



Round Table

War's Casualties:

Men, Society, Humankind

Peacemakers: People of Peace Against Weapons for War

Turin, 2 February 2006

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Mercedes Bresso, *President of the Piedmont Region*

First of all thank you all for being here in such number. I would also like to thank the World Political Forum for organising this initiative with the Piedmont Region and with the local institutions that have prepared all the Olympic events.

This is in fact the last of the Olympic Truce events, which brings together very interesting personalities – though President Gorbachev was unfortunately unable to be with us. With this meeting we close here the long Olympic Truce that has all about been a very important initiative which had the purpose of linking very closely to the Turin Olympic games. This Olympic Truce has also been linked to a number of very practical enterprises. We wished to emphasize the ideal that the Olympic spirit represents. That is why we not only encouraged this Olympic programme initiative but we also chose this slogan “If we can have peace for 16 days perhaps we might have it forever”.

The path that we have followed over these months within these Olympic Truce events has had this objective of peace in mind. Peace went beyond the period of the Olympic Truce. This preparatory period started actually a number of months ago in Assisi, which is obviously the ideal venue for peace initiatives, a venue for various inter-religious meetings. We took part in the Perugia-Assisi peace march, during which thousands of people signed the call for Olympic Truce. This way, we started with a mass event in which a great number of individuals, together with us, called for an Olympic Truce and undersigned this symbolic message. This was at the eve of the extraordinary meeting of the UN, which was meant to restate the millennium objective and that approved a document in which the Olympic Truce was recalled as a commitment for all member States. We all hope that this commitment will be met, and not only during the Olympic period.

After that, the attention returned to Turin. At the end of September we had, here in Turin, the gathering of representatives of those nations with which the Region of Piedmont and Turin had been cooperating for decades now. They have committed, signing a document which was proof of the strong commitment we have put into this striving for peace over these many years. The appeal for the Olympic Truce was also signed by those representatives.

This Truce is a time of true wealth for us. During the games time there will be the so called “ethical village” near the Mole Antonelliana for anyone visiting the Mole – I am sure there will be many during the coming days and weeks. Through this ethical village we wish to present the work that has been done in terms of ethical values by the Piedmont Region. Mr. Sommaruga will take part tomorrow in the press conference in which the ethical village will be presented, to be then inaugurated on next Sunday. Last year, after discussing the millennium goals, the General Assembly of the UN approved unanimously the resolutions of our Olympic Truce statement. A month later, we travelled to the European Parliament in Brussels, where one of the largest international assemblies directly elected by their citizens read out the declarations for the Olympic Truce. At that time we also were able to collect a number of other signatures and a number of photographs were taken where you see the President of the Parliament signing the Olympic Truce appeal and resolutions. All the countries of the European Union had already voted the resolution within the UN, but we thought it significant to ask for this vote from the European Parliament. This institution is in fact the utmost expression of peace-making, which has been of great importance in our continent over the past centuries and Europe has been something of a model for the rest of the world. However in the Olympic Truce program we also included some practical elements: peace as objective does not merely require statements and

proclamations but needs a lot of practical action. Therefore we have decided to develop a project for clearing mines from a 30000 square metres area on the hillside of Sarajevo, that is a point of linkage between the city and the Olympic area where, back in 1984, the Olympics were held. This is also why this evening we are very proud to have with us representatives of organisations who have worked to ban anti-personnel mines. The area was laid with mines in these past years and still continues to be the stage of dramatic casualties, so as City of Turin and as Piedmont Region, we have committed ourselves to removing the mines from this hillside, also signing a document with the Mayor of Sarajevo and a number of mayors from Bosnia-Herzegovina. They will also be present at the inaugural ceremony of the Olympic games, to give further evidence of the strong cooperation and twining initiatives that our Region has developed over the years. In few days we will be having here in Turin as our guests not only the local government representatives, but also the young people of Nova Gorica and Sarajevo. Thanks to the commitment of Yuri Franco, also Slovenian, and our champion Piero Gros, they will be present during the Olympic games and once again this will bear witness to the fact that for us the Olympic Truce is not merely a passing initiative linked to this great sporting event. It is instead a commitment we have been developing over these last decades in our relationship with a number of countries and currently in particular with the Balkan area countries that have seen such dramatic civil wars. I think that with the presence in Turin of the many people who have helped us over these years in this difficult path and promoting our objectives linked to the Olympic Truce goals, these Olympic games will not be just a great celebration of sport, but also an opportunity for us to meditate upon our slogan. If we transform the world attention for a 16 days period in a ritual war in which the confrontation is only between sportsmen, than perhaps we can hope for the elimination of conflict forever.

Cornelio Sommaruga, *former President of the International Red Cross Committee Chairman*

Welcome to the meeting that has been organised by the World Political Forum on the occasion of the Winter Olympic Games of Turin, with a topic which is very stimulating and interesting “War’s Casualties: men, society, humankind”.

I would like to congratulate the distinguished peace-builders who are around me here, and whom I will be introducing when it will be their turn to speak.

