Ms Rosa Emilia Salamanca

Keynote Remarks UN General Assembly:

"Ensuring Stable and Peaceful Societies"

24 April 2014

"I don't want indignation to undermine the necessity for reflection and for careful analysis. Yet, I do not want careful analysis and reflection to do away with indignation and to remain a cold consideration of what has happened and what is happening. There is an urgent need for a compromise between indignation and reflection, for change today and now, so as to attain peace and decent life for all people around the world."

Philosopher William Ospina

On 24 April 2014, the Executive Director of CIASE (Corporación de Investigación y Acción Social y Económica),Rosa Emilia Salamanca, spoke at an event organised by the President of the UN's General Assembly. She addressed the need to include gender, violence and peace in the UN's post-2015 development framework.

Rosa Emilia participates in Coalicion 1325, which advocates for a Colombian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, and is a member of the National Network of Women.

Rosa Emilia is also part of the Women Peace and Security Collective, a group of women in Colombia who have launched a new peacebuilding initiative, called the Ethical Pact for a Country in Peace. The Pact calls on Colombian society, policymakers and the international community to support the 'transformation' of Colombian society to a peaceful one, by signing up to 15 actions.

CIASE and Conciliation Resources have been partnering since 2011 on promoting women's empowerment in peace processes.

Good morning.

It is an honor to participate in this debate that seeks to explore the links between sustainable development, peace and stability.

My name is Rosa Emilia G Salamanca, I am from Colombia, Executive Director of the CIASE; a member of the National Women's Network, the Coalition on Resolution 1325, the Women Peace and Security Think Tank, and the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders.

I will focus my remarks on peace processes and women's participation in peacebuilding and decision-making—key factors in achieving sustainable development for all. I will end by making a few recommendations.

I must name some of the women who have taught me about this connection between peace and sustainable development. There is Danny, an Afro-Colombian woman, who has shown me a country caught between multiple conflicts in a cruel dance of death around drugs, exclusion, ideologies, and where—in the name of development—large industries such as mining and timber have been damaging the country more and more every day. And there is María Eugenia, a small woman, mestiza, of peasant origins, stripped of her land, displaced by warlords. These women, they have taught me that sustainable peace is only sustainable insofar as it is just, insofar as it respects the dignity of all.

Danny, María Eugenia and many more women in Colombia and around the world, who are committed political actors for social and cultural transformation, are the source of inspiration for this presentation.

What are the linkages between sustainable development, peace and stability, and how can these be integrated into national development strategies and their progress be effectively measured?

Today, development at various levels—local, national, regional and global—is at a critical point. Despite some progress on the Millennium Development Goals, poverty, injustices and inequality, the lack of recognition of diversity, remain a reality across the world –in developing as well as in developed countries. Moreover, while there have been indications that some countries have overcome the global financial crisis of 2008 and 2009, many are still suffering the impact. Unemployment, food insecurity, violence, energy shortage, deteriorating social services, including health and education, are evident in many countries. This is further aggravated by climate change, natural disasters, and health pandemics in different parts of the world.

All of these development problems are magnified in conflict-affected countries, where lack of access to public services or rights such as education or health particularly affect women and girls. Therefore I must stress that there is no peace without development, and no development without peace—and neither peace, nor sustainable development without the active participation of women in both processes. Above all, peace is a permanent condition, a requisite to development.

From the moment that peace is being conceived of, it must be linked to decent living conditions for all. There are many formal peace agreements signed around the world, which bear absolutely no consequences on the quality of life of the people, leading to renewed and perpetual conflict. Furthermore, this link between peace and development must be accompanied by a reform of the security sector and an overall decrease in budgets for weapons' production and military spending.

In 2013, global military spending reached 1.7 trillion dollars, nearly 5 billion dollars per day. In the words of peace activist, Ms. Cora Weiss: "To devote $1.7 trillion to preparing for war is indefensible and in conflict with priorities the United Nations has approved." The resources invested in war, should instead be used to build sustainable peace and be invested in programs that work towards this end. Part of these resources should be used to promote education and health.

