



The Association for Trauma Outreach & Prevention (ATOP)

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Conflict Resolution: A Discussion with Leaders in the Field

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Australian Consulate-General

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On Monday 25 June, the New York Young Leaders' Program (NYYP) held a panel discussion at the Australian Consulate-General. The presentation included discussion from three prominent women in the field, Judge Memooda Ebrahim-Carstens, Dr. Beth Fisher-Yoshida, and Rachel Dore-Weeks, mostly speaking about their experience in the field of conflict resolution. These women were able to provide us with insightful information in and around the field, which finds its way into almost every field of work we encounter.

The meeting was opened up with a message from Australian Consul General Phil Scanlan, delivered through Kate Brennan, director of Global Affairs and Strategic Communications at the Consulate. Mr. Scanlan could not be in attendance because he was participating in another meeting, but sent a warm welcome and gratitude to those present. Hila Elroy, Advisor to the Consul General of Israel, then introduced herself and the NYYP, and began the panel discussion.

Judge Memooda Ebrahim-Carstens was the first to speak; giving us a brief bio of her life and how she got to the position she is in today as the Judge President and Sitting Full-Time Judge of the United Nations Dispute Tribunal. Being from Botswana, The Honorable Judge Ebrahim-Carstens described her experience with discrimination as a quadruple factor, due to her being colored, a woman, Asian, and Muslim. This did not stop her from pursuing a career working with the law, but instead fueled it. After studying law in England, she served as a Judge of the Industrial Court of Botswana, and was later appointed to the High Court of Botswana. Through her distinction and role in making landmark decisions, she has worked her way up to her position at the UN where she deals with workplace related cases concerning UN employees. Judge Ebrahim-Carstens said, "law as an instrument of change is a wonderful tool," and explained how harmony and cooperative consultation are also key to positive conflict resolution.

Next to speak was Dr. Beth Fisher-Yoshida, director of the Negotiation and Conflict Resolution Program at Columbia University. Dr. Fisher Yoshida started off her career as an art and special education instructor and now has her own firm called the Fisher Yoshida International, LLC, which works with its

clients to “develop customized interventions aimed at improving organizational performance.” The UN is one of Dr. Fisher Yoshida’s many clients. Her discussion emphasized the idea that conflict resolution is at the core of any field, and to be successful in conflict resolution, one must be open to learning, be inquisitive, flexible, proactive, and able to blend scholarship and practice.

The last speaker, Rachel Dore-Weeks, spoke from her experience as the UN Women’s Peace and Security cluster in New York as the Program Specialist on Peace building. She has also worked with UNIFEM in Afghanistan. While in Afghanistan, she worked on altering the Shi’a personal status law as to ensure women’s rights. Miss Dore-Weeks was especially helpful in talking about the issues that may arise culturally in dealing with conflict resolution, and to be aware of the sensitivity of culture in conflict resolution.

A short question and answer session followed. In the answers that the speakers provided to the questions being asked, they highlighted the necessity of more women in alternative dispute resolution, and the need for mothers to be involved in their child’s education, especially in the Middle East. Miss Doore-Weeks talked about the link between a stable mother and higher education. Children with a stable mother are more likely to further their education. Thus, it is important to invest into both women and children’s healthcare and education. Dr. Fisher-Yoshida mentioned that it is also important to keep mothers in the loop with what is being taught at school so they could align it (or not) with what they are teaching their children at home. When asked how to overcome the disregard for women in many areas of the world, Miss Doore-Weeks replied that while perceptions on what women’s rights are cultural, there are universal women’s rights. It is important to find areas of common ground within the different cultural perceptions, for example, the idea that when it comes to family, a child should always remain with their mother. This is also an area where it is important for NGOs to intervene and collaborate.

When Judge Ebrahim-Carstens was asked if her Western education influenced her and her credentials, she replied yes but also that globalization and technology have been changing the obstacles one must overcome to compete with Western education.

Thank you to the NYYP and Australian Consulate-General for hosting a wonderful panel discussion on the growing role of women in the field of conflict resolution! The Association for Trauma Outreach and Prevention at Meaningfulworld works with women around the globe in empowerment and training programs to achieve their highest potential through a Seven Step Integrative Healing Model. For those interested in our work and in empowering others kindly contact President Dr. Kalayjian at DrKalayjian@meaningfulworld.com.



Founded in 1990, the Association for Trauma Outreach & Prevention (ATOP) partners of Meaningfulworld.com has achieved international recognition as a leader in training humanitarian outreach professionals as well as responding to two decades of global and local disasters. ATOP is committed to global education promoting state-of-the-art scientific theory, peace and consciousness research, and the development of technical skills to train mental health professionals, teachers, psychologists, art therapists, nutritionists, alternative medicine practitioners, clergy, nurses, mediators, interfaith ministers, and lay persons committed to service. Meaningfulworld Humanitarian Outreach teams make a daily difference in people’s lives helping to transform tragedy and trauma into healing through post trauma growth, guidance and meaning-making through a new world view. We have served in over 40 countries, presented over 200 papers, published over 150 articles, 4 books, and 5 films. Ask yourself ...Ask your friends...What makes your world more meaningful? Be a change agent, come get involved, or send your tax-deductible donation online: www.Meaningfulworld.com