

## MOMENTUM GROWS FOR A UN 21ST CENTURY WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

First since Beijing 1995. Would utilize internet technology. Simultaneous satellite conferences could be held worldwide. Would energize global women's movement.

Growing support for a UN 5th World Conference on Women (5WCW) was evident in the numbers of NGO delegates wearing large blue 5WCW buttons, and in speeches and panels during meetings of the 56th Commission on the Status of Women (February 27-March 9, 2012). This grassroots campaign (for) begun in 2002, led by activist-author Jean Shinoda Bolen, MD, backed by four prominent ECOSOC Consultative Status NGOs, was joined by Ambassador Gertrude I. Mongella, Secretary-General of the Beijing Conference and first president of the Pan-African Parliament who came to New York specifically as a 5WCW advocate, and in the address by Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury, former president of the Security Council, whose efforts led to the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325, the Women, Peace, and Security resolution.

Both respected leaders emphasized that new issues deeply concerning women have arisen since 1995: the rise of terrorism, climate change, food scarcity, lack of safe water, economic recession and its effect on women and girls. And that fears for undoing the Beijing Platform for Action, some of whose goals have been opposed by fundamentalist religious leaders should not stand in the way of all the benefits: inspiring a new generation of women leaders, energize the global women's movement, reach people worldwide through technology to raise awareness of problems to women, new and available solutions.

A large delegation from San Francisco birthplace of the UN where the UN charter was signed, came to lobby for San Francisco as the host-city, which while premature until the UN General Assembly supports a 5th World Conference on Women, added to the momentum. A petition in support of 5WCW now has over 13,000 signatures.

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