First of all allow me to introduce myself: I am Cornelio Sommaruga, I hold a PhD in Jurisprudence from the University of Zurich. I am a former Swiss Diplomat and I’ve had roles as Ambassador, Swiss Secretary of State for Foreign Trade and 13 years of humanitarian diplomacy in International Red Cross Committee in Geneva. For 6 years now I have been active in a number of Foundations to help humanitarian objectives or objectives of the personal reconciliation. I am very happy to take part in this panel also because the organisation I chaired for 13 years still treasures the very first Nobel Prize for Peace, received in 1901 by the Red Cross founder, Henry Dunant, and the 3 following Nobel Prizes awarded the Red Cross Committee in 1917, 1944 and 1963.

I think it is important, before the discussion starts, to try and give a definition of this very important noun that is “peace”. I will do this basing myself on the intensive work that has been done for years by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Peace cannot be defined as the mere absence of war. It is rather more a dynamic process of collaboration between all states and all peoples, a collaboration grounded on freedom, independence, national sovereignty and equality, human rights, but especially on a correct sharing of resources to meet the needs of all peoples.

My first question to the distinguished panellist will therefore be if they agree to this very comprehensive peace definition of the Red Cross movement. This definition relates us indeed largely to the proclaimed goals of the WPF to identify concrete and politically possible solutions to the unprecedented challenges of the global and multipolar world. The contacts promoted among politicians, scientists, high level personalities of the cultural, and religious lives of different continents, faiths, languages and cultures should suggest solutions to those as to sustain peace. Because politics is not keeping peace with the course of events and furthermore because of the increasing division of mankind, between rich and poor, prosperous and disadvantaged, division between countries and inside individual missions, there is an urgent need, I believe, to call on the globalisation of responsibilities. Not only States are called to invest much more for preventing international and non-international arm conflicts, but also civil society is invested with the task to work for human security. I mean that victims of war and terrorism can largely be avoided if greater attention is given to the protection of human dignity by addressing with determination the present world challenges as the diffused polity of one third of humanity. The constant deterioration of the environment and the persistent legal and illegal arms transfer is a major problem; not only a problem of security, but much more a question related to development and human rights. The proliferation of light weapons and small arms is a determinant factor in internal conflicts and therefore in the sufferings of so many innocent people. It favours the action of terrorists and criminals. I do not wish to underestimate here the threat still prevailing in the fields of strategic and nuclear weapons, but indeed the reality is that at least half a million human beings each year are killed by small weapons and most of the victims are civilians. Three months ago parliamentarians of the Great Lakes Region announced that 30 millions light weapons

were detained illegally in Africa. Combating such a negative trend is not a utopia, as the fight against landmines has demonstrated. Jody Williams, Nobel Peace Prize, will tell you of the way in which civil society has been able to influence the large majority of governments for a total ban of anti-personnel mines. We came together closer to a mine-free world, what has been and still is our common objective.

My second question to the distinguished panellist implies therefore three elements. The first is: do we agree to the need of globalizing responsibilities? Secondly: should not human security be the primary objective of conflict prevention contributing to development at the service of peace? And thirdly: is not the availability of light weapons and small arms – because of the huge amount of the legal and illegal transfers of such weapons – one of the major sources of victims in today's world, and therefore an issue to which particular attention should be given?

Let me conclude these words of introduction quoting a former Peace Nobel Prize winner. In his speech in Oslo, in 1933, Norman Angel did say: *"The obstacles to peace are not obstacles in matter, in inanimate nature, in the mountains, which we pierce, in the seas across which we fly. The obstacle to peace are in the minds and hearts of men. ... Only by intellectual rectitude and in that field shall we be save. There is no refuge but in truth, in human intelligence, in the unconquerable mind of man"*. The Olympic games are the right place to recall it, in the midst of courageous men and women fighting with peaceful both means and tolerance for Olympic medals.

Before giving the floor to the panellists, let me just point to the fact that Mikhail Gorbachev is not with us. As you heard, Pres. Gorbachev was unable to join us here this evening. I think I should however remind you all, that the Russian statesman was the founder, here in Turin, of The World Political Forum. I should perhaps also remember here that Pres. Gorbachev, who was born into a farmer family in 1931, is a jurist and he climbed various steps of the Soviet Union's Communist Party to become its Secretary General at 54 and then head of the USSR Government. In 1989 he also became President of the Soviet Union. We must acknowledge that, after having launched the policies that we today remember with two words, *Perestroika*, that I will translate as "restructuring", and *Glasnost*, "opening", "transparency", his foreign policy ended the Cold War. The Nobel Prize for Peace was awarded to him in 1990 but he was unable to travel to Oslo for his official speech. He was able to be there only in June 1991 and then in his speech he pronounced two sentences which have remained memorable to me. The first is: *"Reciprocal knowledge and trusting are the foundations of a new world order"*. And further on in his speech he said: *"I believe that together we shall be able now to make the right historical choice. So as not to miss the great chance at the turn of centuries and millennia and make the current extremely difficult transition to a peaceful world order"*. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Mikhail Gorbachev put an end to all government growls and devoted himself with great energy and for many years, with his wife Raissa at his side, to spread worldwide his messages of peace and sustainable development, through his Foundation and through the international Green Cross, of which he was founder and President. President Gorbachev has sent us a message that I would like to read out to you.

