

Ambassador Swanee Hunt on International Women's Day, *March 8*
*Chair, The Initiative for Inclusive Security, Including
the Women Waging Peace Network of Global Leaders*

PARIS, FRANCE – March 6, 2007 – Ambassador Swanee Hunt, chair of [The Initiative for Inclusive Security](#), which includes the 500 member [Women Waging Peace Network](#), released the following statement today in observation of International Women's Day, March 8, 2007. Ambassador Hunt has spent the past 15 years advocating for the inclusion of women in peace processes around the world. On March 8, she will address UNESCO's Women Peacemakers International Conference in Paris.

“On March 8, we call the world's attention to an untapped resource for global stability: women. And we have good reason to celebrate their vital but often unrecognized achievements. The number of women in government reached a record high in 2006, and women are more consistently making their voices heard at all levels of decision-making. Now is the time to build on these encouraging trends by leveraging their growing influence.

“This year's International Women's Day theme, *Ending Impunity for Violence against Women and Girls*, recognizes a devastating reality: violence against women is a pervasive weapon of war. Brutal atrocities are familiar to many of the woman making up our Women Waging Peace Network, from Cambodia to Sudan to Iraq. Still, time and time again, women resolve to stay focused on ending violence and promoting prosperity for all. I've seen firsthand how women prevent the eruption of hostilities, mediate among warring factions, and repair shattered societies. Excluding these women from the peace table is patently unwise.

“At the end of February, I was in Rwanda celebrating with women who have overcome unimaginable challenges and today constitute almost 49 percent of Rwanda's lower chamber of parliament. In 2000, President Kagame remarked to me about the difference between how men and women reacted to the genocide: ‘The men shut down. The women cried then rolled up their sleeves and got to work.’ They buried the dead, adopted 500,000 displaced orphans, and rebuilt – transforming rubble into renewal.

“Rwanda is at the forefront of a worldwide trend to ensure fair representation of women in political decision making. They have demonstrated that when women reach a critical mass in government they accelerate peace by influencing discussions, debates, and decisions relating to security and rebuilding. We need to replicate this success on a global scale.”

The Initiative for Inclusive Security, a program of Hunt Alternatives Fund, advocates for the full participation of all stakeholders, especially women, in peace processes. Creating sustainable peace is achieved best by a diverse, citizen-driven approach. Of the many sectors of society currently excluded from peace processes, none is larger—or more critical to success—than women. Since 1999, Inclusive Security has connected more than 500 women experts with over 5,000 policy shapers to collaborate on fresh, workable solutions to long-standing conflicts across the globe. For more information visit www.InclusiveSecurity.org.