

The Honourable Mobina S.B. Jaffer, Q.C., Senator Educate, Enable, and Empower

Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland 78th Annual Conference

Check against delivery.

Federation President Maureen, International President Alice, Federation President of Europe Kathy, and Federation President of the Southwest Pacific Sue, ladies, and gentlemen:

Maureen, thank you very much for that very kind introduction; it really touched me.

I am really pleased to be here today. The hospitality has been great; the friendship has been so warm. My husband and I have had a really fun time, including at breakfast today – ask me later, I'll tell you. I have some real news about your incoming president...

You know, I am really thrilled to be here. I couldn't have asked for more. To imagine that my country of birth, Uganda, joins the Federation at a time when I'm addressing all of you...I keep pinching myself! I can't believe that the two events have happened together. Of course, I also welcome Nepal and Tanzania, both countries very close to my heart.

I can't tell you enough times how happy I am to be here today, because, if I may attach myself to all of you here today, there's nothing more empowering than being in a sisterhood. You know, Winston Churchill called Uganda "the pearl of Africa." I honestly see you as pearls in society.

To the organizing committee, a great thank you for the tremendous work that you have done. I know you will all agree that if it wasn't for their great work, we wouldn't have such a great conference.

You know, all of us have requests of the organizing committee, but I think I get the plum. I had Norma, yesterday, driving me around Belfast to find kilts for my grandson and my son. My son is a piper with the Irish regiment in Vancouver. So I guess we have some roots here. I am hoping that my grandson will also join the Irish regiment at the right time.

I want to share a secret with you. My secret is as follows: we were at Stormont a few days ago, and Federation President Maureen was introducing us to the dignitaries, the important people there, and she looked at all of us and said, “these are women who have done substantial work for Soroptimist.” And my husband is nudging me, telling me, “fess up!” you know, “tell the truth, you haven’t done anything!” I just basked in the glory of it.

I want today to recognize a young woman who introduced me to Soroptimist, Karima Huda from Calgary, Canada. I can tell you that, for me, it has been an amazing ride. I am truly, truly blessed to have come to know all of you. And I can’t say it enough times, so please be patient with me.

Justice Doherty, your remarks yesterday were very special. As I told you in private, I will certainly be studying them. But I know that I speak for every woman here when I say that you do us proud.

As someone who is in the legal profession, and knows how hard it is to achieve what Justice Doherty has achieved on behalf of us all, as women...it’s truly wonderful to have her with us. And, you know, what’s wonderful about Justice Doherty is that she’s just one of us. She doesn’t need any special treatment, like I know my male colleagues need. So thank you.

Justice Doherty was talking about Sierra Leone. I have to tell you that hearing her speak yesterday brought back a lot of memories for me. After the Sierra Leone conflict, I was one of the people from Canada who were sent to assess what Canada could do. Some of you will know that Canada has had a very important role in the tribunals. But nothing prepared me for what I saw in Sierra Leone.

We went into camps...and one of the sights that I will never forget was to see a year-old child with all of his limbs cut off. That was the tragedy of Sierra Leone. That’s where Justice Doherty worked.

I am very embarrassed of myself to tell you that, while I was there, a young child came up to me and I understood he wanted me to give him something. And I handed it to him – very inconsiderate. He had no hands. His hands – he was four years old—his limbs had been cut off. That has always been with me. Sometimes, people can’t even take what you give them, because everything has been snatched away from them.

Today we have sisters here from Sierra Leone. On their behalf, I urge you not to forget Sierra Leone, and move on to other conflicts. Sierra Leone continues to need our

support. We must remember the struggles that Sierra Leone and its peoples are going through.

Today I want to speak to you about three issues. I have learned from you how special you are. I want to share with you how I feel about who you are. I want to discuss some of the diverse issues, and the diverse ways in which you work on them, and about what a diverse group you are, and how you come together for equality of women.

I was asked to speak on facing the future together, keeping in mind: educate, enable, empower.

You know, I've been giving a lot of thought to that. Education? I get that. I had to think about enable, and empower. And as I thought about it, and I am sure that you have already processed this many times, I see this as a continuous circle. We educate ourselves, we educate ourselves on an issue, we enable people who work on this issue, and people who suffer from the issue, and then we empower them. It's a continuous process; not a one-time process.