"I extend warm greetings to participants in the international Round Table in Turin with the theme People of Peace against Weapons of War."

The Olympic Games both in their initial ancient form and in their modern version are a truly inspiring example and a chance to reflect on bringing together the people and the nations. During the days when, in fair competition, thousands of young people reveal Man's new possibilities, the barriers of prejudice, fanaticism and intolerance which divide the Humanity look particularly intolerable.

The new global world, which is emerging even as we speak, should be a work in progress common to all those who want peace, stable development and cooperation between the peoples on our planet, who repudiate coercion and violence as ways of solving international problems and conflicts, and who believe that economic and technological progress must improve the daily lives of people around the globe.

I heartily wish a successful Round Table to you and brilliant success to the Turin Olympics”.

Mikhail Gorbachev

With all this in mind, conscious of the great contribution to peace given by the honorable personalities present around me, it is indeed time to listen to them. And I would like to start with Mrs. Jody Williams.

I'd like to tell you that anti-personnel mines kill and mangle hundreds of thousands of civilians every year, women and children in particular. Now, if since the beginning of the century victims have been constantly declining, this is may be thanks to Jody Williams, who, with her International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), has been able to bring states to sign the Ottawa Convention, which prohibits manufacturing, stocking, exporting and use of these weapons. The 1997 Peace Nobel Prize has acknowledged her leadership in civil society amongst NGO's, in particular those who have worked with her for a world which is mine free. Eloquent speaker, teacher, organizer of campaigns, this American lady from Vermont graduated from the John Hopkins University, worked hard for the universalisation of the 1997 Convention. Despite the excellent results – 15 millions mines have been destroyed up to the end of last year amongst the 148 parties who have signed the agreement – there still are permanent members of the Security Council missing, such as China, Russia and the Unites States.

We are pleased to be able to listen to her because mines clearance is a key for sustainable development, which in its turn is the base for long lasting peace.

Jody Williams, *Founder of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, Nobel Peace Laureate, 1997*

I am not going to bother, describing the Landmine Campaign. If you wish to have information about it, there are in the room coordinators, as Simona Beltrame, coordinator of the Italian campaign, who can give you all the information you need.

I choose rather to speak about peace, responsibility and human security. I am going to try to do it very quickly, so that we can actually have small conversations and perhaps even some exchange with the audience, because I care about what you think and not just what I think – I know what I think.

Absence of war is only a narrow definition of peace in my view, I think that's pretty clear. If you have absence of war without justice in the world, sooner or later you are sowing the seeds for future conflict. If a few of us in the world have most of the resources and we shut out the majority of the world, we are sowing the seeds for future conflict. It makes people unhappy when the West controls and uses 80% of the resources of the world and the rest of the world has to do without. It makes people a little bit agitated when we live so nicely and 2 billions people on this planet do not even have fresh drinking water, which we buy in little plastic bottles and pollute our planet more. I had a graduated student at University of Houston, where I do teach occasionally, who used to have to walk and get five gallons of water for her entire family in India to use in a day. That's what we use in America when we flush the toilet. If we don't begin to care about that discrepancy, we continue to sow the seeds of war.

That is why some people flew airplanes into the buildings in New York and the Pentagon in my country. Because we are a little confused that our oil is under their sand. We want their oil in our country so we are willing to help them live under authoritarian regimes so that we have access to our oil that somehow ended up under their sand. I think that peace in this world requires a completely different concept of what is security. I do not believe that national security alone provides for peace.

I will give one small example of which we are all unfortunately aware. On September 10 of the year 2001 the United States of America was the sole remaining superpower in the world. Many of us thought that perhaps with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the US might exert a leadership that was different. That they might actually stand up for the values that I have been taught as a child, that they might actually stand for democracy, freedom, equality, for the rights of everybody to choose their own governments. Unfortunately, the government of the US of America decided that it would be better to assure US supremacy. They made a plan under Mr. Bush the father, that was crafted by the current administration, Mr. Rumsfeld, Mr. Cheney, Mr. Wolfowitz – who is now gracing the World Bank with his presidency. In that plan, they decided that they would assure that the United States was untouchable militarily, untouchable economically and untouchable technologically. They would do little things to allow their allies to feel that they were maybe part of the game, but they were going to ensure that their supremacy would never be touched. So were the big guys on the block September 2001. On September 10, the United States felt invulnerable: we had the biggest, the best weapons, who could ever do anything to the US of America? We had oceans on each side protecting us, we had all of that 54 states in the North called Canada, that at least pretends that it is free.

And then what happened on September 11? 4 Airplanes with 19 people flew into two buildings in New York, the Pentagon in Washington and God knows where the fourth one was going except the people on the plane took it down before it killed more people in America. The most important military power in the world was terrified by 19 men and 4 planes. What was the response to that however? Was it a sole

searching of the people of my country and great leaders of my country about why? Anybody in my country who dared to ask why, on September 12, was called a traitor. At the same time you can rest assured that the CIA, the NSA and the 13 other intelligence agencies in my country that we know about – I don't even know how many there really are – and the Pentagon was certainly asking why. If you don't know why, how can you get a good answer and solve the problem? If you want to pretend that it was just a pact of lunatics, who happened to grab four planes and who fairly coordinated everything, and you pretend they're just crazy lunatics, you're not going to be able to resolve the problem.

