



Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Briefing

Ending Violence Against Women in Politics

Panel



Begoña Lasagabaster is Chief of the Leadership and Governance section at UN Women, where she provides strategic leadership, oversight, and coordination on the five interrelated thematic areas of work, including: Leadership and Political Participation; Human Rights; Women's Access to Justice; Governance and National Planning; and Gender Equality and HIV/AIDS. Previously, from 1996-2008, Ms. Lasagabaster was a Member of the Spanish Parliament in Madrid, and served on the Home Affairs, Justice, Foreign Affairs, Constitutional Affairs, Budget, Public Administration, European Union committee and Parliamentary Regulation Committees. She was also member of the Delegation of Congress-Senate at the Conference of the Institutions Specialized in European Community Issues and Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC). Prior to this, she practiced law and served as an expert on regional and justice committees in the European Parliament. Ms. Lasagabaster holds a Law degree from the University of Salamanca and a Diploma in European Studies from the College of Europe in Bruges, Belgium.



Dr. Joyce Banda was the President of Malawi from 7 April 2012 to 31 May 2014. She was Malawi's first female president and Africa's second. Voted as Africa's most powerful woman by Forbes Magazine for two years running and voted as one of the most powerful women in the world, Her Excellency Dr. Joyce Banda is a champion for the rights of women, children, the disabled, and other marginalized populations. An educator and grassroots women's rights activist, she was Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2006 to 2009 and Vice-President of Malawi from May 2009 to April 2012. She was a member of parliament and Minister for Gender, Children's Affairs and Community Services. Before her active career in politics she was the founder of the Joyce Banda Foundation, founder of the National Association of Business Women (NABW), Young Women Leaders Network and the Hunger Project.



Dr. Claudia Paz y Paz Bailey was Guatemala's first female Attorney General and a 2013 Nobel Peace Prize nominee. She currently serves as Secretary for Multidimensional Security for the Organization of American States (OAS). She grew up during the Guatemalan civil war, which inspired her to study law and help bring justice to her war-torn country. She earned a PhD in Human Rights and Criminal Law from the Salamanca University in Spain. She was in office for three years and became globally renowned for standing up against impunity and for achieving significant improvements in the Guatemalan judicial system, which had been notorious for its corruption. Paz y Paz was the first Guatemalan law enforcement official who prosecuted those who committed human rights violations during the military dictatorship of President Efraín Ríos Montt, including those responsible for genocide against the Maya population. She and her team successfully prosecuted the four Guatemalan soldiers who were found responsible for the 1982 Dos Erres massacre in which 200 villagers were killed. She has received many awards, including the Center of Justice and Accountability 2013 Judith Lee Stronach Human Rights Award and the Civil Courage Prize for her pursuit of justice and human rights.



Paddy Torsney has been the Inter-Parliamentary Union's Permanent Observer to the United Nations in New York since 2014. Founded in 1889, and headquartered in Geneva, the IPU has 170 member parliaments, representing most of the world's 46,000 Members of Parliament. A former Canadian MP and Parliamentary Secretary for International Cooperation, and for the Environment, Paddy had a long political career as an advisor, campaigner, lobbyist and as an elected official. She cares passionately about women's issues and helping citizens and elected officials engage in a constructive dialogue.

Moderator



Dr. Kathleen Kuehnast is the director of Gender Policy and Strategy at the U.S. Institute of Peace, where she has worked since 2008. As a socio-cultural anthropologist, Kuehnast has focused on the gendered impacts of violence and conflict on both men and women. She has focused on UN Security Council Resolution 1325, including the critical role women should play in all aspects of peacebuilding. In 2011 Kuehnast co-edited the volume, "Women and War: Power and Protection in the 21st Century." Prior to USIP, Kuehnast worked 15 years in the international development field, primarily with the World Bank, where her role as a senior social scientist included research and project management on the thematic streams of women and poverty, social capital and community driven development in fragile and post-conflict societies. Kuehnast's regional expertise is Central Asia, where she lived for several years in the post-Soviet country of Kyrgyzstan completing her doctoral dissertation research, which resulted in a number of publications on the impact of post-Soviet transition on Muslim women. Kuehnast is the 2015 recipient of the Perdita Huston Human Rights Award of the United Nations Association of the National Capital Area. Kuehnast holds a doctorate in socio-cultural anthropology from the University of Minnesota.