

H.E. Margot Wallström on

# *Sustainable Peace: The Link Between Security and Development and the Role of Women in Peace Negotiations*

Institute for Women,  
Peace and Security  
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

President DeGioia: Good morning everyone and welcome. It's wonderful to be gathered here in Riggs Library with all of you. This library is one of our most special places here on this campus, where we welcome our most esteemed guests and this morning is no exception. We're honored to have with us today distinguished global leader and advocate for gender equality, Her Excellency, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Margot Wallström. And I look forward to sharing a few words about her leadership and contributions in just a moment, but Your Excellency, thank you for being here this morning. It's a privilege to welcome you back here to our campus and I wish to express our gratitude to the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, and the Embassy of Sweden for enabling us to come together for this special conversation. Ambassador Björn Lyrvall, I want to thank you for your presence and for your support of our work together. And there's perhaps no better partner for our conversation this morning than the executive director of our Institute for Women, Peace and Security, Ambassador Melanne Verwee. Ambassador Verwee is a longtime member of our Georgetown community, deeply engaged in issues impacting women, peace, diplomacy, development around our globe. So Melanne, thank you for your ongoing service and for engaging in conversation with our very special guest this morning.

Over the past year we've been fortunate to welcome many distinguished leaders to campus whose contributions exemplify what can be achieved with women as equal partners in the development of international policy. These remarkable women, who share their experiences and insights with our community include Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the United Nations Undersecretary General and Executive Director of UN Women; Zainab Bangura, the United Nations Special Representative for Sexual Violence in Conflict; Dr. Margaret Chan, Director General of the World Health Organization; and Dr. Carrie Hessler-Radelet, the Director of our Peace Corps. These leaders have a commitment to building a world of political, social, and economic equality. They have met the seriousness of the challenges of inequality, discrimination, and violence that face our international community with courage, determination, and extraordinary leadership.



This morning, we are deeply grateful to have the opportunity to hear from another impactful leader, Minister Wallström. A distinguished public servant and an inspiring advocate for women, she has advanced the rights of women throughout her career as a member of the Swedish Parliament as Deputy Minister of Public Administration, Minister for Culture, Minister for Social Affairs, and later as European Commissioner for the Environment, and Vice President for the European Commission, responsible for institutional relations and communication strategy. In 2010, Minister Wallström was appointed by UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon as the first ever UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. She also served as Chair of the Council of Women World Leaders Ministerial Initiative. Through her leadership, Sweden has established a “feminist foreign policy” based on the belief that “equality between women and men is a fundamental aim of Swedish foreign policy, and that Sweden has a duty to ensure that women and girls can enjoy their fundamental human rights.” Minister Wallström described the importance of such an approach, saying, “Striving toward gender equality is not only a goal in itself but a precondition for achieving our wider foreign development and security policy objectives.”

Your Excellency, it’s a great pleasure to welcome you to Georgetown, and we thank you for taking the time to share your reflections and to engage with us today in conversation. Ladies and gentlemen, now please join me in welcoming our honored guest, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Margot Wallström.

Minister Wallström: Thank you very much, President DeGioia, and dear Ambassador Melanne Verwee, and dear guests. I think this might be the most beautiful room I’ve ever given a speech in. [Laughter]. I wouldn’t mind being forgotten here, or just left here afterwards. Remember that, remind me. Thank you so much, it’s a great pleasure and an honor to be here today. Welcome to all of you have come here to join us and to listen and thank you for hosting me and for having invited such a qualified and inspiring audience. And thank you, Melanne, and your coworkers, also, for all of the work that has been put into organizing the event here today. I truly appreciate also the important work carried out at Georgetown University and Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security. I am very happy to be able to announce today that the links between the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security grows stronger. We are investing in that, and we have just initiated closer cooperation in order to grow the evidence on women, peace, and security and raise awareness of critical issues in this field and I think that this partnership will help shape awareness and the future of this agenda and I hope that US representatives of future diplomacy will be also inspired to take an instrumental role in this important work.

The pursuit of peace and progress cannot end after a few years in either victory or defeat. The pursuit of peace and progress with its trials and its errors and its successes and its setbacks can



never be relaxed and never be abandoned. Ladies and gentlemen with the Syrian peace talks slowly unfolding in Geneva, the worlds of Dag Hammarskjöld remains as relevant as ever. All of us gathered here today are familiar with the horrendous human suffering in Syria. Years of conflict have forced millions from their homes, and left hundreds of thousands dead or wounded. A whole generation is growing up without proper access to education, security, or health care. And Syrians have become the largest refugee population in the world. Yet the true tragedy lies in Syria being only one of many protracted humanitarian crises, despite the continuing decline of poverty and inspiring technological advanced we increasingly live in a time characterized by conflict, terrorism, extremism and violence. The rules-based multilateral order that we've come to rely upon for security stands challenged by those who question the most basic principles of peace and human dignity. And the fall of the Berlin wall and the promise of liberal democracies was not the end of history.

