



Capitalizing on women's potential in times of crisis

**High-profile panel hosted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
on the occasion of International Women's Day
8 March 2012, 6-8pm**

Room XX, Palais des Nations, Geneva

CONCEPT NOTE

Background and objective

As all regions of the world are hit by deep financial, economic and social crises, which are affecting women and marginalized populations with even more acuity than the rest of society, growing demands for respect of fundamental rights are emanating from the streets. Women and men everywhere – in Tunis, New York, Madrid and elsewhere – are claiming their rights at all time and at all costs.

In echoing the power of people to realize change, this high-profile panel at the occasion of International Women's Day (8 March 2012) aims to bring some of the world's leading figures together to reflect on the impact of the global financial, food and climate crisis on women and the role women play in promoting peace and human rights. While women are the first to suffer when basic human rights are threatened, they have also proven that, given the chance, they can be powerful agents for change for a better world.

Confirmed speakers

Moderation: Ms Navi Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

- Ms Maryam Al-khawaja (Bahrain), Human rights defender and head of foreign relations office for the Bahrain Center for Human Rights
- Ms Kim Phúc Phan Thị (Vietnam), Peace activist, UNESCO Goodwill ambassador and founder of Kim Foundation International
- Mr Stephen Lewis (Canada), Co-Director of AIDS-Free World, diplomat and professor
- Mr Kumi Naidoo (South Africa), Human rights activist and international executive director of Greenpeace

Programme

The panel will take place on 8 March from 6 to 8 pm, right after the Human Rights Council regular session, in room XX, in Palais des Nations (Geneva). Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in English, French, Spanish and Arabic.

- Welcome statement: HE Laura Dupuy Lasserre, President of the Human Rights Council (3-4mn)
- Reading of poem *Remember* by Alice Walker (video transmission) (5mn)
- The High Commissioner (moderator) lays the ground for the discussion and introduces the panellists (7-8mn)
- First set of questions by the moderator related to the global financial crisis and answers from the panellists (30mn)
- Second set of questions by the moderator related to the role of women in promoting peace and human rights and answers from the panellists (30mn)
- Questions from the audience and answer by the panellists (30mn)
- Concluding remarks by the moderator (5mn)

Focus and format of the discussions

World renowned activists, politicians and scholars will address delegates of the Human Rights Council in an interactive panel, to celebrate women's contribution to challenging injustices throughout the world and renewed hope in the winds of change. The High Commissioner will moderate the discussions following a "talk show" format, asking questions tailored to each panelist, based on their background.

The moderator will take up to five questions from the audience after the two series of questions to the panelists. Member states are therefore encouraged to prepare a concise question (no statement) related to the interventions of the panelists, who will be given 1-2mn to reply.

Audience and outreach

Some 350 participants are expected to attend the event. The audience will be a mixture of States representatives, UN Organizations, civil society, media and academics.

The two-hour event will be entirely recorded and transmitted live via webcast on the Human Rights Council website (<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/19session/>). All journalists accredited to the United Nations will also be invited to cover the event.

More information on www.ohchr.org/IWD2012