I think it was an unfortunate method to make their political point, but they made it. It proved to many of us who are rational thinkers, that national security alone will not resolve our problems in this world, that it will not give us peace. If we do not care about human security, if we don't redefine the needs of the planet and the basic needs of the majority are met, this will continue to happen and will only get worse as there are more people on the planet, few resources and us rich guys take them all. It makes people mad. If I were one of the guys who didn't get any stuff, I am sorry, I'd be a little mad. Am I given the willing to make my displeasure known. If my family was dying in refugee camps, in Palestine, if the people of Sudan are being left to die in its genocide and who cares, cause they're African.

If we don't care and if we don't recognize that we do have responsibility, the world is only going to get worse. We have to stop saying "The government will take care of it". I am saying that my country, my government, has not taken care of them, except to make it worse. We can no longer pretend, in a globalized and globalizing world, that we are safe in our nice little clean countries. It was proved in my country, was shown in Spain, it was shown in London. If we don't accept responsibility for making the world different, we are responsible for making it worse.

I am a profound believer in action. I get very tired of people coming up to me all the time, saying "Oh, Jody, you're so wonderful, you change the world". No, I didn't. I did not. I *helped* change the world. I was *one* of the thousands of people who have the courage to stand up, see a goal, see that we can help people and actually than take action to make it better. Nothing magical about it; nothing utopian about it; nothing that anybody else could not have done if they had taken care. So, because of my great magic ability to change the world, I have people asking me all the time "what can I do? I am so worried about the environment, about women's issues, about this thing and the other". And then I ask them "ok, you're worried about this thing and the other, but what are you doing about it?". 99 over 100 times the answer is "nothing". Then my response is "then don't talk to me. Come back to me when you're willing to do something to make it different". Compassion, caring about a better world without taking action to make it that way: don't waste your energy, go have a beer and watch the World Cup. I am serious: don't do it, if you don't want to make the world better, if you just want to complain and pretend that it's the government's fault, it is the US's fault, maybe her fault [*indicating Mrs. Bresso*], because she is the Regional President. They're blamable, because they are the government people you elected, by the way, and you pay them to do that job, because it is your money they are spending. I think the governments work for me, they use my money to do their building in this world and I am going to say what I think about them and I am going to work to make it better. I am not just going to sit there and complain, because those idiots run the world wrong. I am going to show those idiots a different way. Idiots just means the human beings who mess up, it's not necessarily an indication of my feeling about the IQ with the permanent seemingly President of my country of late.

If you really care about something, get up, find an organization that's working on it and go do something. Surely you have the time to volunteer an hour a month. I

mean, how much time do you spend a month on manicures and pedicures? How much time you spend shopping, watching inane television shows that have no impact on your life whatsoever? In coffee bars or restaurants, whatever? I'm sure you can allow one hour a month, or, if you're really willing one hour a week maybe. We all have responsibility for this world, and if you abdicate your responsibility, trust me, I will take it, and I will love to make the world a different place. So if you care, get up and do something. Accept you're part of the solution, if you want to be. In this world, there is no security unless you work to make it more secure.

Peace is not the absence of war, peace without justice sows the seeds for future conflict. So help us make it different. Or leave with your own legacy of lack of care. Your own legacy to the world you leave behind, is a part of you.

Cornelio Sommaruga, *former President of the International Red Cross Committee Chairman*

Thank you Jody. As usual very outspoken, and it is my pleasure to see that some of my questions, did get an answer because you simply – without saying it – agreed to what I was saying at the beginning.

Time has now come to present another member of this round table. MSF, *Médecins Sans Frontières*, of which Dr. Stefano Vajtho has been chairing the Italian section since the year 2000 forward. MSF is a model humanitarian organization in emergency medical aid, and also in assisting victims of calamities, be it natural calamities or conflicts. MSF was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1999. They used to be called “the French doctors”, then it spread into a number of countries in Western Europe and elsewhere. I collaborated with MSF while I was chairman of ICRC and also with MSF Italy in the struggle against anti-personnel mines. The key of the success of MSF is the proximity of the physicians to the victims. Stefano Vajtho too, as a physician, had this kind of experience in the field, in Chad, in Indonesia, after the tsunami in Aceh, and recently in Haiti, where he worked through the excellent organization of MSF Belgium. Born in Venice 50 years ago, Dr Vajtho at the moment is head of the emergency board in the first aid of Gemona, in the Udine Province. Previously to this he worked in hospitals in Friuli, Verona, Trieste. His responsibility was in first aid medicine and preventive medicine, and this is what he was also involved in, when he was working for the WHO in Geneva, between 1994 and 1997. Dr. Vajtho studied medicine in Padua and has a specialization in anesthesiology and intensive care from Udine. Dr Vajtho, you have the floor.

Stefano Vajtho, *President of Médecins Sans Frontières Italia, (MSF, Nobel Peace Laureate, 1999)*

I am a very poor speaker compared to whom has just preceded me, being I not that greater doctor either, but there is something I am proud of and that is I belong to *Médecins Sans Frontières*.