I want to tell you why I see you as pearls in society. You are all very accomplished women. You are professionals and businesswomen, who have done a lot of work in your own fields. These days, people make choices, people prioritize. Mostly, they work on their professional goals, and they work with their families. But they haven't set the priority to take the extra step; that's what you do. And that's why I see you as very special.

You realize aspirations of people. You help people get educated. The Oxford Dictionary definition of education is, "to inform or instruct on a particular matter; especially to dispel public ignorance; to eradicate, remove a trait, habit, belief, etc., by means of education; to raise public awareness of a particular issue." That's the Oxford Dictionary's definition.

And you know, you do a lot of work on education. I'm very much aware of the work you've done on demining. Anne Garvey has told me how much work you have done, as she has spearheaded, with the Red Cross and with all of you, the work on demining. I'm in awe of the work that you do on maternal health, and I'll speak about that later on. You educate and you enable.

To enable, the Oxford Dictionary says, is "to strengthen...or to supply with the requisite means or opportunities," to make possible. Give many opportunities, as we saw yesterday, to the widows in Kenya, to the women in the South Pacific, to women all

over the world...as your mission and vision statement says, to realize their aspirations and dreams. You educate, you enable, and then you empower.

The definition of empower is “to bestow power, make powerful.” To give equal voice. And that is why I say that you are truly pearls. As you all know, all of us who love pearls, for a pearl to be formed, there has to be irritation with the sand...you sure cause a lot of irritation.

You have worked so hard to raise issues. If you will allow me, I will call you my sisters today. My sisters, I've given a lot of thought to this...I'm going to take a risk today. I'm going to talk to you about empowering women, about enabling women. One of the things that I face all the time is the issue of culture. Many times when we want to talk about equality of women, we are faced with a wall that comes down and says, “my culture will not allow me to do this.” Or, “this is part of my culture.” And people accept that; that it's part of their culture. So we build a wall and we're respectful of that person's point of view. We move back, and we leave that group out when we talk about equality of women.

I stand in front of you today and I want you to challenge what culture means. Let me give you an example – my example. My grandparents went to Uganda 110 years ago. When they went from India to Uganda, they took a bag full of culture. They took the culture that they knew at that time that it existed in India. They took it to Uganda. In Uganda, they continued with that culture. For example, the place of a woman: in the house. For example, when your daughter gets married, you would give a dowry. I never questioned it, because that was my culture. And then, I had a daughter. And if you are a mother of an Indian daughter, on the day the daughter is born, you have a suitcase, and you start collecting her dowry. We must remember that this was in 1980 in Canada, and I continued that culture, of having a bag with the idea that I would give my daughter the dowry. Later on I went to India and met with people who I had come to know, and I started talking very nostalgically about how I was collecting a dowry for my daughter. And my friends looked at me and said, “What are you talking about? Why are you collecting a dowry for your daughter?” And it dawned on me that cultures that people take with them in a suitcase when they leave a country don't sometimes exist in the home country. And so my sisters, I say to you that when people say, “I do this because it's my culture,” ask them these questions. Obviously, there must be a level of trust between you and the person whom you ask these questions:

1. What defines the cultural practice?
2. Who defined it for you?

3. Who interpreted it for you?
4. Where is this practiced now?
5. Is it still practiced in your country of birth?

And, you know, I draw a line in the sand. I was the President of the Liberal Women's Commission when I urged the Prime Minister of Canada to make female genital mutilation illegal in Canada. I don't care which countries practice that culture, it is basically harmful to little girls. And that's the end of it.

My sisters, we will never be equal to each other if we do not give each other permission to question what is culture. If it is a harmful practice; end of the matter. It is not acceptable. I accept that some women wear a hijab. It is not my way of dressing – I am a Muslim woman – and, you know, I'm quite cheeky about it. When people ask me why I don't wear a hijab, I say, "God made me so beautiful. I have to show off." I am cheeky; I have a bigger sense of who I am. But what I am saying to you is, that I can accept. It's not a harmful practice. And, my sisters, it's very important, if we are going to move further in this world as a sisterhood, we have to challenge the issues of culture. And for me that's an empowerment issue. And you are Soroptimists because you shake up, you irritate, you irritate people to change the status quo. And I say to you that you are pearls. Not the perfect round pearls. Because perfect is only the creator. We are not perfect. But we are trying to change the status quo.