The effects of conflicts on the environment, such as burning and bombardments of land and the poisoning of water supplies, have serious effects on all living beings and are indescribable. Respect for the environment that is in tune with the cultural practices of local and indigenous communities and guarantees biodiversity is a prerequisite of sustainable development.

How can political, economic and social institutions be strengthened in such a manner that they work harmoniously to replace the legacy of conflict and violence with a new, inclusive and more people-centred order of relations in support of achieving sustainable development?

Human security places people at its core, with a particular emphasis on those who have been excluded from development processes. Thus, it is essential to stress the importance of women's participation who, in conflict situations, are not only passive victims but peace builders—it is women who largely build and rebuild societies. They are key players in peacebuilding efforts and in decision-making. Their participation is essential to strengthen and transform the political, economic and social institutions, in order to replace the legacy of conflict and violence with a legacy of peace.

Women have played a central role in the consolidation of peace in Liberia and Rwanda. In the Philippines, women have successfully influenced the peace process between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the government, which led to the signing of the recent peace agreement. In Colombia, we women have raised our voices, demanding a leading role in decision making in the transition to post-conflict. Women in Syria and South Sudan are also making their voices heard.

Consequently, the transition to peace and the path to sustainable and transformative development will be more likely to succeed if peacebuilding efforts include women and gender equality.

Good governance particularly transparency and accountability are an absolute necessity in strengthening political, economic and social institutions. Duty bearers such as government officials, civil servants including UN officials need to exhibit strong leadership and practice leadership by example. Personal, political and economic agenda must be set aside and people's agenda must be prioritized. The people's agenda that I refer to here is a rights-based, people-centered development agenda that is developed from the bottom up in a most inclusive and participatory process.

How can the development challenges for stable and peaceful societies be reflected in the post-2015 development agenda?

The complete absence of specific points on peace and security in the Millenium Development Goals should be corrected in this new agenda and the design of new sustainable development goals. It is imperative that discussions on women, peace and security be integrated into the post-2015 development agenda.

Implementation mechanisms should strengthen

non-state as well as state accountability and human rights obligations, including for the private sector and international monetary organizations, to respect, protect, and fulfill the human rights of all, with particular attention to those most at risk.

What capacities and partnerships, including donor-relationships, would be required for building peaceful and stable societies for sustainable development?

For the success of these mechanisms, it is essential to strengthen the institutional capacity and the coordination and cooperation efforts between national and local governments, civil society, the international community, the private sector and UN agencies. Gender-responsive planning and budgeting, gender and conflict analysis, gender audits and human rights monitoring must be regular exercises among government, civil society and UN entities.

Recommendations

Finally, I must emphasize several recommendations, as a starting point for today's discussion. Stable and peaceful societies imply:

Reducing the current military spending and allocating this to education and health and programs that support peacebuilding, especially those that fully involve women;

Including conflict prevention, sustainable peace and the participation of women in peacebuilding as a cross-cutting condition across all sustainable development goals;

Ensuring that the implementation of sustainable development goals are accompanied by indicators and verification that

build on human rights covenants and conventions in coordination with the resolutions on women, peace and security that have been issued by the UN Security Council, as well as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);

Recognizing the diversity of approaches to development and the lessons to be learned from this diversity in the prevention and resolution of conflicts; and strengthening capacities and cooperation between national governments, local governments, civil society, the international community and UN agencies, so that they can monitor the progress of the sustainable development goals in a complementary, participatory and inclusive way.

Conclusion

The next development agenda must create an enabling environment for peace, so that women like Danny and María Eugenia, who have dedicated their lives to making this world a better place, can see and feel a real transformation.

We urge you to support an approach to conflict prevention and development centered on people and on the respect for the environment. Just and lasting peace is a necessary condition for sustainable development. Sustainable development will be guaranteed if there is long lasting peace.

Thank you.