MSF to a certain extent has always stood out as an organization that has gone countercurrent and I very much recognized myself in what Jody Williams said. I'd like to come up with some provocations to the audience this evening because if we are all goody-goody there is no fun. Perhaps we should stimulate certain amount of debate, and a number of themes in Jody Williams' speaking already did it, though in brief.

I saw four or five young people leave the hall: I don't know why they came but they left the audience. More in general, there are not many young people at all in this hall this evening. As humanitarian organization, we find it hard to create an echo amongst young people, especially in the medical field. We don't understand whether this is because we are communicating badly – and that's possible, because of our age – or whether it is because the world is changing. So, with respect to the issue of responsibility Jody Williams spoke about so well, I'd like to give you some examples of responsibility. I spoke with a number of doctors, when I asked them to join MSF and be an anesthetist in the field, since we really lack anesthetists. And very often it's an unversed staff that does anesthesia. There was a young psychologist in one of our missions who was a great anesthetist in the field, but she had not studied medicine. When I proposed young doctors to join MSF, many of them asked me "well, what's the insurance coverage?". That really left me downstruck because I've never thought about insurance when I went out in the field on missions. Also my wife, when I tell her that the situation is not that bad, knows it means that it's dangerous and if I say it's a little dangerous she knows that I am somewhat at risk. But in terms of accepting responsibility too, I have the same negative feeling when people ask me whether during a mission I've seen the sea in Haiti or whether in Indonesia the countryside was beautiful. In Haiti I've never seen the sea, if not with binoculars.

The press conference we had today really raised the right issues but also has tackled things from the wrong side, because we've spoken a lot about good, but we talked about practical things. Passing from 15 to 150.000 euros, as we said, means a 100% increase: that's not bad, but 150.000 euro are nothing but a drop in the sea in terms of amount of money for medical aid. So I wonder whether in terms of accepting responsibility we don't all tend to ostracism, also we who head out on our missions, because in some way we satisfy some of our own personal needs and we ourselves feel a sense of self-salvation. So there certainly are a lot of problems that have to be solved, from minimum to maximum systems.

I'd like to tell you about two problems of humanitarian action. The problem of fund raising – this goes back to what Jody Williams said – which is an enormous problem since NGOs live of funds that are for the most part institutional. By this I mean funds that come from donor organizations, that normally are governments or super-national communities. Power development really is one of the problems of humanitarian action as we see it today.

Another problem is linked to the role of the media. This year we had the tsunami. MSF by itself collected a hundred million euros in funding for the tsunami. Than there was the earthquake in Pakistan, but there was no resonance about it in Italy and just a little better in the rest of Europe, but not much. We heard nothing in the media also about the great crises in Congo, Sudan, Niger, Somalia, Haiti ones.

Among the non-state medical institutions, there is the organization having more AIDS patients in the world, something like 40000 ones. And what about all the others?

So, we have this responsibility, we have to accept it and this is really the essential crossroads of what we are doing. We are civil society, single individuals are not in the field as I am, or other people are, because our commitment is our specific choice, but people in general really have to ask themselves something about this. We must not try and flee from this responsibility. We must rather think in terms of critical commitment. We are really lucky, we complain about things that don't happen in our countries but basically societies close up like hedgehogs.

I wouldn't like meetings such as this just to escape the house. I like how this theme has been dealt with in Olympic terms. I mean, how can we consider this in a positive way? I live in Trieste, I know the Balkans, and I know what Sarajevo was like before the war. It was a beautiful city, and now it's terribly sad. So this idea of the Olympic mine clearing of the hill is a wonderful idea.

Cornelio Sommaruga, *former President of the International Red Cross Committee Chairman*

I think our two speakers, who have in some way also focused on some of the things I said earlier, have really brought out some very strong elements.

First of all responsibility, not only on the part of governments and public institutions, but responsibility of the civil society, responsibility of individuals. Jody Williams said something like “Responsibility which means doing something in order to make a difference”. The motivation has enough commitment to make a difference. What was said also by Jody Williams about not having peace without justice is also important. This returns us to the fundamental concept of justice which inglobes very many aspects of what is happening around the world today. Justice. The third element, which came to us from Dr Vajtho, is the viewpoint of humanitarian workers, who have strong motivations and who also look for financial support for the work being done. The fund raising issue is important if we are to achieve any results in this field as I could see in my many years of humanitarian experience in the field, and in my work with International Red Cross and International Red Crescent around the world. One of the keys of success is the question of independence of the humanitarian workers. Even when the government funding is available, is allocated for humanitarian action, it’s essential that humanitarian workers have the independence to be impartial and neutral. Fully, not neutral with respect to victims, but neutral with respect to differing opinions in a situation of conflict. The Red Cross – and I know that there are Red Cross members in this hall – was first conceived here in Italy on the battle of Solferino in 1859, when Henry Dunant brought aid with the women of Lombardy. He said we are all brothers and sisters and it was this sense of impartiality vis a vis the casualties of different nationality, of different origin that made it possible.

I think the time has now come for us to ask whether there are any comments or questions from the floor.

