

Mr. Secretary-General, Ms. Robinson, Minister Cannon, Ladies and Gentlemen,

My Government attaches great importance to this topic and to the difficult situation created by contemporary conflicts, in which women and children are most affected by the deterioration of their living conditions and their fundamental rights.

The ongoing commitment of Chile's foreign policy to peacekeeping operations has resulted in the inclusion in its national policies of new approaches such as the one outlined in Security Council resolution 1325, which emphasizes the participation of women in peace and security issues.

Our commitment is reflected in the adoption of the National Action Plan for the implementation by of Security Council resolution 1325, which constitutes the first and only plan adopted in the Americas and projects its work in three basic areas:

In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Although the Ministry clearly bears primary responsibility for the implementation of this plan, we are taking the initiative of adopting a cross-cutting approach, incorporating it internally in our work. For example, internally, we are adopting gender-sensitive policies in staff recruitment processes and, externally, we have shown our commitment to international humanitarian law through support for the adoption of the Oslo and Ottawa Conventions.

In the role of the defence institutions

These institutions participated actively, through working groups, in the drafting of the Plan. Most of the commitments made in this area are now being fulfilled. The review of the curricula of the various educational establishments, the compilation of gender-disaggregated statistics and the inclusion of more women in peacekeeping operations are examples of activities included in the Plan that reflect the contribution of the defence sector.

In civil society

One of the key aspects of the implementation of resolution 1325 was the inclusion of civil society in the public process of launching this initiative - not as a mere spectator or recipient of the final result but as an active party. This made it possible to incorporate the vision of civil society regarding these topics so as to achieve a broader and more representative viewpoint. The idea was to identify gender and security organizations and experts. For various reasons, these two topics do not, at least in the region, usually coincide, since the topic of security and the topic of gender have differences of language, priorities and approaches.

Although the original design provided for the participation of civil society, its continuous action in the process of drafting the Plan resulted in the acceptance of the

proposal to create an observatory with mixed membership (public agencies and civil society bodies) with the task of participating in the process of accountability subsequent to the publication of the National Action Plan. In this way, civil society can keep attention focused on the Government's concern regarding the protection of women and children in conflict and post-conflict situations.

We therefore believe that an element of vital importance in the implementation process will be the compilation of statistics to measure how well the mechanism is working. In our view, although there are few measurable examples, speedy action must be taken to allow quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the results of women's participation in the processes.

Regional challenges

Now that over 6,000 men and women in the armed forces of Latin America and the Caribbean are actively participating in peacekeeping operations all over the world, we believe that the time has come to involve the majority of countries of the region in the challenge of implementing this resolution.

In this scenario, we see new possibilities for South-South triangular cooperation, in which donor countries or agencies could collaborate to finance initiatives of bilateral or regional cooperation. We are convinced that the Chilean experience, with the lessons learned, can be useful to other countries of the region. Accordingly, we are prepared to collaborate to enhance the efforts already made, improving the results achieved for the wellbeing of women and children in conflict and post-conflict situations.

In connection with the upcoming anniversary of the adoption of this resolution next October, we urge countries in the region to make available the participation of national experts, so that we can meet the challenge of making a reality of this resolution, ultimately aimed at a people-centered foreign policy.

Finally Mr. Secretary, I just want to say that we are proud for the appointment of Michelle Bachelet, past president of Chile. She will be a key support for the achievement of the goals of this resolution and the advancement of women's rights and opportunities across the world.

Thank you.

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