in Jordan, in 2009, young women and men worked side-by-side in an almost gender-neutral way as part of a multi-media project focused on using social networking platforms, YouTube and Twitter, to empower women.

The use of social media and technology at the grassroots level is crucial to the success of UN resolutions and international programs. Technology can transform the way we view the world. It can provide an impetus for policy-makers to allocate resources and to implement policy which is conducive to improving women's situation in conflict areas. Coalitions that nurture integrated grassroots activism need to be engaged and the focus needs to be shifted to advocacy and to using diversity as a strength.

Karin von Hippel, Co-Director of the Post-Conflict Reconstruction Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, talked about the importance of the demonstration effect. If we require quotas for women in the Afghani government, there should also be quotas at the UN. Women's representation must be increased within our own organizations and existing structures must be changed accordingly to make UN (and other) positions more appealing and available to women. Thornton put forward the idea of alternate criteria allowing highly qualified women to work for the UN. Vice President Wallström stressed the importance of nominating women to political roles; without this platform they will remain invisible. Ellis suggested the recruitment of women from defense or related backgrounds, as candidates for high-level UN and governmental positions.

Given the existing momentum for women's issues, the UN must make a decision on the appointment of the director for the new UN agency on women.

Anne Gantén, Executive Director of The Atlantic Partnership, brought up women's participation in the arena of climate change and noted that global health issues are a major threat to women's wellbeing and security. Climate change specifically is a direct security threat to women. Vice President Wallström discussed the need for women's representation at all debates on climate change. The Road to Copenhagen, an organization co-chaired by Honorable Margot Wallstrom, H.E. Mary Robinson and H.E. Gro Harlem Brundtland, provides a voice to women in the climate change debate. Women must be present at discussions on carbon exchange and at all discussions on budgetary allocations at national and international levels, even when it comes to details such as the construction of roads and bridges which have a direct impact on women and their communities.

Mary Ellsberg, Vice President of Research and Programs at the International Center for Research on Women, emphasized that efforts should be broadly coordinated internationally, and that community mobilization and the engagement of men are paramount. Katherine Blakeslee, Director of the Office of Women in Development at USAID, suggested bringing health, conflict, and security experts together to address the problem of coordination.

Laura Liswood pointed out that awareness of the problem and data are both available on women and gender issues. What is needed next is to drive private, government, and civil society action. She suggested that the organizations represented at the meeting could partner, using "twinning" concept, with male-dominated organizations to provide them with a gender perspective. According to Liswood, we must employ the data available on this topic and target specific groups within the private sector and civil society by providing them with information on the gender aspect of their specific field. For example, mining companies could be provided the gender component of mining. The Council of Women World Leaders has been working to provide some of the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Councils, a group of 50 councils which focus on a broad range of issues and which engage the main industry actors in the World Economic Forum's 50 focus areas, with summaries of the gender aspects of their specific area of interest.

Laura Heaton, Writer and Editor at the Center for American Progress, stressed the need to raise awareness among the general population about violence against women in conflict zones. Consumers need to be made aware that their decisions can perpetuate violence, as is the case with the purchase of cell phones containing minerals obtained in conflict zones in the Congo, where violence against women is prevalent and employed as a strategic tactic in conflict.

The best way to successfully raise awareness is by educating children, according to Honorable Ann Veneman. We must start early, at the pre-school level, to educate youth about violence and to push for equality in schools. From a top level, countries must stop giving money to schools that allow corporal punishment.

Nancy Bearg, Senior Advisor at the Project on National Security Reform, suggested that a good way to ensure implementation of UNSCR 1889 would be to find a prominent male and female

sponsor for each element of the resolution. The sponsors would be responsible for the implementation of their assigned section of the resolution.

Vice President Wallström concluded the discussion by reiterating the importance of engaging political and business leaders to implement durable policies which will ensure the prevention of violence as a weapon of war and the protection of women in conflict zones. Based on the discussion, the Vice President provided a list of action items for the attendees and international community.

ACTION STEPS

- To move forward, we must push for funding and resources for the implementation of all four UN resolutions (UNSC 1325, 1820, 1888, and 1889).
- To engage all players, business, government, and civil society alike and reach out to the groups that can make a difference.
- To pair women's organizations with those predominantly run by men to advance the issues discussed.
- To develop a list of women who have the experience and background needed to qualify for high-level UN positions, and for decision-making positions within other international organizations.
- To continue the conversations with decision-makers to encourage UN implementation of the aforementioned resolutions.
- To find sponsors for each element of resolution UNSC 1889 to follow up with concrete actions.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Margot Wallström

Vice President Wallström has served as Vice President of the European Commission responsible for Communication Strategy and Institutional Relations since 2004 and as Chair of the Council of Women World Leaders Ministerial Initiative since 2007.