Question:

I found both the speakers very interesting in what they told us, and I was wondering, with respect to this issue of peace and war, whether we should not perhaps give more attention to selecting the governing classes of states. If we observe the situation of Italy we find ourselves with this incompetent President of the Council, who does not in any way help to improve peace in this world. The state is not like him, but I think we should first inform us. I ask the panelists what do they think about how our leading classes are selected, about the systems we call democracy – though I have some doubts about whether this is truly democracy for we end up with having a Bush a Blair and Berlusconi.

Jody Williams

Thank you for your beautiful description of the leadership of the world. You probably find me in much of your corner, as you guessed.

I can only speak for the electoral system in my own country and I would hardly call it democracy. If you really believe that democracy means the chance of every individual to rise to a position of elected office and be the president, that is a joke in my country today. It is on two parties to rule the United States trading off and on, since

the beginning of the country. As you look at how elections are conducted in the US today, it's a permanent campaign machine. The minute the elections end, the next day they are up raising money for the next elections. Some of the elections in individual states in my country cost millions and millions and millions of dollars. Rich people themselves have put like 50-60-70 millions of their own dollars in their senate campaign to get elected. How can any normal human being compete? The guy who has powers is going to run the law to maintain powers – logical. That's happening in the US: the laws are written so that no new parties can emerge.

The second threat to democracy in my country is the media. When I was a child there were 50 major media outlets in the country, in addition to all the little local newspapers in every tiny little town in the country. Fifty. Today there are five. And they are the same companies that own Hollywood, so they are much more interested that you care about Hollywood actresses and their movies and their videos and all of that, than that you actually care about news. How can you possibly have an educated electorate, if they really think that Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt and their pregnancy and their possible marriage is the most critical thing in their life? They have to really understand what their country is doing abroad and what the policies are effecting people at home. They have to be educated about it to make a rational decision. Otherwise they turn on the TV, get Fox News which is a Bush campaign machine and people believe it, cause they have no other access. We have McDonald's news in America. Now you go from coast to coast you can eat in any and you not even know where you are anymore, right. You're going anywhere in America and you're going to McDonald's, you're going anywhere in the world and you're going to McDonald's. Same is true of the news: go anywhere in America and the news is the same. The same, the same, the same. They're making idiots of the electorate because it's easier to control idiots than people who can actually think, analyze and make a rational choice for a better government.

I assume since one guy seems to own most of the media in this country and he also seems to be the President, it is probably somewhat similar here. That's a tragedy if we really believe in democracy.

Cornelio Sommaruga

Do you also want to answer, Dr Vajtho?

Stefano Vajtho

Well, we are in the electoral campaign stage, so I counted to speak in terms of *par conditio*, but anyway what Jody Williams has said can partly also be said for our country.

I don't know whether you read the book "The time of sad passions": we certainly are in a sad time, in a sad era in our country. With reference to your question, which was very specific, there is a void in terms of being able to dream, being able to create new ideas. It's a very big void and it exists on both sides of the political stage in Italy. It's very sad, I don't know whether we'll be able to move away from this. I mean it would be a dream, but I don't know whether we have the strength to make this dream come true.

Cornelio Sommaruga

I would like to add, at this point, a quotation from Lev Tolstoj. I think it's important for each of us and also for politicians to hear and remember this quotation: "Each person would like to change humanity but no one thinks of changing his- or herself." I think that it is essential, if we want to commit to peace, that we start to think of our own personal position and think about whether we should not be changing ourselves.

Question:

Good evening. I feel very moved. I wish to compliment you all for this lovely initiative. I thank Mrs. Bresso and our former Mayor, Mr. Castellani, who are very sensitive to these problems. I'd rather make a little comment than posing a question. I come from a country at war, Somalia. Maybe something alike is already foreseen, but I wonder whether, on the day of the inauguration of the Olympic games, in front of the President of the Republic and all the authorities, under the spotlight of the entire world, could we possibly launch a message, perhaps in all languages. For example have young people of all nationalities crying out "Peace! Peace!". That would really be a lovely opportunity to have people here and tell them that it's not just going to be sports, but it is going to be a participation.

At Christmas I was in the UK, where everybody knows there is going to be this event in Turin, but the Muslim community said "well, there is only going to be talk about skiing", and when I answered there were going to be other issues, they asked what were they, showing that peace had been totally forgotten. I just wanted to ask whether it would be possible a mandate to express this sign of peace.

Cornelio Sommaruga:

Mr. Castellani will react to this when closing.

Question:

There was a mention, a provocation, on fund raising. Actually it is very important that each one of us should take a little step, do something and not just complain about that there is problems with 80% of the world population. The problem is that many associations – I am not talking of MSF or Emergency for example – use most of their funds for activities which are not actually leaded to help organizing aid. Many people believe they are tricked, in reading about the funds not being used if not for headquarters or things like this, so how can we solve this kind of problems?

Stefano Vajtho:

On behalf of MSF I must say that the problem is a global problem. As you were saying quite often is enough to read the financial statements and at times there is some perplexity about what is spent on the so called "core business", using financial terms, and what on the other hand is used on other things. Another important thing is the proportion between private donors and institutional donors. These are true

problems NGOs have. I think some NGOs really live just to support themselves. It's a very ignoble aim but, limited, it's noble for the workers, actually.

