



THE SPIRIT OF WOMEN IN PARLIAMENTS: ADVANCING SOCIETY

**Speech by Mrs Silvana Koch-Mehrin, Founder of WIP, at WIP Global Summit 2016 (4-6 May 2016; Parliament of Jordan, Amman, Jordan)**

Your Excellencies,  
Honorable Members of Parliament,  
Dear Friends of the Women in Parliaments Global Forum,

Nobel Peace Laureate and President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, once said: “If you are not scared of your dreams, they are not big enough.”

The dream of a WIP Global Summit in Jordan, that dream was a big dream. A beautiful dream. It is a dream that today comes true.

Why dreaming of Jordan? Of course - it is a beautiful country, with rich cultural heritage and amazing landscapes. For a politician it is an important destination: The main political issues on the world agenda are all in one way or another connected to Jordan: peace and security, flight and migration, religious tolerance, the importance of societal change towards more gender equality.

During the WIP Global Summit we will address all these issues, and more. We will discuss them with perspectives from different continents, different political ideas, always with the voices of women leaders. We will be a catalyst of political messages, and create impact by exchanging experience and knowledge.

“Women should be active agents of peace, not passive victims of war”, says Zainab Bangura, the UN Special Representative on Violence in Conflict, and former Foreign Minister of Sierra Leone. So: • How do we get women to the table, where peace is negotiated? • How can women be equally involved in maintenance and promotion of peace? • What are best practice examples? We will debate this tomorrow.

What are women leaders policy answers to Flight, Migration and Integration? Challenges faced by women as refugees, as migrants, and as citizens of destination countries are different to those of men. And questions that are more and more imminent. We will debate tomorrow, what are successful answers.

And of course: Women’s equal participation in politics is a Human Right, and a cornerstone of democratic governance.

The Women in Parliaments Global Forum Mission is to increase the numbers of women in Parliaments, and their influence. WIP is the international network of female Parliamentarians. It’s Today, around 80% of Parliamentary Seats are held by men. 95% of Heads of State are men. Dear friends, there is a lot to do!



We will also together celebrate progress and achievements that have been made in the Middle East North Africa Region. The Women in Parliaments Global Forum highlights positive results, even (or especially) when they have been achieved in a difficult environment.

The Women in Parliaments Global Forum highlights positive results, even (or especially) when they have been achieved in a difficult environment. Today in a Ceremony here in the Parliament, the Members of the WIP Executive Board will present WIP Certificates of Recognition to Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and of course Jordan for achievements in each respective country.

It is wonderful to see the participation of so many distinguished female political leaders from all parts of the world come together to this truly historic meeting. It is for the first time, that an international Summit of female Parliamentarians is taking place in a country of the Middle East North Africa Region. Let me congratulate the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and indeed the Parliament of Jordan, for the leadership and graciousness of warmly hosting the WIP Global Summit 2016 here in Amman. Jordanians worldwide are famously known for their hospitality, and we are experiencing this now. Schucran, your Excellency Faisal Al-Fayez, your Excellency Atef Tarawneh, and all Jordanian Representatives present here.

Our highly appreciated cooperation with the OECD further underlines the international importance of this Summit. Picture this: an organization, that focuses on economic issues, makes gender equality in leadership a priority. Women as leaders: it is not only a human right, but also makes economic sense, for the benefit of all of society – that is what the OECD underlines. Mari Kiviniemi, Deputy Secretary General of the OECD and former Prime Minister of Finland, represents this perfectly herself. Kiitos, Mari.

Finally, let me praise the partnership with the Council of World Women Leaders. It is the network of current and former Presidents and Prime Ministers. As much as all of you, dear female Parliamentarians, are role models to girls and women around the world, these powerful women are the ultimate role-models. They are role-models to women Parliamentarians. We are delighted to have you as integral part of the WIP Global Summit, and share with you insights on policy issues, as well as leadership. Aciu, President Grybauskaite,

Closing, I would like to quote His Majesty King Abdullah II: “We need more women in parliaments and as political leaders because no lasting positive change can ever be achieved unless women are an integral part of it.”

So - as we want this positive and lasting change, it means: Women in Politics: fast forward!