

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security
Tuesday, 26th October 2010, Security Council Chamber (GA-TSC-01)

Statement by Mr. Michel Kafando, Permanent Observer of Burkina Faso to the United Nations

It is a genuine pleasure to see Uganda presiding over the Security Council in this month of October, and I congratulate the delegation on the excellent way in which it has carried out that responsibility. The contribution of Uganda to the work of the Security Council is greatly appreciated, and, as the end of the Ugandan presidency approaches, I would like to express our great satisfaction.

Before embarking on the subject at hand, I would like to say that we take note of the statement just made by the representative of the African Union.

The choice of the subject for this debate is extremely relevant to our time. Moreover, if any country is qualified to summon us to this debate, it is Uganda, which has experienced this topic's terrible realities in a concrete way on the ground through the depredations of the Lord's Resistance Army and by virtue of belonging to a region where every day the drama of women in armed conflict is played out.

I need remind no one here of the hopes raised by the Security Council's adoption in October 2000 of resolution 1325 (2000), and subsequently of resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009), which provide clear proof of the special attention the Council gives to the lot of women and girls who live in life-threatening conditions in armed conflict zones and daily pay a heavy toll. Ten years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), what account can we give?

First of all, we can legitimately welcome some achievements, notably at the institutional level, with the appointment of Ms. Margot Wallström as Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Another gain is the identification by the Secretary-General of 26 indicators for the monitoring and revitalization of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) (reports of the Secretary-General S/2010/173 and S/2010/498). We should also mention the adoption of resolution 1882 (2009), which allows the specific consideration of the case of girls, by extending the monitoring and reporting mechanism on sexual violence against children and the killing and maiming of children. We also note the initiatives taken by States, the United Nations system, regional organizations and civil society in particular, in the realms of the prevention of sexual violence, the promotion of gender equality, the training of mediators, the strengthening of the capacity for women and others.

Unfortunately, that progress and all of those efforts and the regular consideration of the issue of women and peace and security by the Security Council have not ensured the protection of women and girls during conflicts, nor their full involvement and participation at all stages of the peace process, not to mention the fact that the issue of the inequalities and disparities between men and women continues to be a challenge.

With respect to sexual violence, the situation is the more terrible for its unequalled scale and the unspeakable suffering of its victims. Even some refugee camps and displaced persons camps have become unsafe places for women and girls, instead of being islands of peace. We note, among other obstacles, the low degree of access of women and girls to basic social services and legal mechanisms and the meagre participation of women in peace negotiation processes. With such a record, what should be our response and what actions should be taken?

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), we think that it is necessary to step up our commitment to a complete implementation of its noble objectives in a number of ways. That includes making the protection of women and girls an absolute priority at the legislative, judicial, regulatory and operational levels; strengthening the participation of women in the process of settling and mediating conflicts, including during decision-making processes; and consciousness raising among the different parties so that they realize that they must carry out their respective obligations and fully assume their responsibilities. Other important steps are the economic reintegration of women, including former combatants, and taking into account gender issues in security sector and judicial reform; wide publication of resolution 1325 (2000) to combat wide-spread ignorance of the resolution; dialogue with non-State actors in cooperation with States, so as to inform them of and sensitize them to the content of the fundamental texts and their responsibilities; and calling on States to

adopt plans of action featuring clear objectives and deadlines, with the involvement of women's groups in the conception, formulation and implementation of those policies.

One of the challenges for an ideal implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) remains coordination. Given the multisectoral nature of the issue, every entity and agency of the United Nations should play its role, in the framework of a common, coherent effort capitalizing on individual strengths. From that point of view, we hope that the appointment of the Under-Secretary-General for UN Women, Michelle Bachelet — whom we congratulate — will help fulfil the need for rationality, coherence and coordination.

To conclude, I would like to recall that my country, Burkina Faso, adopted in 2009 a national gender policy, which was drawn up in a participatory and inclusive way. For its implementation a three-year plan of action — 2011 to 2013 — was drafted and adopted. In terms of gender equality, the adoption of a law setting quotas of 30 per cent in the legislative and municipal elections is an important step forward. Its implementation will certainly contribute to better representation of women in politics.

On 15 December 2009, Burkina Faso also launched a programme to combat violence against women. This year it commemorated the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women with the clear motto: "The consequences of violence against women on victims, families and communities". Our national women's forum, set up in 2008, is a high-level forum exclusively focused on the specific concerns of women and presided over by the head of State personally. The latest of these was held last month and was an opportunity for the Government to launch the African Women's Decade: 2010-2020.

The issue of women and peace and security will not find a definitive solution without the complete empowerment of women and their full participation in the lives of their communities and countries. That is why Burkina Faso again welcomes the establishment of UN Women in this year marking the tenth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000). We hope that that entity will enjoy all the support necessary for the success of its mandate. As with all of the bodies responsible for protecting women, Burkina Faso will also provide for its support.