As we recently mark the second anniversary of Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, I reconfirm our unwavering support for Ukraine's territorial integrity and its sovereignty of its entire territory. Since 2011, the number of armed conflicts has increased. New conflicts have arisen in countries such as Syria and Ukraine, while old ones in Yemen, Iraq, and Afghanistan and Mali have intensified. According to the UN refugee agency these worrying developments last year resulted in more than sixty million people seeking refuge from war, persecution, or other forms of violence—the highest number ever. And the average length of conflict-induced displacement is an astonishing 17 years. So to many, displacement has become a life sentence.

Rarely before have the links between security and development been so clear. Extreme poverty is extremely, increasingly concentrated to fragile and conflict affected states. The global community spends around 25 billion US dollars on life saving assistance to 125 million devastated by wars and natural disasters. If we took all of the people who are now dependent on humanitarian assistance, it would be the eighth largest country in the world. That's how many people today depend on humanitarian assistance. And while this amount is 12 times greater than 15 years ago, never before has generosity been so insufficient. The current humanitarian funding gap is estimated to a staggering 15 billion USD. So ladies and gentlemen this cannot continue. Although many humanitarian appeals remain unanswered, the issue of increasing humanitarian needs is not a humanitarian problem. It is political. We desperately need to think innovatively and body how to address the root causes fueling conflict and find means to support sustainable peace. And to do this, I would like today to mention three main tasks.

Firstly, we need to improve the means by which we prevent conflicts from materializing in the first place. Building societal resilience must be at the core of all of our efforts. Secondly, we have to more effectively end conflicts and ensure that peace is sustainable and inclusive. Thirdly, states and well as international and regional organizations must increase their efforts



in support of peaceful societies. Because security is built together with others, and this is an area where I still see plenty of room for improvement.

So how do we more effectively prevent conflicts? How do we build inclusive social political and economic structures that constrain the forces of violence? In 2015, global leaders committed to leave no one behind. Agenda 2030 is a testament of impressive political will. Its promise lies in its recognition that peace, security, climate change, and development are closely interlinked. The 125 million people in need of humanitarian assistance or the equivalent of the 11th most populous nation in the world (here it says the 11th) are those who stand at the greatest risk of being left behind. This group is increasingly being concentrated to fragile states, where governance is weak, where many women die in giving birth where too few children are lucky to live beyond their fifth birthday, and where those who do, especially girls, do not attend school.

As we prepare for the world humanitarian summit in Istanbul in May, we must recognize that the most cost effective and sustainable mean of bridging the humanitarian funding gap is to address the root causes fueling conflicts. Humanitarian aid can never be a permanent solution. It must be followed by long-term development assistance and efforts to strengthen institutional resilience against both manmade and natural disasters. International assistance has to increasingly be directed towards conflict and post conflict situations. Prevention and peacebuilding has so far been systemically under-financed. So more money to prevention and peacebuilding. In the report of the high level panel on humanitarian financing, and I was honored to serve on that high level panel, we highlighted the value of country configurations, local ownership, improved accountability and flexible funding, but also broadening of the donor base. It's vital that with greater wealth comes greater responsibility.

Sweden recently adopted a new development strategy for Syria and a new regional strategy for the Middle East and North Africa. And key components of that strategy is long-term and predictable funding, but also focus on gender equality and civil society. Because research shows that gender sensitive approaches enhance the effectiveness of state and peacebuilding. Societies where women are economically and politically emancipated are less violent. The empowerment of women and girls is a true example of smart politics. It transcends the divide between hard and soft security that enables effective as well as sustainable peacebuilding. 16 years since the adoption of UN security resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security, one can firmly state that the promotion of gender equality is not only a matter of women's rights, but more importantly, a matter of ensuring peace and security for all.

Ladies and gentlemen, almost half of all peace agreements fail within five years. Wars are inherently difficult to end. And fragile states are the ones most like to relapse into conflict. Nine out of ten ongoing conflicts were initiated in countries that have already experienced



war. And this is partly a result of a flawed peace process. Recent research and lessons from peace processes in Colombia and the Philippines demonstrate that women's effective participation substantially increases the likelihood of peace agreements being reached and sustained. Yet even today, in 2016, we are all too familiar with women being dramatically underrepresented in peace and mediation processes.

Last week during the peace talks on Syria in Geneva, 24 men and just six women were sitting at the table. Whilst there is still room for improvement, I am pleased that women play a more prominent role than before. And Sweden has supported the opposition's women's advisory committee, which were effective and visible in Geneva and managed to obtain a commitment by the opposition of a 30 percent quota for women in future governing structures. A successful peace process is not only a matter of reaching a ceasefire; it is also a matter of justice, education, health, reconciliation, and fair distribution of resources. Peace processes therefore inherently need to be inclusive. Women must actively participate in all decision making processes at all levels, and be active in defining priorities and resource allocation, in times of peace and in times of war. So to put it simply: more women, more peace. Nothing can be discussed about women, without women.