Jody Williams

In my country it's relatively easy to investigate how NGOs spend their money. If you want to give money to an organization just go investigate to find it out what it does, where the majority of the money goes. It's public information, at least in the United States.

I can say for the Landmine Campaign, from the time we launched that campaign, in 1992, until we accomplished the treaty at the end of 1997, globally, for the whole campaign we spent a total of 6 millions dollars. 6 million dollars for a global campaign: you can do it on the cheap.

Cornelio Sommaruga

For what concerns the International Red Cross Committee, which is the body in charge for interventions in armed conflicts, it is 95% founded by voluntary government contributions. When I left the organization, 5 years ago, we had a budget of 1 billion Swiss francs. The principle I always abided by was that of transparency and that of not exceeding 10% spent on administrative expenses in general. We needed this degree of transparency because the governments funding us kept a close eye on our accounts, which were published. However, one of the problems I had was that of trying to lead the Red Cross Organization throughout the world in a transparent way, because you may well know that in a movement which has a name for itself suffice to be the odd one, to have a black sheep to get discredit to the entire movement.

As has been said by my friend, one of the major problems of NGOs is quite often the lack of transparency and possibly a lack of clear objectives being set. All in all, where does responsible financing lie? It's up to you, to public opinion, who has to make decisions and to tend to give the money to those who are transparent. As to my experience, I must say that we are lacking in governments because of internal political reasons. Governments may tend to favor either one or the other organization with the act of financing, and this may tend to advertise enormously, being very negative in terms of the neutrality of the actions taken.

Question:

I have a question to Jody Williams. I am a student in international studies and I realize I feel a bit lost. There's a lot of conferences on important topics – peace, war – but in actual fact, what would you suggest me, as a young student, about what to tackle to? What is the real actual path I could follow to become active?

Jody Williams

I think at times it is very difficult to decide what we want to work on. I feel sometimes we think if we cannot change everything we should try to change nothing. You have to be the person who decides what you care about most. Do you care about the environment? About democracy in your country, about women's issues? Do you

care about gender issues? I have no idea what you really care about. But every act that women take to make the world a better place contributes to overall change, even if we don't know.

When we started the landmine campaign it's one tiny weapon in the world. One tiny weapon it's not guns, it's not helicopters, it's one little weapon. Lots of people said why are you doing that one little weapon, why don't you try to get a treaty on world peace? Oh, that's a little overwhelming, isn't it? We picked up one thing and we thought if we could do something about this issue. Whatever, we would be making the lives of people who live in minefields better, and that would be terrific. Right, we worked sanded out how to change the world out. We went sanded out to be Nobel Peace Prize winners, our gold boys getting rid of the weapon to make lives better for people in 80 countries around the world with landmines. We happened to do an extremely good job on this one little issue, and it's had a huge impact in the world. But that's not why we did it. We did it because we believed if we did anything, if we made any change, we would be contributing to change overall. And by focusing on the little, we ended up contributing a huge amount.

So pick that thing you like – whatever you care about –, find the organizations that are working on it. There are tens of organizations working on every issue in the world. Go and visit them, see how they work, watch what they do, volunteer an hour a month, with a variety of organizations and see which one you like. Then you spend time there, you get to know them, you get to know people around the world, if you're working on an international issue. Through that way you find your way into what an organization you want to be with, what role you want to play. But if you sit back and you don't pick something and figure out who's working on it and how you can help, it is overwhelming. You're never going to change the whole world all by yourself. Take something and go forth.

Question:

I must say this is a meeting organized by a cultural organization as the WPF, which took up culture, peace, voluntary work and in an occasion we may define of a sporting culture - the Olympic games are history of civilization and also historical culture. So the password this evening is culture. Now I'd like to ask the other two organizations. For 20 years I've been involved in culture in the field of humanitarian law, and I received lots of bulletins, of communications, but in the end it's just something I tend to throw into the paper bin, something that leaves no trace of it. So I think long-lasting education, a sort of information culture and not only simple education, may be something useful. Another issue we may discuss here is the protection of the cultural heritage at times of war. Now the quotation made by Sommaruga earlier sounded like something coming from the UNESCO, and I'd like to know whether this could be a step forward vis a vis mere communication.

Stefano Vajtho

In general, culture does not make people happy, but it helps. In particular information and the transmission of culture is what I may define a very important fly will. Culture and education can be transferred in many ways. No doubt an effective manner is the creation of official website, since this is a prevailing kind of communication. As far as our organization is concerned, great care and attention is paid to this act of transferring through our websites, the issues we, in our work, believe

to be the important ones, as for example the forgotten crisis, or the campaign to access the essential, or drugs. No doubt this is the “time of sad passions”, as I said before, so we do not find very fertile ground but it is very important to create culture, there is little culture around these days. It certainly is not very good level culture, either. Certainly during the fall of the Roman empire there were lots of poor people compared to the glorious times and now it’s a bit like that, but I must say quite honestly those who have responsibility transferring culture tend to make mistakes.

