

# GLOBAL NETWORK FOR JUSTICE

A Project of New Orleans Bread for the World at the Twomey Center for Peace Through Justice  
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## THE GLOBAL PEACE INITIATIVE OF WOMEN RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL LEADERS

The Global Peace Initiative of women is a direct outcome of the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders that brought over 2,000 pre-eminent religious leaders and their delegations to the United Nations in New York in August 2000. Less than 15% were women. This led to a commitment to build a network of accomplished women religious and spiritual leaders along with their counterparts from business and government who can support United Nations activities aimed at eliminating the causes that led to conflict.

For the first time in history, women leaders from religion, business and government representing every region and faith tradition gathered at the Plais des Nations (United Nations) in Geneva, Switzerland, October 6 to 9, 2002. More than 500 women religious and spiritual leaders from 75 nations participated in the launching of this Initiative.

The Initiative is being organized in close cooperation with the United Nations, in particular the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). For more info go to.....

[www.amritapuri.org/amma/in/un2002/why](http://www.amritapuri.org/amma/in/un2002/why).

**Highlights of the Gathering:** The US delegates of the Global Peace Initiative called "upon women from the international community to join an interfaith delegation in Washington D.C. to meet with political leadership to discuss the importance of...pursuing all viable alternatives to war...In the event of war we will send delegation to meet with Iraqi women to address their immediate needs and provide sustainable ways to heal the com-

munity through education, financial and spiritual means." The Jewish and Palestinian women talked about creating common contacts and joint meetings for peace. Both representatives agreed to the formation of a new group, El Kafi/Day, Hebrew and Arabic for "enough." Afghan women and American women talked about the devastating destruction of Afghanistan - done in the name of saving it - and the need to resist such moves in the future. The Global Initiative announced the formation of a Women's Negotiation Corps, an international group of women who will visit zones of conflict to initiate woman-to-woman diplomacy. Women's fact-finding groups will be used to determine immediate needs and open up new channels to support official diplomats. Nearly 100 businesswomen who attended the conference launched a Business Council for Peace to provide programs, finances and markets for women's businesses in conflict regions including the West Bank, Gaza, Israel, Rwanda and Afghanistan. The meeting represented different culture and faith traditions; Hindu, Jewish, Buddhist, Christians and Muslims. Daily prayers were ecumenical, the meals were vegetarian, cultural events were multinational. Spiritual leaders talked about stopping the wars within the self if we want to end war with the other. They talked about the contrast between the place of women as leaders and thinkers that lies at the theological heart of each religion and the cultural distortions that have blocked the emergence of women as a world of force regardless of the theology of equality. Women bishops, Christian and Buddhist nuns, Swamimis, Muslim scholars and judges mixed, talked and agreed that the real effects of war are borne by women and children. These voices of the future were calling a halt to the myth that war is a contest between armies. War is about the devastation of the defenseless innocent by the ruthlessly powerful for the sake of the economically secure.

[www.peacesummit.org](http://www.peacesummit.org)