And wherever I've traveled in the world, from Ukraine to Colombia to the DRC, I've met brave women who strive to deescalate violence and to promote initiatives for peace, who not want to only be seen as victims, but actors for change - often in very dangerous environments, where the personal risks are extreme. And the work of these women is commendable and deserves our full support and long-term commitment. And so do all of those that defend women who work for peace. It's called the Fem-Defenders, so I think we also have to recognize their role. With the resumed talks on the Syrian crisis in Geneva, we have therefore taken steps to not only support Steffan de Mistura and the participation of civil society but also supporting inclusion of women peace builders at the talks.

As part of my government's broader feminist foreign policy, we have also initiated a Swedish network of women peace mediators and we are simultaneously taking part in the development of a Nordic women's mediator network. And the goal of this process is not only to strengthen our national capabilities but more importantly to cut across traditional divides and create cooperative networks with in terminational women mediation teams from across the globe, so that we don't have to hear again that there are no women negotiators or mediators. Yes there are. And there will be.

Finally, ladies and gentlemen, security is built together with others. With several drawn out conflicts, the continued scourge of terrorism, systematic sexual violence, and the largest refugee crisis in modern history, it is clear that the international order has not succeeded in its core task to ensure peace and security for all. For too long was the UN Security Council



unable to agree upon a roadmap towards peace in Syria. Despite early warnings, the international system has still not adequately responded to developments in Burundi. Yet, at the same time, persistent and patient negotiations between the EU +3 and Iran successfully resulted in an agreement on the nuclear issue. Both the successes and failures of recent [times] demonstrate the primacy of politics and the importance of multilateralism. We need to recommit to international standards and norms. And I would like to call for a new global compact for peace. 2015 was an important year for global governance with worldwide agreements on Disaster Risk Reduction, development financing, Agenda 2030, and climate change. Now is the time to allocate resources and shift focus to implementation.

As the United Nations is reviewing its peace and security agenda, it is crucial that it assumes its leading role in ensuring international policy coherence for peace and security. And I therefore welcome the Secretary General's call to development banks and regional organizations to increase cooperation, improve livelihoods, and strengthen support to fragile and conflict-affected states. Fulfillment of Agenda 2030 must be our main task. Similarly, mediation must be recognized as a real weapon for peace. Despite both the Security Council and the General Assembly have committed to strengthen the UN's mediation capacity, this has somehow not translated into action, and reform of the Security Council is long overdue. The world is in dire need of a more vigorous council that fulfills its mandate as the ultimate guarantee for international peace and security.

A more capable UN is also a UN working in tandem with regional organizations. We need to promote processes that strengthen regional interdependence and constrain the forces of violence. And I therefore welcome close cooperation between the UN, the European Union, and the African Union, as well as other regional and subregional organizations that might be the first to sense and understand early warning signals before conflicts. It is also necessary that the World Humanitarian Summit in May results in a global commitment to address root causes fueling conflicts. Both short and longterm aid must contribute to strength and resilience. Regional organizations and development banks all have important roles in this regard.

So finally, dear friends, to shift resources to conflict prevention and peacebuilding, to commit to inclusive peace processes, and to invest necessary political capital in international cooperation for peace, is ultimately a matter of political will and proactive leadership. As Dag Hammarskjöld rightly pointed out, the pursuit of peace and progress cannot end in a few years in either victory or defeat. If we are to prevent new conflicts from arising, and effectively end ongoing wars, we need to redouble our efforts in order to promote peaceful and secure societies for all. It is precisely at times like these, times of crisis and unrest, that we must not hesitate, and be persistent in our efforts. Thank you for listening.



Ambassador Verveer: Well thank you, Madam Minister. When you said what this takes is political will and a proactive effort, I don't know anyone who typifies that more than you, and a better articulator on the role of women in conflict prevention and peacebuilding that our world so desperately needs, so thank you.

MW: Thank you.

AV: Thank you for your leadership, thank you for this comprehensive discussion in terms of how you see all of this, and what we all need to do, and for this call to action. So we're grateful, very grateful that the minister is here this morning. She was with us a little over a year ago, when she first came into her position as foreign minister. Had, I think within two weeks earlier, articulated a feminist foreign policy and there was much discussion about what that represented. So we're delighted to have you back—she's here for the nuclear summit. And I just want to say, you've done miracle already, because at this hour of the morning to have so many students in the room is a tribute to what you represent in our world today and why they're so eager to be here. And I also want to welcome Assistant Secretary Ann Richards, she has the portfolio for refugees at the State Department, which as you know, and have described—

MW: Yeah, we have met on several occasions.

