

WOMEN'S TRIALOGUE

Delhi, Sunday March 29 and Wednesday April 1, 2009

Present: *Shinkai Karokhel, MNA Afghanistan, Heela Najibullah Afghanistan, Bushra Gauhar, MNA Pakistan, Jamila Shah Gillani, MNA Pakistan, Zahira Khattak, Awami National Party Pakistan, Zalla Khattak Pakistan, Radha Kumar, Delhi Policy Group, Tasneem Meenai, NMCPCR Jamia Millia, Meenakshi Gopinath, Lady Shriram College & WISCOMP, Jyoti Malhotra, Women's Press Corps India.*

This, to our knowledge, the first “trialogue” between women involved in peacemaking in Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, was initiated on the following understanding:

- The three countries are linked by the threat of militant groups whose immediate aims often appear to be local but whose networks and support systems spread across at least two of the three countries, and whose area of operations is all three.
- There exists an understandable but counterproductive suspicion that militates against full cooperation between the three countries against this threat. Yet each is engaged in peace talks with the other.
- Women have contributed to peacemaking initiatives between their three countries – indeed they have been involved in grassroots initiatives to make peace bilaterally as well as at the regional level – yet when it comes to formal negotiations they tend to become invisible.
- At a time when women are increasingly being targeted by radical religious groups – and in some cases even being sacrificed in the interests of a “peace agreement” – their presence in peacemaking is all the more vital.

In preliminary discussions, the idea of a “Women's Peace Jirga” was mooted by the Pakistani participants, and all agreed this would be a great gathering to organize. Further discussion would be required to flesh out an agenda and participants' lists, but as a starting point, the base principles would be:

- No peace agreement which violates women's rights or human rights.
- No carrying of strategic rivalries to each other's terrain.
- Support for each other's campaigns in peacemaking.