So I looked hard for these pearls. They are not the same shapes, because we aren't. They are not the same size, because we aren't. They are not the perfectly round pearls that we sometimes see, because we aren't perfect. They are all shapes, all sizes. And that's why I call you pearls – because you are all shapes, sizes, and you are changing the status quo even though you have enough in your lifetime. And today I want to anchor this in your thoughts, that you are special. Because it comes from the bottom of my heart: you have to continue the great work that you are doing. And I would ask President Wells to come up here today and accept these pearls your behalf. She has such beautiful jewellery so I'm embarrassed. But I ask you to humour me and wear them today. And when you see her wearing them, see yourself in these pearls. You are all very special people.

You know yesterday somebody was saying to me, you know, there is so much that we hear, and we forget when we go away. So don't listen to everything I'm saying, just listen to my two messages: on culture, and that you are special pearls. When I was thinking of the many issues that you work on and how I can handle it. I was thinking, "how do I express to you how I see your work and how I see you making a difference."

At first I thought of you as a knitting needle. Very strong, like steel. I saw you as knitting society together. And yes, you are both. Of course you are. But you know you're not inflexible. Even in cold weather you will go out and rally for a cause. So I see you as this chain: it's flexible, but still tough. You can't break this chain.

What does that mean? There are so many issues that you work on that I could talk about, but I'm going to talk for a few minutes about the issue of trafficking, that you handle so well. I remember something that Naomi Long said to us yesterday: nobody told her that it was a man's job, so she became an engineer and she became a politician. I was thinking last night; nobody told you that you could never get rid of trafficking. You just keep fighting.

I came through your airport in Belfast. I'm always looking in airports at what they have. The first thing I saw was a pamphlet, "Visitor or Victim: Are You Being Treated as a Slave?" I found that in the Belfast Airport.

And I thought, "The women of Belfast must have had something to do with this pamphlet." I know you go door-to-door. I had never heard of a campaign on trafficking that goes door-to-door; you do creative work. I didn't even know this until President Maureen told me, but half a million dollars a week passes through the avails of trafficking in Northern Ireland. Can you imagine? That's how much is earned by people.

Yesterday's rally is something that we will always remember. Over the last couple of days, I've had the pleasure of being around Janice Harris, and I've seen how hard she's worked with all of you to bring about this rally. It's not just hard work; she's obsessive about it. She's done a great job, and she made us look good yesterday. If you've read the papers, we – I keep saying we, please include me – we actually really looked good.

You all have stories about what trafficking is. You've all dealt with it. You deal with it every day. But when I was asked our Prime Minister in Canada to sponsor a bill on trafficking, I didn't have much experience with the issue. This was in 2003. I went to Abuja, where I was doing some other work. Then I went Kaduna, with the police. What I saw there will always live with me.

In Kaduna, I saw girls, young girls, age 9, being given to people who their parents thought would take them and give them an opportunity to learn. On their way to Abuja, these girls were stopped with the madams who were transporting them. I spoke to those girls. By this time, the girls were very confused. Imagine an eight-year-old leaving her parents and not knowing where she was going. They were so confused, and

so scared. I don't know what happened to those girls afterwards. But I can tell you, as a grandmother of a six-year-old, if my little baby was being sent away like that...what would that mean for my little child?

That's who we are talking about. It's our girls. It doesn't matter what part of the world they are in. They are our girls. And you know you've done an amazing job on education. But what about the enabling of the women and the children who are trafficked?

Some of you will not like what I have to say, but I have come to the conclusion that we have to stop talking about trafficking. We are not doing them any favours. I'll give you an example.

In Canada, I was very gung-ho about fighting against trafficking. I even worked with the police in trying to break up some gangs on trafficking. Along with NGOs and other groups, I worked with the police to try to break a very big trafficking ring. The police had assured us; they said, "We will look after the girls." And we said, "You cannot handcuff the girls, you cannot mistreat them, you cannot put them in prison." The response: "yes, yes, yes."

