

**Speech Award Ceremony Carnegie Wateler Peace Prize by  
Dr. Bernard R. Bot, Chairman of the Carnegie Foundation**

Peace Palace, 16 November 2016

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Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, and most especially Mrs. Kaag and family,

I'd like to extend a warm welcome to all of you assembled here in the Great Hall of Justice of the Peace Palace for the award of the bi-annually given Carnegie Wateler Peace Prize to Mrs. Sigrid Kaag.

Before addressing more specifically Mrs. Kaag, I would like to mention that today, November 16, is a very special day for still another reason. Thanks to the decision of Johan Wateler exactly one hundred years ago, we are all gathered here for this special occasion. I would notably like to thank Marten van Harten for his extensive study of the life and legacy of Mr. Johan Wateler who initiated this prize and I am really pleased that we now have a clearer idea about the background and motivations of this philanthropist. The Dutch banker Wateler drew up a will during the First World War, in 1916, which stipulated that an important philanthropical legacy should be given to the State of the Netherlands with the aim of awarding an annual peace prize after his death. When his will was made public, the Netherlands parliament felt it had to renounce the honor of deciding and awarding this prize as this might be considered too political an act. It wanted to avoid any accusations of being biased towards one particular person or institution.

And that is how the Carnegie Foundation was appointed as the authority responsible for the selection and adjudication of the prize. As a foundation we are very proud of this responsibility to award this peace prize to a person- Wateler himself said "a he or a she"- or to an institution which has distinguished itself in the pursuit of peace.

The other element of the name of the prize, Carnegie, has been added to honor the American steelmaker and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, the founding father of our foundation.

Without Carnegie's gracious and immense donation to the Peace Palace, we might not be assembled in this Great Hall of Justice today.

Wateler was inspired to initiate a peace prize by a speech given by French poet and novelist François Coppée, which he gave on November 16, 1893 in Paris, at the annual public session of the Académie Française. Coppée's speech was an answer to Andrew Carnegie's *The Gospel of Wealth* published in French in 1891. Modern philanthropy, aimed at the public welfare, was highly laudable, Coppée argued; but this scientific approach could and should not replace the virtue of charity, as written in the old Gospel: "*The poor will always be amongst you.*"

Wateler most likely knew of Coppée's influential speech. It may be coincidence that he wrote his testament on the same date, 16<sup>th</sup> November 1916. But it is also possible that November 16<sup>th</sup> and its historical value inspired Wateler to make his own contribution to peace and to the celebration of peace.

Wateler was not only an admirer of Carnegie and Coppée. The Dutch banker was also an admirer of strong, independent women and was inspired by many. This admiration began when Johan Wateler was a little boy; his self-supporting mother raised Wateler and he deeply respected her.

During his work for the Orange Nassau Bank in The Hague, Wateler worked together with the greatest female philanthropist of that time, the Dutch Princess Sophie van Oranje Nassau, who was his business partner. Princess Sophie van Oranje Nassau invested in his mortgage bank, The Oranje Nassau Hypotheek Bank. The daughter of King Willem II and Anna Palowna was the last royal to live on the grounds on which the Peace Palace was later built. She inherited her parents' estate (nowadays the premises of the Peace Palace).

Johan Wateler also admired the work of the Dutch Queen Wilhelmina who played such an important role during the First World War as an agent for stability and peace.

Strong and independent women were a red thread in his life and also perhaps influenced his decision to give something back to society and establish a peace prize. In his will, he intentionally refers to a prize for *him or her*. A very progressive thought for that time.

Therefore, I believe Wateler would have been very much in favor of awarding this year's prize to Mrs. Sigrid Kaag. Mrs. Sigrid Kaag is, without a doubt, seen as a strong and independent woman too. However, she is honored here today, not for being a strong woman in a man's world, I even understand that next to her office she has an inscription: "*Men to the left, because women are always right*", but for her brave work in bringing peace to regions of the Middle East – regardless of gender.

Unfortunately enough, I have not had the privilege of working together with Ms. Kaag when we were both employed by the Dutch ministry of Foreign Affairs. But I presume that this period has certainly contributed greatly to her mastery of the art of diplomacy. In 1994, she left the nest of the ministry to spread her wings and to continue her career in a world-wide organization, the United Nations.

I would like to name some impressive positions Sigrid Kaag has successfully fulfilled: Chief of Donor Relations for the International Organization for Migration; Senior Programme Manager UNRWA (UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestina); Regional Director for Middle East and North Africa for UNICEF (UN International Children's Emergency Fund); Director of the Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy of the United Nations Development Programme. These positions would prove to be the perfect preparation for what lay ahead.

From October 2013 to September 2014, at the request of the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, Sigrid Kaag successfully led the highly sensitive and dangerous OPCW-UN joint mission for the elimination of chemical weapons in Syria. This unprecedented mission consisting of a hundred experts under Mrs. Kaag's leadership, coupled to her dedication and courage, helped secure the peaceful removal and destruction of Syria's declared chemical weapons.

Currently, Mrs. Kaag serves as the UN Secretary-General's Special Coordinator for Lebanon, where she oversees the work of the UN family in Lebanon. She also leads the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701, aiming to achieve a permanent ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel; once more promoting peace in very difficult circumstances.

Her engagement ranges from conflict prevention and diplomacy to strategic leadership on humanitarian, development and security issues. Sigrid Kaag has proven over and over again that she is a top diplomat with a distinguished long-term record of service at the United Nations. In doing her work she is convinced as she recently said that *“We have to spread a different message. Diversity is not a threat, but an enrichment. We live in a period of fact free politics. But politicians must make a stronger contribution, they must stick to the facts and not let themselves be carried away by emotions. It is understandable that this happens among ordinary citizens. But politicians have to give a different interpretation. We are being confronted by new worldwide problems and solving them in a bilateral context or by exclusion does not work anymore.”*

The Board of the Carnegie Foundation lauds Kaag’s dedication and personal approach. Kaag has a remarkable talent for bringing parties together and to promote consensus. Mrs. Kaag doesn’t think in problems, but encourages parties to act. It also reflects her proverbial motto: *Minder woorden, meer inhoud, Fewer words, more content.* But in last instance, she says, my means are those of conviction, of the voice, of the moral force of the international community.

The Carnegie Foundation has awarded the peace prize to Mrs. Sigrid Kaag for her successful efforts in accomplishing sensitive and dangerous missions in the Middle-East. Perhaps more than ever the Middle-East is a crucial region to promote peace in an interdependent world.

I think that it is most fitting for all these reasons that the Carnegie Wateler Peace Prize is handed to you, Mrs. Sigrid Kaag, in this place, the Peace Palace, an icon for peace and justice.

Before I will hand over the prize, I would like to ask your attention for a short film about Ms. Kaag that illustrates her devotion to hard work and her passion.