

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

***Statement by Her Excellency Paulette A. Bethel, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bahamas to the United Nations***

Like previous speakers, I would like to commend you, Mr. President, for your initiative in organizing this important event.

This meeting marks an important milestone — the tenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). My delegation praises the valiant efforts of the countless people who have worked tirelessly to put women at the centre of global efforts for peace, not only in responding to their needs as victims, but — equally importantly — in drawing on women’s talents as peacemakers. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2010/498), notable efforts have been made by the United Nations system, Member States, civil society and other actors across a broad range of areas. We have seen increased participation of women in decision-making roles and peacekeeping operations, which is indicative of the important role that women can and must play in the development of peace.

However, despite this progress, we continue to receive shocking reports of atrocious abuses and sexual violence against women in conflict zones, as recently occurred in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Warring parties must first and foremost halt all systematic and individual abuses against women. My delegation believes that the Security Council and the international community as a whole owe it to these victims and others around the world to do much more to prevent such crimes, punish the perpetrators and establish conditions where violence against women is treated like the societal anathema it is. The Council has a special responsibility to enable the United Nations to do the best job it can on this front.

This meeting is an opportunity for us all to declare our commitment to achieving this goal. But it should be more. It should spark concrete action, through a more coherent and coordinated approach geared towards helping women, not next year or next month, but right now, today.

My fellow countrywomen and countrymen in the Bahamas count ourselves most fortunate, for we have no first-hand knowledge of the horrors and ravages of war and civil strife. Nonetheless, we feel the pain and suffering of our fellow human beings caught up in conflict and war in other parts of the world, particularly the women and children who are disproportionately affected by such negative circumstances. As noted by Martin Luther King, Jr., “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere”, and one might correctly extrapolate from that notable quote that conflict anywhere is a threat to peace everywhere. For this reason, we feel compelled to lend our voice to this important debate today and to recognize the important role of women in this process.

In recognition of the meaningful participation of women at all stages of the peace process, including disarmament, and in the integration of a gender perspective, we note the recent introduction of a draft resolution in the First Committee (A/C.1/65/L.39), spearheaded by our sister Caribbean Community country of Trinidad and Tobago, on women, disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, and we welcome this as another important step in the right direction.

We welcome the fact that since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the Security Council has given this issue increased attention. But we urge members of the Council and all other countries to back these declarations and directives with appropriate resources: police, troops, funds, equipment and training. These are solid tools that can be used in assisting individual women to surmount their circumstances and contribute to lasting peace and the development of their communities and countries. Currently, just 8 per cent of the 13,000 United Nations police officers are women. The Organization must promote the recruitment and training of more skilled women, not only as police officers but at all levels, especially in leadership positions.

The Secretary-General’s assertion that “securing lasting peace and security requires commitment and ownership of decisions by Member States as well as all parties to armed conflict” (S/2010/498, para. 81) should serve as an axiom undergirding all our efforts in this regard. It is an axiom that cuts across gender lines, cultures and levels of development, and it demands the support of us all. If we can empower all of the good

words and positive intentions in this Chamber with real action, that will unleash the much more transformative power of the world's women and usher in a better future for all. This must be done with the full engagement, participation, cooperation and support of men.

Finally, we are greatly encouraged by the appointments of Margot Wallström as the Secretary-General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict and Michelle Bachelet as the Executive Director of UN Women. My delegation is confident that the leadership roles these two women will play in their respective arenas will greatly advance the causes that have brought us together today, and I assure them both of my delegation's support and cooperation.