You know, we worked with the police. We enabled the police to go arrest these girls. When we got to the house, they did not arrest the traffickers. They arrested the seventeen girls. They handcuffed the seventeen girls. And then they drove them to the airport, and they deported them. That's the law in Canada.

So if anybody thinks that I am now going to "work on trafficking"; I am not. I think each one of us has to go and change our laws, so that we enable those girls to stay in our country, so that we enable those children to stay in our country, and so that we empower them to integrate in our society. Because our society damaged them; the least we can do is empower them.

You know, there is someone in the audience, who has been a member of Soroptimist for many years: Pat Dale. Go speak to her; she has all kinds of stories to tell you. Go speak to her about how you have to take the next step and change our laws.

We will not stop trafficking until the girls come to us. The children need to come to us for help, but they won't, because we can't help them. So it's not good enough to do half the job. I'm challenging you, my sisters: let's really enable and empower the girls that we are fighting for.

One of the things that I take from this conference is this pamphlet. If you have any extras, I want them. I will have them with me wherever I go. Throughout my lifetime, I've been struggling. You know, we always talk about the "educate" part. But I've never thought about the enable and empower. I've realized, though, that these three elements—educate, enable, and empower—go hand in hand. These three things go hand in hand.

Let me very quickly give you my struggle with that. As some of you know, I am a refugee from Uganda. I went to boarding school in the Isle of Wight. I went to university at London University. And I thought I was pretty smart. At the age of twenty-one, you think you've got the world on a string. Unfortunately I became a refugee. But I ended up in Canada. I had the education.

When I did get a job, I very quickly realized that I hadn't received the other opportunities to learn. Education alone is not enough. You have to have other opportunities to learn your job. Somebody has to enable you. I saw that the men who worked with me, they got the big files, the big trips. I could see the partners in the firm tell them, "You should join Rotary. You should join this. You should join that."

They never said that to me. They just gave me piddly little files.

So, one day, well...let's just say that I don't take these things well. Even though my husband didn't yet have a job, for many reasons, and I had a little baby and could not do without a job, I went to the senior partners. I said, "I don't accept this. Everybody gets to travel. Everybody gets to do the big files. I stay here, and look after the piddly files."

And I said, "You know, I'm the first South Asian woman to practice law in British Columbia. Judges will think South Asian women are stupid because I always take these silly files to court."

One of the law partners replied, "Well, wait your turn. Be patient. Anyway, I can't travel with you, because what will my wife say?"

You've all experienced that. But I have more guts than sense. I said to him, "Well, I don't know what your wife will say. But my husband will trust me, so maybe you should start there."

So, my sisters, I say to you, when people say, "Oh, we must wait until women earn their place by merit." And here I will use a bad word—perhaps I shouldn't, because this is being taped—that is...nonsense. You will not develop merit if you don't get

opportunities. So do not buy into this nonsense, “he earned it by merit.” Nobody is there purely on their own merit. You don’t develop merit until you have opportunities and you are empowered.

So if you think that we don’t need quotas to elect women to parliament, think again. If you think that we do not need to be enabled and empowered by a system that has been engineered against us, you are wrong.

I fought very hard in Canada with my Prime Minister. At that time, only 12% of Canadian senators were women. Today, it’s 30%. And that was because we made it a rule. The Liberal Party Women’s Commission made it a rule that, if the Prime Minister appointed a man, he had to also appoint a women. That’s the way we did it.

So, on any given issue, we work to educate, enable, and empower. And you add beads to your chain – we link issues together. These issues are like the beads that we see on these new bracelets. There are all kinds of beads that exist, and all kinds of issues on our chain. They increase, and prompt us to reflect on things.

You know, the issues that you work on – for example, how you will change laws on trafficking so that women are not stopped and sent back to the areas that they came from – that is your challenge.

But the beauty of these bracelets, and the beauty of our situation, is that we can always add more. Today, President Maureen, I would like you to come up and wear this bracelet.