AV: One of the most difficult undertakings. And Ambassador Fritsche who has, among the diplomatic core here in Washington, been a real leader on these issues. So we are all here for you this morning and delighted you are with us. I wanted to start, and then we'll certainly open this to others in the audience, but to ask you about feminist foreign policy which you articulated again this morning, and how is it going? It is one thing to say it—

MW: Yes.

AV: It is another thing to make it happen in the work of government. How are you articulating this gender lens? And I understand that you've adopted an action plan for the Ministry. How does that work, and what does that mean, because I think there's a lot of learning in this for others who want to do a better job of integrating gender and that perspective.

MW: Thank you very much and again thank you for being here so early in the morning, all of you. I often get the question, so why do you call it a feminist foreign policy? Maybe it is, as someone said, feminism is the radical notion that women are human beings. [Laughter] I've also learned to quote Gandhi, who said that first they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, and then you win. [Laughter] We have definitely passed the stage where they giggled at this whole notion of feminist foreign policy, because we have explained that this is,



first of all, it's an analysis of the world. What does it look like? What is the role of women and men respectively? Do women enjoy the same rights? What about their representation? Are they represented where important decisions are being made? And what about the resources? Are they allocated, the same kind of resources as men? So these are the three Rs that we use to guide our actions: rights, representation, and resources. But it starts with the fourth R, which is really the reality check, to make sure that we know exactly what the world looks like. So, in turning this into action, not only as a nice catch word of a feminist foreign policy, we asked all our embassies around the world to give us a picture of the world with these glasses on, or through a gender lens.

And I must say that these stories are absolutely amazing. For example, I was just a few weeks ago, I was in the DRC. And I went to a small clinic that UNFPA runs, and of course, I met with teenage girls, children, who themselves had children. So this girl, I don't know, she was a young teenager, and she had to carry the little baby daughter, born on the same day as our prince in Sweden, so to me it was very clear what the world looks like, because she—and we don't know, this baby might have been the result of a rape, we don't know, many of the girls who come there, they have definitely been raped—and of course, it means she can no longer go to school. It means that she is not sure who is the father, so who will actually take care of the baby? It will be a very difficult life, for this girl, for this baby, and so the poverty is carried on. I think this baby became the symbol, or she personified the problems of this, it was such a clear picture of what the challenge looks like. I think this is what they described.

And so when we got the reports back, we also looked at how can we prioritize. So we are trying to specify approaches, starting points in our action plan after having listened with all our—getting those reports back from our embassies, we've also identified the tools and the actors changing things. We've also said that it is important to involve men and boys in the work and in the reforms. Of course, the action plan will be the focus for the long-term objectives. And we have said in this year, in 2016, we will put priority to the human rights of women and girls in humanitarian settings and also to combat gender-based and conflict related sexual violence. So this is one of the priority areas. But also, peace processes, peace support operations and also sustainable development efforts, and we continue to work on reproductive and sexual health issues for girls. So the rights of girls and young people in those countries. So we have tried to specify also what will be the efforts for this year. As we have started to do, we have created this network of women mediators, we will work with other countries, with the Nordic countries, but also hopefully with African countries to make sure that the network is broadened and widened, and I insist on every meeting in the foreign affairs council in the European Union, I ask, so where are the women? What about Mali, and the peace agreement in Mali? What about Libya? What about Syria? Where are the women? And this must be the natural inclination for all of us, to ask, so why are they not there? 16 years



after 1325, it's still not a given. We have to fight for it. And we have to make sure that we follow up on everything we do, and we will hopefully together with Ukraine, because they say, what does feminist foreign policy help against what Russia is doing in Ukraine, well the truth is we might not discover war crimes committed in Ukraine if we don't ask women. So what have you been through, what are the needs of women and girls in all these situations. So it just has to be integrated in everything we do.

AV: I think you're—

MW: Sorry for a long answer, but this is just to outline the—

AV: Actually, it's extremely helpful, because I think one of the things we all see, certainly I did in government, and we do now at the Institute, there is still this skepticism if you will, about, we've got a crisis in Syria, you've got the crisis in Ukraine, well what exactly do women, how do they have a role in this, and what exactly does that mean, and—you know let's follow up on the Ukraine piece, because the Russian aggression there has created much dislocation, over a million and a half internally displaced, a huge humanitarian crisis, but interestingly, Ukraine's government has just adopted a national action plan on women peace and security. one of the questions is, how do we work with them more effectively? How do governments, how do outside groups, work with them more effectively? So it's not just checking the box, yes we have a national action plan.

MW: No.

AV: But what does that mean? And I think that what you just said about documenting any of these crimes, particularly in the east, where you do have monitors, they're not able to get into the OSCE, monitors are not able to get into many of the places that they're still kept out of, where the war is taking place, because the ceasefire is broken constantly. And to document what's happening for the future, but also what could be happening now, to give teeth to that national action plan?

