



**INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES FEMMES
(Founded 1888)**

**STATEMENT TO MARK THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE
21st September 2017**

"Together for Peace: Respect, Safety and Dignity for All". This theme - declared by the United Nations for 2017 - presents intrinsic values which are amongst those at the forefront of women's organizations all over the world. Day after day indeed, through educational programs and activities, we disseminate this set of norms in the complex society in which each one of us live.

In every small community, one can see how women try to preserve these values; women from diverse population groups try to work together, supporting one another, tackling challenges, and marching forward toward justice and rights for women and girls and for marginalized populations such as migrants and refugees, building bridges, transforming fear and despair into hope.

This year, as the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres emphasized, "The International Day of Peace will highlight solidarity with refugees and migrants, bringing people together and reminding them of their common humanity".

ICW - through its affiliates activism and policy advocacy responds to the challenges that arise in diverse societies: to take on issues, to aid weak communities and to focus on rights of women and children, migrants and refugees in order to secure a better life for all.

However, despite the recognition of the **role of women in educating for respect, safety and dignity for all**, women continue to be under-represented in the processes dealing with peace-building. It is imperative that lessons should be learned from actual experiences to better identify and overcome barriers to women's equal participation. To achieve sustainable and durable peace, it is notably essential to ensure the integration of gender perspectives in all aspects of conflict prevention and in conflict resolution.

There is obviously a need for women's organizations to make their voices heard in their own national spheres, propose solutions to remove obstacles to gender equality, analyse the existing policy for promoting women's and girls' rights, and serve as local "gatekeepers". They clearly need to be provided with an opportunity for a local discourse and for raising awareness of issues related to the connection between gender, security and peace.

On the International Day of Peace, it is accordingly a must to repeat, again and again, that women and girls should be protected from sexual and gender violence. In such context, it is necessary to expand the policy of enforcement and punishment of perpetrators, to broaden the array of services provided to women and girls in all spheres of life, especially to maintain their personal and economic security. Without that daily battle, we cannot ensure a life of respect, safety and dignity.

As has been rightly emphasized by the poet and writer Francisco Gomes de Matos (IFLAC): "Let us help promote peace; a challenge never to cease".