When you see her wear this bracelet, know that we are the strong chain, we change the issues that we work on, and we work on diverse issues. But we all come together, to build on this continuous circle: educate, enable, empower. We are a chain that comes together to look at diverse issues.

I said to you that I was going to speak on three points. One was who you are, the second the diversity of issues that you work on, and the third was the diverse groups that you represent.

Conflict: the topic that I was really supposed to talk about. I talked to you about a chain, a chain that is flexible. I’m not going to tell you which conflict you should work on. That is something that President Wells and President-elect Pat Black will decide on. But let me share with you what a conflict looks like. You need to analyze a conflict.

I'm feeling very humble here. There's a woman, she belongs to Soroptimist, and she was a Federation President: Hilary Page. She's done amazing work on this issue.

Hilary and I have known each other for a very long time. We've laughed together and we've cried together. We haven't fought though.

You know, Canada has lost its way, sadly. But in the United Kingdom, they're doing tremendous work through people like Hilary on issues of conflict.

When you look at a conflict tree, you see the roots, the causes of conflict. Then you see the trunk, the core problems. Then you see the branches, which depict a multitude of dimensions emerging from the trunk. You have to analyze conflict.

Something happened at the United Nations. I tell my male colleagues, "You all must have been sleeping! Because you have given us the biggest tool to work with: Resolution 1325."

Resolution 1325 gives us all we need. Every single country in the world signed up. Nobody can say to you, "No, we didn't sign up for that." Not only that, but after Resolution 1325, there came Resolution 1820, then Resolution 1880, then Resolution 1889, then Resolution 1960. All resolutions, you will see, that give us so many tools to fight conflict. They give us the tools to challenge our governments to do more.

The first question we have to ask our government: what is your plan to implement Resolution 1325? We don't need to ask the UK government because they already have an amazing plan. There are thirty-eight countries that have national plans on Resolution 1325. My country has a plan, but I wouldn't ever bring it here, because I would be embarrassed.

I would love to speak to you about Resolution 1325 – I have a write up that I can circulate to you later – but I'm almost out of time, so I want to suggest that you Google, "Resolution 1325," and learn about this powerful tool.

I want to share with you how I've used it. Resolution 1325 recognizes that battles are no longer fought on the battlefield. They're fought in the community. And as a result, women and children suffer more. They're more affected by conflict than men. So we need to make sure that, when we consider peace solutions, we look at how they will affect women.

I've used Resolution 1325 in Palestine and Israel, to bring Palestinian and Israeli women together. I had been able to do it a few years ago, though I do not believe it would be

possible now. But we held thirty roundtables, because both groups had signed Resolution 1325.

In Sri Lanka, when the peace processes were being discussed and implemented, we used Resolution 1325. And it was amazing. That's a process to die for. The LTTE, the so-called rebel fighters, had very strong women soldiers. We had women soldiers at the peace table with women representatives of government organizations. The women from the Sri Lankan government would share knowledge with the women soldiers, the women who had the power. Unfortunately the peace process broke down, but we were able to use Resolution 1325 to constructively influence the peace process.

In Pakistan, around the Peshawar and Islamabad area, we brought many women together to work on the deradicalization process of terrorists. I know that you have Pakistani sisters here, and I will be saying something that's not very respectful. So I say to you, Malala's issue is an important issue. It's important that we focus on it. But there are more Malalas there. There are more Malalas in Pakistan.

Every time I go to Pakistan, it makes me very humble. The war is in Afghanistan, but the people of Pakistan are suffering. The Government of Pakistan would not let us use Resolution 1325 because they said that, if you say there's conflict, we will have the West come in and try to solve things. "We don't have conflicts here!" So in Pakistan, we don't use the words "Resolution 1325." Instead we focus on our peace committee. But we use the resolution to bring women together, and to get the Government of Pakistan to understand that they need to look at gender issues. And we've done the same in Kenya.

The one process that I want to talk to you about is in Sudan. I was the envoy from Canada. When we went to Darfur for the peace process..., well, all of you know about the horrible conflict in Darfur. Earlier on I had been involved in the South Sudanese peace process. Everyone used to pat me on the head and say, "No, no. We can't involve women. It'll just mess the process up." But for the Darfur peace process, I had become smarter. I went to the mediator and said, "Where are the women?"