MW: I think maybe to second experts and help, because they need to be able to do the work. And very often they start from scratch, or from a rather low level of awareness, or expertise, so we can help with that, we can help with money. We can support the humanitarian actors, so that they ask the questions. They might have to sit down and ask these women what they have been through to provide also the best assistance and help. And very often, I think, they count on this being, sort of, ignored. And we know, that for example, in situations of war and conflict, very often you have situations of social unrest, where there is violence in border crossings, where actually many soldiers arrive, like in bus stations or train stations, and this is also where refugees often seek refuge, and this is where they are attacked, or where they are



being abused. And if you don't look at that, if you don't find ways to avoid that, it will simply go unnoticed. So I think to provide money, expertise, second people, maybe, and make sure that we ask the right questions. And that we, in the follow up, also ask reports to covertness situations. That would be a great help, a first step.

AV: And I think it's really important too, because we are in the midst of an ongoing crisis, and rarely are these issues injected into the considerations of what should be done. So your voice matters greatly, and hopefully it's not a lonely voice, but that many others from our government and others are joining this effort.

MW: I think there is a growing awareness about this, and also, how much more difficult—what a heavy impediment this is to create peace. To restore peace, or to—

AV: Very hard.

MW: Or to make it last longer. And what the researchers—because we have excellent researchers, Robert Egnell was here in Georgetown and did an important job, and he can improve also that when women are part of a peace process, more options will be put on the table, simply. So you will have much more to work with in the peace process, and it will last longer, because they are also the ones who implement a peace process. And I can see in Syria, in talking to these women, that we have helped and supported in the negotiations, they are much more down to earth, in that they represent the women that are stills struggling to live through this very difficult war. And they are dealing with issues like how are we going to get electricity to this block where we live, where we can still survive? How do we get fresh water, how do we get medicine to our kids, and all of that? So it is a very practical thing that they need to address first of all. And this is good. Because if you think that you can only calculate about how many bombers or fighter jets you need to send to a place, you forget about how it affects people on the ground.

AV: And you forget about any possibility of a sustainable peace if you haven't given people, a reason to believe that things can be different in their lives.

MW: And rebuild, and function again after it.

AV: Well we're hoping that the collaboration that we're engaged in with you that does involve Ukraine will create that kind of evidence-based case that I don't think anyone has really focused on significantly to be able to move this forward.

Can you talk a little about Syria, because as you said in your speech, and you've alluded to just now, it's obviously a very, very difficult conflict, everyone is working in ways that they can, but



you and your ministry have really gone our your way to ensure women’s full participation, as best as can be created in the process and in terms of the advisory, to the process. But what does it mean, I know you’ve brought the women to Sweden for that kind of effectiveness training, if you will, the ability for them to come together, to congeal, to understand how they want to go forward. Tell us a little bit about what the texture of that is, because I think it’s really interesting, as you say, when you get really practical about it.

MW: Well one first has to remember that they don’t have a tradition of democracy building, organizations working together in a cooperative way. So they have to start from scratch in a way. They are very different, these women. Most of them, they still live in Syria, but some also outside. I have met them twice through Skype conversation, and I try to give them some good advice. And I don’t know if maybe I could just say something of the points that I made to them. And here if you would have given the same kind of advice. And I think one should always be careful about giving advice to anyone, but I said, well this is what I’ve learned so far, these are the things I know or I have heard from others. So we said, first of all, make sure that you get a role at the center of this process, and if it is not given, then take it yourselves - insist on having a role. And as you said so eloquently from Afghanistan, where, couldn’t you repeat that? It was such a good example of—

AV: Well, it was—and I’m some folks have heard it, but I was sitting one night in Kabul with a group of women, as Ambassador I had gone to Kabul at the time, on women’s issues. And one of the women before the conversation even started, looked me in the eyes directly, I didn’t know who she was, and she said, “Stop looking at us as victims, and look at us as the leaders that we are.” And I think, I thought long and hard about that, because she was so wise in what she said, that when you sit at decision making tables, if you only see women as victims, you do not see them as the real change makers that they can be. And I thought it was profound, and it’s absolutely true. 1325 is we have to protect the victims, but we also have to recognize the full participation of women in these processes.

MW: So this is what I said also. I said, you represent, actually in Syria, you represent more than 50% of the people of your country. That’s what you do. You represent these women, and you deserve a place at the table, remember that. Then, secondly, I said focus on substance. So, for example, define three key priorities for a ceasefire. And then if possible back it up with facts and figures, as much as you have. Thirdly, take concrete positions on substance, and then present it yourselves. Present them yourselves, don’t let anyone else take over your positions and your ideas. And fourth, process is key. You have to demand information and transparency, so you understand exactly what will happen next in a peace process, what will be our role? How can we get into the process? So ask for information. And then, influence. Try to identify who are the important actors here? Who are your best allies and friends in the peace process? And six, I said it is important to get military leaders to buy into certain courses



of action, so if you can, please mobilize them as well. And then, networking, interaction, communication will help you. So don't forget that. Don't act only our own, try to stick together. And then build confidence in the group. Be aware of the criticism and pressure that will come. Be prepared; be aware of that. It will happen, and you just have to seek comfort from and help and assistance from the others in the group. Because this will be problematic. They are not used to think that you grow stronger by belonging to a bigger group, because that has not been their experience, you fight for your own life, and for your own existence, and for your own role. These are just a few of the things we discussed. And then, they know more than I do about Syria, the rest is all theirs to take.

