

## **For Immediate Release**

Contacts:

Christine Ahn, Women De-Militarize the Zone (310) 482-9333 (in English)

Hyun-Kyung Chung (347) 622-1014 (in Korean)

### **International Peacemakers Announce Women's Walk for Peace and Reunification of Korea**

March 11, 2015—During the 59<sup>th</sup> United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) meeting, leading global women peacemakers will announce their plans for a women's peace walk calling for an end to the Korean War, which is technically unresolved without a peace treaty. Millions of Korean families remain separated as both Koreas live in a state of war. Gloria Steinem, Abigail Disney, Ann Wright, Suzy Kim, Keum-ok Kim, Hyun-Kyung Chung and Christine Ahn will speak.

In May 2015, international women peacemakers will travel to Korea to meet with women leaders to embark upon a peace-building initiative to formally end the Korean War, including the launch of a global petition urging signatories of the 1953 armistice agreement to replace the cease-fire with a permanent peace treaty.

The delegation includes two Nobel Peace Laureates, Mairead Maguire from Northern Ireland and Leymah Gbowee from Liberia, and women leaders from over a dozen countries, many of which participated in the 1950-53 Korean War. At the press briefing, representatives of the women's peace delegation will give an update on the governments' approval to cross the De-Militarized Zone (DMZ, that separates the two Koreas) on May 24<sup>th</sup>, International Disarmament Day.

Gloria Steinem, renowned American author and Honorary Co-Chair of the international delegation, says "If this division can be healed even briefly by women, it will be inspiring in the way that women brought peace out of war in Northern Ireland or Liberia. In Northern Ireland women crossed the boundary of religion and region, and said, 'No more'. For generations, the divisions seemed inevitable but women managed to cross it and now Ireland is a peaceful country."

Suzy Kim, professor of Korean history at Rutgers University, explains, "Known as the Forgotten War, the Korean War claimed 4 million lives, mostly Korean civilians. The brinkmanship we witness today, from war games to nuclear weapons, stem from that historic fact that a peace treaty was never signed."

"American women have a very important role to play in this, not as people who dictate the solutions, but because of the role our country played in drawing the line and now very aggressively plays in enforcing it," says the award-winning American filmmaker and philanthropist, Abigail Disney.

According to retired U.S. Army Colonel Ann Wright, “My government should support the peaceful reunification of the two Koreas by de-escalating military tensions. Although both sides claim defense, when there is no communication and just a show of force, the chances for “miscalculation” are unimaginably high and very dangerous. We need to de-escalate tensions, engage North Korea in talks, and sign a peace treaty.”

“We are collaborating with the international women to mobilize Korean women,” says Keum-ok Kim, Standing Representative of Korean Women’s Association United, the largest umbrella organization of South Korean women’s NGOs.

Christine Ahn, one of the organizers, says, “We are walking to unite Korean families tragically separated by an artificial, man-made division, and to re-direct government investment away from the military towards improving the welfare of the people, in particular women, children and the elderly.”

### **International Women’s Delegation**

#### *Honorary Co-Chairs*

Mairead Corrigan Maguire, Nobel Peace Laureate 1976, Northern Ireland  
Gloria Steinem, Author and Founder of Ms. Magazine, USA

#### *Executive Committee*

Christine Ahn, Women De-Militarize the Zone, USA  
Medea Benjamin, Co-Founder Code Pink, USA  
Hyun-Kyung Chung PhD, Professor, Union Theological Seminary, ROK/USA  
Gay Dillingham, Filmmaker & Environmental Advisor to Governor Bill Richardson, USA  
Suzy Kim, PhD, Professor, Rutgers University, USA  
Vana Kim PhD, Spiritual Teacher, Canada/USA  
Gwyn Kirk, Co-founder Women for Genuine Security, USA/United Kingdom  
Sung-ok Lee, United Methodist Women, USA  
Cora Weiss, President, Hague Appeal for Peace, USA  
Ann Wright, Former U.S. Army Colonel, USA

Aiyoung Choi, Korean American Family Service Center, USA  
Jean Chung, Co-Founder Action for One Korea, USA  
Abigail Disney, Filmmaker, USA  
Jodie Evans, Co-Founder Code Pink, USA  
Leymah Gbowee, Nobel Peace Laureate 2012, Liberia  
Erika Guevara Rosas, Americas Director, Amnesty International, USA/Mexico/United Kingdom  
Patricia Guerrero, League of Displaced Women, Colombia  
Meri Joyce, Peace Boat, Australia/Japan  
Jane Jin Kaisen, Artist, Denmark  
Deann Borshay Liem, Filmmaker, USA  
Brinton Lykes, Professor, Boston College, USA  
Liza Mazza, Gabriella Network, Philippines

Ann Patterson, Peace People, Northern Ireland  
Suzuyo Takazato, Okinawan Women Against Military Violence, Japan  
Katharina Zellweger, former Swiss Development Corporation DPRK, Switzerland

###