And the mediator, Salim Salim of Tanzania, was amazing. He said, "Yeah, where are the women?" And the UN representatives said to me, "No, we can't bring the women! It'll mess up the process." And I replied, "Well, then let's tell the UN Security Council that you're not following their resolutions."

The representative looked at me and said, "Yes, you are right." Then he asked, "how will we get them here?" And I said to him, "Just as you've sent a plane all over Europe to pick up the exiled leaders of Darfur, send the plane to the refugee camps and pick up

the women from the refugee camps.” And they did! They picked up seventeen women and they brought them to the peace process. It absolutely changed the peace process.

The men, for example, would talk about water rights at the peace table. And the women would say, “What are you talking about? That water dried up ten years ago.” Because they live there! They’re the ones who go to collect the water.

The men would talk about food security and the women would say, “We could never take that route! It’s full of landmines, and our children will be blown up. Why would you fight about that route?”

When the women are at the peace table, the dynamics change. And so I say to you all, when your governments are involved in a peace process, your mantra has to be: Where Are the Women? We have the tools. Resolution 1325 says that women must be at the peace table; they must represent a minimum of 25% of the participants.

Where are the women?

And don’t accept this “it’ll mess with the process,” and so on. I’ll tell you why it’s so important. It’s not just important to ensure that the women are *at* the peace table. When people are selected to participate in peace talks, they’re sent to training for a month, and then they’re given continuous training. And at the end of the peace process, guess what? The leaders of that country emerge. So if women are not at the peace table they will never be in leadership roles. That is why it is very important to be at the peace table.

I have to admit to you that whenever I speak anywhere else, I talk about the Belfast peace process, and the women’s coalition. To me they are absolutely my heroes, the two women who were selected. I talk a lot about them.

How can I talk about that process to women who know it so well? I won’t speak about the great work that those women have done. But they are absolutely our model of what needs to happen with peace processes. They really changed the world’s peace processes. It was sustainable peace because the women’s coalition was involved.

We have to have women at the peace table. First, we need to ask our countries to show us their national plans to implement Resolution 1325. Then we have to ask them, which women are they sending? I was the only women envoy from all of Europe and North America. It was very funny. Can you imagine? I’d arrive there, and the Sudanese government would look at me and ask, “You are a Canadian?” The President of Uganda would say, “We threw you out. Canadians are funny. They sent you back as an

envoy. What's wrong with the Canadians?" I had one gentleman said to me, "The last time I looked, Canada was in North America, not India." I said to him, "You obviously haven't been to Canada for a long time."

Where are the women? Ask how many women are sitting around the peace table. And most important, ask that there be women police officers.

In Darfur, before the peace process, I was the first person that went to see the conflict. I can't tell you how horrible it was. I don't have the time to describe it properly. But I will give you one example.

I kept telling President al-Bashir and the governors that the young girls were being raped. And they would say to me, "Muslim men don't rape. Don't tell me that." I won't tell you what I said to them.

I was at the camp. The saddest part was that the mothers would send the girls to collect firewood. I would look at them and say, "Why would you send your girls to collect firewood? The chances of them being raped are too great. Why don't you send your sons?" They would at me and say, "At least our daughters will return. Our sons would be killed." What a choice for a mother. They had to have that firewood, for many reasons.

One day I was sitting at the camp. A young girl had been raped by the militia. The other girls brought her back to the camp in a wheelbarrow. She was in a horrible state. I ran, practically, to the Governor's office and I just dragged him. As a Muslim women, it is especially impolite for me to drag a Muslim man, but I didn't care. I brought him to the camp and showed him what had happened to the girl. To his credit, with the help of a policewoman from Canada, he set up a rape investigation team, that exists still in Darfur. When I was in Khartoum they said that they wished they had that kind of team.

We need women in the army, and we need women in the police force. Women bring new skills. Ask your governments, where are the women in the military? Where are the women in the police force?

I want to leave you with this last thought on the Arab Spring. Many people speak about the Arab Spring but, for me, it's the saddest time in my life. My Muslim sisters are regressing. They have lost whatever small powers they had over the course of the Arab Spring. You know, yesterday, President Wells said to us, "If your dreams do not scare you, they are not big enough." I can tell you, I am scared. I truly am scared.