AV: And we're very grateful for the effort that Sweden is making in this space, because it will make a difference, and with Mr. De Mistura, you've got a real partner, who is committed to this. So hopefully, we'll see good things coming out of it. I want to ask you one more question and then hopefully our audience, I'm sure, will want to put others to you. But as President DeGioia said, you were the first special representative of the Secretary General on sexual violence in conflict. It is a very, very tough issue. Much of it, the role emanated out of a resolution, to really focus on what you made a keystone of what you said today, which is prevention. To prevent these horrible things from happening, when you begin to see the signs, what lessons did you take out of your experience as the first special representative, and how'd o we make progress on an issue that seems really intractable, sexual violence in conflict?

MW: Maybe I mentioned this last time I was here, but I think there were three things that I took away from that experience, and I think there were lies or misconceptions about sexual violence in conflict. The first is that it is inevitable. That this is something that has been in every war and conflict from the beginning of time. And that's why, you know, it's like boys will be boys, or it's the spoils of war, or this is what will happen in every war and conflict so it's impossible to do something about it. It is even mentioned in the Bible. So how can you do something about it? So that's the first misconception, that this is inevitable. The other is that [it] is unspeakable, that it would somehow have [to do] with sex, sexuality, and that's why it's a bit shameful to talk about it. And of course the truth is that it is women—it's not the perpetrators who are shamed, but it is very often the women who feel guilty for having been raped, and they cannot talk about it. And you have to explain how this is a matter of aggression taking sexual expression, and not the other way around. And very often, men of course cannot do it, and it means that instead they will use a weapon, or a bottle, or something else, a rifle to hurt a woman or shoot her instead. So it is also, to explain what it is, what kind of phenomenon it is. And thirdly, that it is a lesser crime. It is seen as a lesser crime. And this is also why in peace processes, they are always asked to forgive and go on with their lives. So this is not something that should be punished, or where justice should be done and given to the women or the victims. And this is very serious. And I think this means we have to explain how



it impacts a society when this is done to hundreds and thousands of women, that it does not only affect the woman, but her family, her village, whole country. And the economy of a country, because very often they are also the economic backbone of their community. So I think that these three misconceptions we are still struggling with. But I think what we have managed to do is so far, to get a number of tools available to us and now we have to start using them. So it means we have everything from the naming and shaming of the blacklist of perpetrators that the United Nations will set up every year, the reporting, the women protection advisors, and so on. So we have very much of the tools, but we have to use them to the full, and I think we have to do more on prevention. And there are also a number of areas where we have not even started enough, and that is for example, children born out of rape.

AV: Right.

MW: And very often they are stigmatized and ignored, or they are not faring well in different situations.

AV: So let's go to your questions now. Where's the microphone? We've got some here in the front.

First Audience Question: Hi, my name is Alexandra Stark. I'm a Ph.D. student here at Georgetown in International Relations. Thank you so much for your talk, it's wonderful to hear about your feminist foreign policy and your efforts to empower women negotiators. I was hoping you could speak briefly to your own experiences as a woman working in a foreign policy realm, particularly in a realm like security that tends to be dominated by men, and sort of hyper-masculinized, and whether you've ever felt, or may be not, that you've had to provide more evidence, or behave in certain ways in order to garner the respect and the attention of your male peers. Thank you.

MW: Of course if I look back, and I think of how I started also as a very young Member of Parliament, I do recall that they tried to put me in the visitor's group, once. And also that once we were really told just to wait, sit by the wall and wait until it was our turn.

AV: Weren't you 25 when you were elected to Parliament?

MW: Yes, something like that, yes. [Laughter]

AV: Something to aspire to.

MW: It was so long ago it was a hundred years ago. [Laughter]. I belong to a generation where we organized ourselves. It was all about believing in politics as a tool to change society. So we



would immediately organize also a group of young—like Mona Sahlin, and myself, and Anna Lindh, we were a group of young women, also, as members of Parliament. And we would then sit down together and say what do we do? How do we change our conditions, and how do we change the attitudes towards us? And so we would also seek that kind of cooperation and working with others and reforms, because we lived in times when we could see reform after reform, allowing us to have children and also share parenthood, and all of the things that really helped us become more active in politics and society. And that was most important.

AV: We still aspire to have some of the benefits that Sweden provides, in terms of making it a little bit easier for women to be in this space, parents.

