

# Under the High Patronage of His Majesty the King Mohammed VI



3 May 2018

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## ***Make Mothers Matter for Peace***

**International Conference #Mothers4Peace, 3-4 May, Casablanca, Morocco**

**Mothers at the heart of change for a culture of peace -  
At family, community, national and international level**

Organized by Make Mothers Matters in collaboration with CARE International Morocco, the #Mothers4Peace conference highlights the role of mothers in conflict prevention and the promotion of a culture of peace. Though the rise in violence, conflict and forced displacement mostly affects mothers and children, mothers must not be considered only as victims, but also as key actors in the transformation of society at all levels.

The conference was opened by HRH Princess Esmeralda of Belgium, author of a book on Women Nobel Peace Prize winners: "A mother is a school in the family, a driver for peace; she conveys patience and tolerance; fathers also have a very important supporting role. It takes a lot of courage for women to find a solution. Everywhere women are busy working in the shadows, too often without resources and without support.

Today, Neurosciences show the connection that exists between nurturing care and a secure and loving environment during early childhood, and long-term wellbeing as well as more peaceful behaviours within families and communities. Dr Rima Salah, a professor at the Yale Child Study Centre (USA), advocates for greater investments to support early childhood development, both as a path to peace in the home, in the community and in society, and as a path to social transformation and the prevention of violence.

For Gary Barker of the Promundo Institute (Brazil/US), the starting point is to promote men's equal involvement in caregiving and active fatherhood, which leads to extremely beneficial outcomes for children, mothers and fathers themselves. For example, training 1,700 fathers and their partners in Rwanda in positive parenting resulted in a 50% reduction in violence against women and a 30% reduction in violence against children. The involvement of fathers at home – beginning during or even before pregnancy - is also essential to redistribute unpaid family care work and thus allow mothers to fully assume their role as citizens and economic actors in society, which also contributes to peace.

Betty Batoul, a former victim of violence, a *Woman of Peace Belgium 2012* and president of the Association *Succès* in Belgium, reaffirmed that "women give life and are prepared to do anything to preserve it. Giving them their rightful place in peace processes will bring a change in attitudes. Love brings peace and it's free!

At community level, coaching mothers on their transformational power and capacity building is what *Women Without Borders* (Austria) do in many countries around the world with its *Mothers' Schools*, a prevention program against radicalization and violent extremism. Mothers must develop their self-confidence and learn to trust their own skills and power to initiate change.

Nevertheless, Yasmina Sarhrouny of Creative Associates who works on the project "Fostering peace in communities in Morocco" in collaboration with *Women without borders* reiterated the importance of not putting all the responsibility of prevention on their shoulders since they already have so much to cope with, especially when they live in a context of poverty or vulnerability.

CARE International Morocco also presented its work with women and mothers through various initiatives. These include projects for the economic inclusion and empowerment of vulnerable women, support of positive parenting, and awareness raising about gender-based and domestic violence. These actions were illustrated by powerful testimonials from women in the field, and mothers emphasizing their transformation after being equipped and trained.

At national level, gender equality, peace, security and development are interconnected, interdependent and inseparable from each other. Benoît Bichon, Project Manager for Asodamas, a member of MMM in Colombia, presented the work of the Observatory for Peace and the creation of "Casas de la Mujer". Their goal is to promote women's economic empowerment as a means of promoting peace in a post-conflict environment by rebuilding social capital.

According to Khadija Moufid, President of the *Centre of family studies and research on values and legislation* in Morocco, an international march of mothers for peace should be organized to raise awareness on their transformational skills and potential power for change, and to urge decision-makers to act and promote social justice.

At international level, #Mothers4Peace is a continuation of the conference organized by the Moroccan government in Rabat in September 2016 on the importance of integrating a gender perspective into all peace promotion activities, including prevention, conflict resolution and peace building. This is what Resolution 1325 adopted in 2000 by UN Member States is about. However, many States still have to adopt a National Action Plan to implement this resolution.

"Mothers are part of the solution to build peace. We must work not only for them but also WITH them. We call on all decision-makers to recognize that mothers are a resource that is too often untapped, and that it is necessary to empower mothers for a better world", concludes Anne-Claire de Liedekerke, President of Make Mothers Matter.

#### **Make Mothers Matter**



*Make Mothers Matter (MMM) is an international apolitical and non-denominational NGO founded in 1947 at UNESCO with UN General Consultative Status. Its mission is to promote and support the essential role of mothers for peace and for the social, economic and cultural development of societies.*

*MMM promotes the universality and importance of the economic, social and cultural role of mothers, based on their skills and responsibility as the primary educators of their children. MMM articulates its action around two areas: field work via its network and advocacy. In collaboration with its member associations working in the field, MMM advocates at international level to influence policy and public opinion in order to bring about positive changes in the lives of mothers. Working for and with mothers by involving them in development projects, has beneficial effects on their children, their families and more broadly on society.*

## CARE International Maroc



CARE International Morocco is an association whose mission is to support individuals and families in the poorest communities by promoting equal opportunities. Based on its diversity, resources and experience, it promotes innovative solutions for sustainable change, and is currently active in the following areas: education, economic empowerment and governance.

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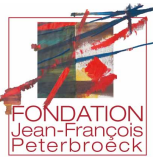
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