Jody Williams

I believe that we live in cultures of war, in the West in particular. We glorify war. I look at the history of my country, at the telling of it. It’s the noble conquest of America, which they do not even mention, that ends up with almost genocide of native Americans, total extinction of some of the tribes in my country. That’s not discussed. It’s the noble conquest manifest destiny: the great Europeans coming to America and making it civilized. Then we go from there to the war of 1812 and then we go to First World War, WWII, and then we have the Vietnam war and then we have the 1991 Iraq war and now the illegal invasion in Iraq. That’s our history: a glorification of war. That does not mean that there are not individuals against enrolling as soldiers. The people who send those soldiers to war are politicians. In my country today the politicians who send those little boys into war have never gone to war themselves. Rumsfeld, Chainey, Wolfowitz, Bush have never gone to war. And we glorify that somehow, we glorify every war with every thought. Peace is somehow webby, peace is not sexy, peace is not valiant, it doesn’t capture the imagination. I wouldn’t want some idiot for his personal powers sending me to war so he can advance the power of the country. And it’s insane that human beings allow their children to be sent that way. I want to see Mr. Bush send his children. I want to see Mr. Rumsfeld send his children. I want to see the men in the Congress of my Country, about five of whom have children who could go to war. The rest of them do not and if they did, they would have debated that resolution that took my country to war, illegally. They didn’t even have the courage to debate.

That is the culture we live with. We need to change the definition of what makes us cultural. We need to understand that if we want a world of peace, we actually have to understand it’s not wimpy to be peaceful. We have to understand that when people go to war it is a complete failure. It’s not glory, it is the failure of systems that could not find other resolutions to conflict. It’s failure. It is not glory, it’s just failure. And we have to stop thinking it’s magnificent and to enroll to make the ultimate sacrifice. It’s insane. I would send my child out of the country before I would send my child to war because five men who have never gone before a gun tell me that my child is going to die and make the ultimate sacrifice. It’s insanity and until we start recognizing it’s insane, we live in a culture of war.

Cornelio Sommaruga

My conclusion will be short using again a quote. It was Ralph Bunche, Nobel Peace Prize, who was saying in Oslo 1950 the following: *“This is no mere matter of men fighting or not fighting. Peace, to have meaning to any who have known only suffering in both peace and war, must be translated into bread or rice, shelter, health and education as well as freedom and human dignity, a steadily better life. If peace is to be secure, long suffering and long starved forgotten people of the world, the*

underprivileged and undernourished, must begin to realize without delay the promise of a new day and a new life”.

This is the hope I harbor at the end of this panel, before I give Pres. Valentino Castellani the opportunity to close our evening meeting.

Valentino Castellani, *President of Toroc (Torino Organising Committee XX Olympic Winter Games)*

The brand of the Olympic Truce you see here, is part of the Olympic games. It belongs to the International Olympic Committee, which has put the theme of peace amongst the values of the Olympic games. It has returned to a historic tradition of the Olympic games dating back to the Greece tradition, which was to end all wars during the Olympic period to allow all competitors to travel to Olympia for the games, despite any wars that might have been on at the time.

I would like to express my great satisfaction for the way this panel has gone. We've not just been rhetorical, this evening. We've involved our institutions and over these months a number of initiatives have developed in Turin. There have been a number of rather very practical ones, good practices in small things. When you save a man's life or a woman's life you are saving the life of men or women. Obviously if we look around us there are many other men and women who are dying, but we saved that man and that woman and we have won something, with one man or one woman saved or a child who has been torn from death, from hunger. In this Olympic Truce we have also launched a great campaign, in our Piedmont and Italian schools, and I think this is the way to nourish democracy.

Let me make a short comment about what has been said here this evening. We have the leadership we deserve, even if we don't like them, because it is us making democracy. There is no other way than choosing the ruling class and that is a great risk in our democracy. Democracy cannot grow by itself, but needs nourishment in our country. Our history certainly is different than that of the United States. In our country we discovered democracy after years of dictatorship and we perhaps cultivated the illusion that democracy was self-nourishing, but it's not so. A father, a grandfather like myself, has a great responsibility in nourishing democracy through education and it's not just our schools, not just delegated to others. Of all the words used by Jody Williams, I pick "responsibility". Responsibility is a big commitment. We all are in charge of the nourishment of democracy with our actions, with what we do and what we sow.

I answer in particular to the Somali representative, who spoke earlier and who called for a sign of peace within the Olympics, when I say that Olympics *are* a feast of peace. We have athletes coming from 80 different countries worldwide, we have thousands of journalists. Obviously there are many risks in sports, from commercialization to drugs, but there is also the possibility of providing strong messages about respecting others, respecting diversity. This is a deep message, in terms of peace and so the Olympics certainly are a great sports feast, but also a feast of peace and of cohabitation between religions and different cultures.

You spoke of the Muslim. In our organizing committee we contacted the interfaith community since we had to offer our athletes religious services too. We could have limited this to organizing areas for the Orthodoxes, the Jews, the Hindus, the Catholics, the Muslims. Well, we brought together the five main world religions and we developed a place in which they might dialogue together. This is important, because democracy also must find its nourishment in this, especially at the time in which we've seen the emerging of fundamentalisms of all kinds. This is a legacy we

are going to leave our city, a legacy of dialogue between the greatest religions of the world, even for those who do not take an inspiration by religion because there are values to be found out this way too. So, in this dialogue between all these various partners, I think this is the way we find the future of our city.