

Address by H.E. Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak
On the occasion of the Peace Matters Lecture Series
“New Zealand and Peaceful Conflict Resolution”
November 28th, 2007

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to see you all this evening for a new edition of our Movement’s Peace Matters Lecture Series. Today, we have a very special guest amongst us, a leader in every sense of the word, an inspiration to women all over the world, who has devoted her career to advancing the causes of peace, justice and security in her country and beyond. Please join me in extending a warm welcome to the Rt. Hon Helen Clark, Prime Minister of New Zealand.

We are delighted by your visit, for it not only gives us the opportunity to hold this timely lecture but also to celebrate with you the official opening of the first Embassy of New Zealand in Egypt. I am certain that this important development will greatly help to strengthen the relations between our two countries, highlighting our shared values and aspirations – for there are many.

First and foremost we certainly share a strong desire and long-standing commitment to strengthening the fabric of sustainable peace between our people and nations. Our collective vision of peace is one that goes beyond the absence of war or the silencing of guns. It entails creating the conditions that lead to the foundation of secure societies --- societies that are empowered to assume a major role in defending and preserving peace. It means investing in human security, strengthening the rule of law, protecting and enriching our environment, our values and partnerships. We all have a part to play in this process: governments, the civil society, the media, and the private sector. We all have the potential to spark the change we want to see happen, despite our differences, despite the obstacles that we encounter.

Indeed, on a daily basis we are confronted by negativity and devastation associated with wars and conflicts, violent crimes, poverty, disease and discrimination. I myself cannot think of a single day when I haven’t heard something on the news that has made me sad, made me angry, and made me want to do everything in my power to change things and make a difference in people’s lives. And yet there is one thing that comforts me, and that is the knowledge that I’m not alone. There are countless individuals, women and men from all walks of life, of all ages, who are out there looking for ways to address the causes and consequences of

these global problems, who are working to elevate the many injustices that exist. They are the true heroes of our world today – the greatest defenders of peace, who need to be praised and acknowledged for their achievements.

I founded our International Peace Movement in honour of these phenomenal people, to support their work every step of the way, taking pride in sharing their stories of courage and helping them to realize their dreams for a better future by catalyzing their ideas and expertise into consolidated action.

From the start we recognized the role of women as major players in the quest for peace, they have an infinite capacity to want peace, make peace and maintain peace. This is why we strive to build their capacities, promote their visions, and make their voices heard, at both the heart of decision-making processes and the forefront of public opinion. We work hard to create platforms for discussion, such as our Peace Matters Lecture Series, highlighting success stories, alternative perspectives and diverse approaches in the field of peace. We also use every opportunity to initiate dialogues between cultures helping to spread authentic knowledge and highlighting existing commonalities.

In these troubled times, dialogue can help us to redress misconceptions, transcend differences, and tackle the root causes of conflicts. It can stimulate a greater appreciation for the important interdependency between our nations, and the richness that our diversity brings to our world.

In this regard, I must commend Prime Minister Clarke for her country's leading role in the promotion of inter-cultural dialogue. New Zealand's contribution in this field is a testament of its staunch commitment to live by the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter. It also builds on a solid record of constructive actions and strategies aimed at fostering durable peace and security worldwide, including its efforts in human rights, peace keeping, disarmament, sustainable development and the protection of the global environment.

Our Movement supports many of these causes through its Global Coalition of Women Defending Peace, its International Campaign with the private sector against the Trafficking of Human Beings and various community programs and grassroots initiatives. We seek to ensure the continuity of peace-building efforts through education and training, inspiring and enabling global citizens to foster a Culture of Peace in their

families, communities and nations. Towards this goal, we recently established an Institute for Peace studies, which serves as the academic arm of our Movement, developing educational and research programs designed to enhance the role of women and young people in peace building.

I am very proud of the Movement's success in spotlighting and re-enforcing the efforts of young leaders. Youth are all central to the process of peace, as equal partners, not just because they are the stakeholders of our future, but because they are already playing decisive roles in shaping our present. We have many of these young people with us here today. They are part of our International Youth Network, created as an outcome of an International Youth Forum, entitled "The Power of Youth For Peace" (Youth Speak – We Listen!), which we organized last September.

This youth-inspired, organized and run event, brought together over 800 youth from 100 different countries, offering them a platform, a space, to make their voices heard. From the first moment and in the opening session, which was conducted by youth, the spirit and tone of the Forum was set--- a spirit that was creative and unconventional. Its energy was contagious! Through frank dialogues and debates they connected, shared experiences on ways and ideas to eliminate violence and build a more peaceful and sustainable world. The inspiring messages of these young people gave us hope, gave us courage, they opened windows of opportunities and offered solutions to genuine and real global challenges.

The youth considered their destiny not a matter of chance but a matter of choice. This is what was so refreshing and made it so special. Through their eyes, we saw clearly what our world could be, if more young people were empowered to lead the way.

Over the next couple of weeks, we will be holding consultations with members of our youth network to shape a strategy paper for the coming year based on the recommendations made during the Forum. We will also begin to implement some of the activities and programs of our new "Cyber Peace Initiative," which aims to intensify young people's participation and effectiveness in fostering peace through the vast world of Information and Communication Technologies. We welcome the involvement of everyone here tonight –for our Movement is determined to make these initiatives as inclusive as possible, aligning the capabilities and strengths of all society members, bridging gaps and bringing together all their energy and potential for change.

The documentary, which you are about to see this evening, was filmed by two young reporters attending our Forum. It captures from a youth perspective, the magic moments, the visions, and the determination of our youth network members to collaborate and affect change in their respective communities. One of the most powerful outcomes of this Forum was the hope and all the positive energy generated. It helped us to clear our minds and focus on all that is possible, and all that can be achieved.

We must hold on to this positive state of mind – for although we live in a period of uncertainty, where existing concepts are re-examined and re-defined, where double standards continue to persist, one thing will always remain true:

Peace Matters, because the good things in our world are worth fighting for.

Peace Matters, because we all need it to flourish, access knowledge and to enjoy prosperity.

Peace Matters, because we all have a right to live in peace, in security and in an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect.

I would like to thank Prime Minister Clark for taking the time to be with us here today. We look forward to listening to your perspectives and hear more about your country's diverse and dynamic programs and activities. I am convinced that we will find numerous ways of contributing together to the kind of international environment that we all aspire for...an environment where the human rights and dignity of every individual are valued and secured.

Before we listen to Prime Minister Clark, allow me to take you back very briefly on a short trip to September 1st, 2007.