Vice President Wallström was elected to the Swedish Parliament at age twenty-five and later became Minister for Consumer Affairs, Women and Youth, Minister for Culture, and Minister for Social Affairs. She served as EU Environment Commissioner from 1999 to 2004 and played a significant role in ensuring that the Kyoto Protocol saw the light of day. In 2005, she became the first member of the European Commission to have her own blog. In 2006, she was voted the most popular woman in Sweden, ahead of members of the royal family, Olympic gold medal-winning athletes, and famous sport and entertainment stars. In 2007 she launched EUtube, the Commission's own channel on YouTube. The site has been a phenomenal success with close to 13 million videos viewed since the launch.

In 2008, Vice President Wallström received the Göteborg Award on Sustainable Development and the H.M. The King's Medal of the 12th Seraphim Order. She has served as Co-chair of the Road to Copenhagen initiative since 2007 with Mary Robinson and Gro Harlem Brundtland. Since 2000, she has also served as Chair of Respect Table, a business-led group focusing on sustainable development. She has published the books *EU – elite project? No! The People's Europe* and *The People's Europe or Why is it so hard to love the EU?* (both with MEP Göran Färm). She also wrote the foreword to the Swedish translation of Al Gore's book *An Inconvenient Truth* in 2007.

Laura A. Liswood

In 1996, Laura Liswood co-founded the Council of Women World Leaders with President Vigdís Finnbogadóttir of Iceland. The Council is composed of women presidents and prime ministers, and is a Policy Program at the Aspen Institute.

In 2001, Liswood was named Managing Director, Global Leadership and Diversity for Goldman Sachs. She is now a Senior Advisor to the firm. From 1992 – 1996 Liswood interviewed 19 current and former women presidents and prime ministers, which she chronicled in her book and video documentary, *Women World Leaders* (1996, 2007 and 2009, Harper Collins). In 1997, Liswood co-founded The White House Project, which is dedicated to electing a woman President of the United States.

After the events of September 11, 2001, Liswood became a reserve police officer in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department and is now a Sergeant. Liswood's latest book, *The Loudest Duck*, is a business guide that explores globalization and workplace diversity and uses practical stories to offer an alternate, nuanced approach to diversity to create a truly effective workplace for all. (Wiley & Sons, November 2009).

She holds an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School and a B.A. from California State University, San Diego. She holds a J.D. from the University of California, Davis School of Law, and is admitted to practice law in California and Massachusetts.

ATTENDEES

Mahnaz Afkhami

**President and CEO
Women's Learning Partnership**

Nancy Bearg

**Senior Advisor
Project on National Security Reform**

Anne Bergenfelt

**Deputy Head of Cabinet
European Commission Delegation**

Katherine Blakeslee

**Director, Office of Women in
Development
USAID**

Patricia Ellis

**President
Women's Foreign Policy Group**

Mary Ellsberg

**Vice President, Research and Programs
International Center for Research on
Women**

Haleh Esfandiari

**Director, Middle East Program
Woodrow Wilson Center**

Anne Ganten

**Executive Director
The Atlantic Partnership**

Laura Heaton

**Writer, Editor
Center for American Progress**

Karolina Hjers

**Personal Assistant to the Vice President
European Commission Delegation**

Barrie Hofmann

**Deputy Regional Director, Central and
West Africa
National Democratic Institute**

Laura Liswood

**Secretary General
Council of Women World Leaders**

Kara McDonald

**International Affairs Fellow in Residence
Council on Foreign Relations**

Evelyn Thornton

**Policy Associate, Inclusive Security:
Women Waging Peace
Hunt Alternatives Fund**

Ann Veneman

**Executive Director
UNICEF**

Karin von Hippel

**Co-Director, Post-Conflict
Reconstruction Project
Center for Strategic and International
Studies**

Margot Wallström

**Vice President, European Commission
Chair, Council of Women World
Leaders' Ministerial Initiative**

Michael Wasco

**Policy Associate, Institute for Inclusive
Security
Hunt Alternatives Fund**

Kasper Zeuthen

**Senior Press and Media Officer
European Commission Delegation**