MW: Unfortunately, I can notice that I was for a time also minister for gender issues, women's issues, as it was called, I can see that unfortunately, the agenda that we set for ourselves is very much the same. Because it had to do with fighting violence against women, this is still a huge problem everywhere, we said that we want to share, that women and men—what was your expression, you had a good—

[Voice from audience]: Share the care.

MW: Share the care, exactly.

AV: Share the care.

MW: So that both men and women share the care of the home and women. The equal pay for equal work, and what was the fourth—well, every other seat for a woman, and that means political representation. And there's still some way to go.

AV: You're not kidding. [Laughter] Some of us, it's a little harder than others of you. Who else? The mic? There's one in the back, and then we can come back to the front, and then we can go to this side.

Second Audience Question: Thank you Your Excellency. My name Samir al-Shahabi. I work for the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, and my question is, being a minority, I guess, in this room, myself, I'm interested in knowing your perspective, especially when you mentioned the Swedish network on peace mediators and that you're trying to expand across the globe. Have you noticed any resonance among male allies in peace mediation that can actually work with women's organizations and women activists who engage in promoting women's leadership and increasing their participation in the political process.



MW: I think this has been welcomed, generally everywhere from everyone. Because they can also see, I hesitate to mention this example, but actually the UN also sent a delegation, I will not say where they sent this delegation of negotiators to a certain country to start a peace process, and they insisted on that country including women in the delegation, and then they just pointed back at them and said, “But you don’t have one woman in your team from the UN! So who are you to teach us about the role of women?” So of course we have to be credible, in making sure that we ourselves live up to the notion of letting women have a voice, and this is the lesson from resolution 1325, that women first of all have to be represented. I would say that it has been welcomed throughout. So the UN system and other countries, they want to be part of it, they say, “Let’s build a broader network of women mediators,” and I actually think that these women that we have identified, and that we’ve started to provide training also, they can immediately start work in any team of negotiators or mediators. They are excellent, they are lawyers, they are experienced ambassadors, diplomats, so I think they are well equipped already to take on that role. It has been welcomed, generally.

AV: Others? Back in the front?

Third question: Hi, first of all thank you so much for being here today, it’s an honor. My name is Alexandra; I’m a first year MSFS student here at Georgetown. I’m also Swedish myself; I used to be at the Swedish Foreign Ministry for parts of 2013 and 2014. And I’m also in Ambassador Verveer’s Women, Peace, and Security class. And we’ve been—

AV: A very good Swedish student. [Laughter]

Third question: We’ve been talking a lot about Security Council Resolution 1325, and where it has come up until this point, and going forward, where we should take it. And I was wondering, based on your extensive experience, both as Swedish Foreign Minister but also in your work with sexual violence in conflict, where would you say where we have missed, where are the biggest challenges going forward in fully implementing the resolution, and where have we failed, and where should we focus going forward. It’s been almost 16 years, where would you say that we should focus on going forward from now.

MW: I think that it has been defined, until now, it has been defined until now as women’s issue. But it is not. It’s a peace and security issue. It’s a human rights issue. And until we put it and define it as a peace and security issue and provide all the necessary facts and figures to build it up, to say that peace processes are more effective if women are around the table, if they are there, then I’m not sure we will be successful. But we also have to make sure that men understand this, and that this is built in to everything from military doctrines, to the facts and documentation that we provide on this topic. So I really think that it is not only when they are retired military leaders that they should come out and talk about this, but already now, there



are too few men who say, well—I still remember because I visited NATO headquarters when I was a special representative, and talked to one guy, I don't know his grade, or so, but an American, who said, "If only I had known this before they sent me to both Iraq and Afghanistan. If only I had understood this better, what it does to women, what it does to society, and how I could work in communicating also with women. It would have helped us so much." And I keep those words ringing, that this is really what it's all about. And now follow the debate on UN peacekeepers, and the link to sexual exploitation and abuse. Because only one case, and this will undermine the whole credibility of the peace operations of the UN. And it has to be stopped. And it cannot only be stopped by the UN, it is the member states, the troop and police contributing countries will have to stop this. They will have to follow up. They will have to train their peacekeepers. And that is why it has to be in the training of security personnel everywhere and national security forces everywhere. So I think it has to go deeper, and it has to be defined as peace and security issues, not something that women can deal with.

AV: Which is why, as you know, the Institute was established to create that evidence-based case, because we certainly had the same experience in government—it's always sort of the demand, "Prove it to us," but the proof is really that it's not about women. It is about women, but it's not solely about women. It is about peace and security. You said it so well. Others? Well we've got one here in the second row, she's had her hand up from the start.

Fourth question: Thank you very much for this opportunity to participate in this important discussion. Minister Wallström, last time when you were giving remarks here in Georgetown, you talked a lot about Ukraine. And you said that Ukraine would be a litmus test in terms of how, and if, the women are included in the decision-making. How do you think the international community is doing on that test today?