I was in Istanbul three weeks ago and we met with Syrian women who were in refugee camps in Turkey, we met with Libyan women who came to the conference, we met with Egyptian women. What they had to say was really, really sad. But what I found really difficult to accept was that after the Arab Spring, the people who took over are asking the women who worked side-by-side with them to take virginity tests. In Yemen, the women's situation has really worsened. In Tunisia, which before the Arab Spring had a fairly liberal women's rights regime, it's completely changed. And it goes on, and on. The women are losing their rights. That's why it's really important that we remember them. The Arab Spring has taken away their rights.

You will decide which conflicts you will deal with. You will decide which beads, or conflicts, you will work on. The reason I evoke the beads and the pearls is not to be gimmicky. I find that if I have a symbol that anchors an idea for me, it's a reminder. Most of us wear bangles or necklaces or bracelets. So I'm hoping that you will remember the different things that I've spoken about today.

So I'd like to ask President-elect Pat Black to come up. Pat, your bracelet doesn't have many beads, because you are going to decide what will happen. I've done enough presumptuous things today; I do not want to tell you which conflicts you should work on. Together with Pat, you will decide over the next year; you will add the beads yourselves.

In conclusion, I want to say to you that I've truly seen a difference on the ground because of your work. Last November, I had another honour. I spoke at your international conference, where I met President Wells. She, as you know, is very interested in maternal issues. When we were finishing, she gave me a kit. Later I went to Uganda, and visited a very poor community. I gave that kit to a birth attendant, who didn't recognize many of the tools in the kit. I took her to a midwife, and the midwife taught her how to use the watch, how to use the stethoscope. The birth attendant proudly wore that watch—I wish you could have seen it. She learned how to keep the needles clean, and how to use the scissors. Every time the midwife showed her something, the birth attendant's smile widened just a little bit more. I wish you could have seen the difference that you all made.

I thought about that so much. I attended a delivery with that woman, and the smile of the mother, when the birth attendant was able to use the equipment properly, was also something to behold. I say to all of you: the work you do brings smiles to women. It brings comfort to women. It empowers women. So I ask you to continue working.

When I was in Istanbul, I met with many Syrian refugee women. But one woman has really stayed in my heart. She was a humanitarian worker. She wasn't a political activist. She wasn't involved in the dispute. She was just delivering food from elsewhere to the families that needed it. She was threatened, and she had to flee.

As she fled – she hadn't even made it to Turkey – she found out that her son had been killed. They don't know whether it was the Syrian government or the rebels. No one knows who was responsible. But they killed her son. They assaulted her husband. They hurt her parents. She was just a humanitarian worker.

I truly wanted to close my ears when she continued to say what had happened to her in prison. They removed her toenails. They cut her hair. They beat her. And, something I have never heard before: they ironed her genitals. That's what the Arab Spring is doing to women.

As Justice Doherty told us yesterday, women can no longer be spoils of war. We will only achieve what we achieve, together. So I ask you to think of your roles as you work on diverse issues with diverse groups. Because I know why, even though you have very little time, you work on these issues.

It's because you believe in harmony. You believe that every woman should be equal. I keep your vision statement with me. You believe that you are a vibrant, dynamic organization of business and professional women who are committed to a world where women and girls together achieve their individual and collective potential. You believe that women have to realize their aspirations and have an equal voice in creating a strong and peaceful community worldwide.

This week we've enjoyed so much music. We have had so much fun. It'll stay with us; music always stays with you. We had a piano player here. When I was little, my mother wanted me to be a pianist. My father wanted me to be a politician. You can see who succeeded.

My mother would say to me, "Practice!" I would always say, "Yeah, yeah." But I wouldn't. And when she, as mothers tend to, had the upper hand, I would practice, and to make her angry, I would play only the black keys. Try it; it doesn't make for good harmony. Sometimes I would just play on the white keys, and that wasn't good harmony either. My sisters, to have peace in the world, to have harmony in the world, we have to play on both the white and black keys.

Thank you very much.