MW: Not good enough, as we have said, and we started already then to discuss how to work together to give more support to everything from the OSCE, and their presence there, to humanitarian assistance, to what we can do bilaterally. And I have also said to my ministry that we will now look at how to do more, and I think together with you we can also provide, as I said everything from seconding people, experts, to, if necessary, provide more money to exactly this. Because you have to start by recognizing this as a problem. And that you might find war crimes committed against women that otherwise will go unnoticed or undetected. We have not been effective enough.

AV: There's not even a track two process in terms of trying to get some agreement that will hold and move the country forward at this point that engages women.



MW: But this is an important step that the Ukraine themselves have now adopted, a national action plan, because it means that they see this problem, and we can help them to make sure that it is implemented, and that it is put in place. And they have some fantastic women parliamentarians and women in civil society organizations, so I think of lot of good efforts to build on.

AV: Let's go this side now. And then there's a gentlemen in the second row, we'll take you after her.

Fifth question: Thank you very much. I'm Karen Sherman, I'm with the Institute for Women, Peace, and Security. I've been working with women survivors of war and conflict and post-conflict zones around the world for many years, and it really seems like one step forward, two steps back, in terms of the culture of impunity surrounding sexual violence, you see it going on and South Sudan and so many other countries, and I'm just wondering, with the right's up front doctrine with the UN, what you feel like has changed over the last 20 years, because it doesn't seem like all that much has changed. And I realize that there has been progress, but it doesn't seem like enough, we keep making the same mistakes over and over again.

MW: I have the same impression, actually. It's a rather bleak outlook, at the moment. It's as if it was in two parallel tracks. Where we are able then to do work, establishing the necessary, the normative framework is there, the texts, we have all kinds of fantastic texts about everything from girls' rights to resolutions, we have eight resolutions by now on this particular topic, following up on 1325, what is it, eight or nine? Eight. So we have all of that, we have the necessary tools or instruments that we can use, but the attitude and the reality is a very different one. And look now what ISIL or Daesh is doing in Syria and Iraq. I mean this is just so awful, that women again are targeted. And as it was called in the New York Times, it's a kind of theology of rape. So with handbooks, on how you can abuse women. And I met with Nadia Murad, these young girls who managed to escape. And it was just—I mean, talk about unspeakable, the things that she's been through. And she's a very, very courageous but traumatized person of course, but she has decided that she needs to tell her story. And then you think, what have we managed to achieve, if this can happen to so many young girls? Also in war and conflict situations, this is still the normal. No we have no been effective enough. We have all the necessary texts and the normative framework, but in practice, it's something else that has taken over. I think the whole idea of violence and military solutions to everything. So you want to send a telegram, ever thought of women? Let women try. We gave them the chance, let women have a go at all of this.

AV: I think this is going to have to be our last question, here in the second row.



Sixth question: Thank you, thank you very much, Minister, thank you very much for the opportunity. My name is Aloysius Ordu, I'm the former vice president of the African Development Bank and in that capacity, as you can imagine, the issues of fragility across the entire continent. Right now, the Central African Republic, Burundi, the DRC, my own country, the northern part of Nigeria, where violence to women is just one of the things—I mean, the challenges are enormous. But we also know, I mean it is said that in many, many countries like yours, the fiscal challenges are real. You mentioned the issues of rights, representation, and resources, and I believe the latter is particularly important. How are you coping in your own ministry with the challenges on the fiscal front, which we are hearing, that many of the European countries are having to cut back massively on resources.

MW: That's true. This is true in two parts. It's about the fiscal policies but it is also resources given to women of course in allowing equal empowerment of women. Because the minute that they have a chance to provide for themselves, or to have an earn a living, to provide for their, sustain their families, also their role and their status changes in their societies. So it has all of these aspects of the problem. And it has been increasingly difficult to uphold also the budget, for example humanitarian assistance in many of the European countries, and now with the refugee crisis, this has really exacerbated the problem. So this is a constant fight for resources. But so far, at least our guidelines have to do with being most effective. We know that we are more effective if we direct towards also women. So if we distribute resources in optimal way, it will be to direct it to women. So this is a very important part of our policy. Not to ignore that everywhere, and especially in Africa, I would say also that the leaders know this, they know that women are so important in changing the reality. They know they are depend on including women. But it seems we are not capable of doing it in practice, in a more visible and effective way.

AV: Well there is much work to continue doing, but thank you for doing everything you're doing, because for all of us, I think in very significant ways, you are a woman leading peace. You epitomize the banner. I want you to know that you're welcome back here as many times as you can come, and we thank you, really deeply, for what you're trying to do, and motivating others to do and inspiring others to do, because it matters greatly.

MW: And most important are all of these young students.

AV: They are indeed.

MW: And the people here who are both men and women, you are the real future.



AV: So Minister Wallström, she has to— she has a very hard stop that's going to happen almost immediately. So we're going to let her leave the room first, and again, thank you so much.

MW: Thank you for having me.

AV: Please join me in thanking the minister. [Applause]

