

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security

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Statement by Mr. Alain Le Roy, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations

Resolution 1325 (2000) has fundamentally changed the conduct of peacekeeping operations over the past 10 years. As we implemented a wide range of multidimensional mandates to stabilize and support peaceful transitions in every region of the globe, from Afghanistan to Liberia to Timor-Leste, that landmark resolution guided us in our efforts to support women's participation in peace processes and to improve the protection of women in post-conflict situations. It placed women's participation at the centre of all efforts for an inclusive and lasting peace.

Ten years on, we have made some progress, but not as much as we would have wanted. We still face immense challenges.

A few months ago, the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and of Field Support — DPKO and DFS — launched a joint study to review with our partners our implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in post-conflict situations, the impact of our efforts to date and the implications for our workplan. That exercise has confirmed a certain number of important lessons. Allow me to underscore some of them here.

In Afghanistan, Darfur and Timor-Leste, we have seen to what extent the leaders of our peacekeeping operations can use their good offices to facilitate women's participation in political processes. The experience in the Democratic Republic of Congo clearly shows that forming partnerships with women in post-conflict situations greatly enhances our understanding of the operational environment. It should, therefore, enable us to further increase our ability to protect women and children from sexual violence in those countries, which is clearly vital despite the very difficult circumstances of which we are all aware.

We have seen in Liberia and Haiti how effective the links of female peacekeepers with the local population have been, particularly in internally displaced persons camps, as in Haiti, for example. Besides their professional qualities, those women model the principle of gender equality.

With regard to police personnel, beyond the presence of a woman — who is seated behind me — at the head of our entire police force around the world, we have set up a plan to enable us to achieve a 20 per cent proportion of our worldwide police personnel being female by 2014. As for our 15 peacekeeping missions, three are now led by women, while none were a few years ago. That is a proportion of 20 per cent — 20 per cent of our peacekeeping operations are led by women.

Moreover, our multidimensional operations have greatly benefited from the recruitment of gender advisers in each of our missions. Those advisers have provided valuable technical expertise in the Sudan, on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; in Chad, on prison reform; in Burundi, on election support; and in Afghanistan, on constitutional reform. That helped gain significant percentages of female representation in the parliaments, as Ms. Bachelet said, in particular, 25 per cent in Afghanistan and more than 30 per cent in Burundi.

The development of manuals and training tools for the Blue Helmets has promoted gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping missions and in predeployment planning and training of troops and police.

Naturally, we know that peacekeeping missions must cooperate closely with other United Nations partners present in the country in order to deliver coherent support that can be sustained when our missions withdraw. Our common response should, of course, demonstrate our unwavering commitment to the rights of women.

In addition to those lessons, we can also cite a number of developments on the broader global and peacekeeping agenda in recent years that will influence our future strategy.

In the first instance, there are many more actors engaged in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) at the field level today than was the case 10 years ago. Besides the gender expertise available within peacekeeping missions, many of our United Nations partner entities are also deploying gender experts to post-conflict

countries. That requires that we strengthen the coordination of our efforts on the ground. Too often, actual strength on the ground to coordinate and implement is weak.

The protection of civilians has assumed central priority in the work of peacekeeping today. We have initiated a broad policy and operational reform effort, including training, guidance and planning. Together with the Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Wallström, and other United Nations partners, we are advancing a broad protection agenda.

Drawing on lessons and emerging trends, I would like to advance five key elements of our future strategy.

First, the necessary financing must be in place to support implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) — which has not always been the case.

Secondly, our focus in future must be on building the capacities of women to build and sustain peace in their own countries. We must invest more in facilitating women's participation in political processes and in newly restructured security sector institutions. We must also work closely with local women to identify and implement protection strategies. That requires us to draw on local women's perspectives and contributions in the planning and drawdown phases of peacekeeping missions to ensure sustainable outcomes.

Thirdly, we will continue to engage closely with troop- and police-contributing countries to help them prepare military and police personnel with the knowledge, skills, expertise and profile to effectively implement resolution 1325 (2000). To ensure that women are included among civilian peacekeepers, we will also press forward with efforts to improve conditions in the field and to realize the goal of harmonized conditions of service across the common system.

Fourthly, during the early post-conflict phases, when peacekeeping missions have the largest presence and resources on the ground, we will continue to provide the leadership and coordination of an integrated United Nations response. Like everyone here, I am sure, we welcome the establishment of UN Women and the appointment of Under-Secretary-General Bachelet, and we look forward to the promise of strengthened field coordination to ensure that we deliver as one.

Fifthly, we will actively support the strengthening of accountability and monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The recently developed standardized indicators are a welcome development. The specific indicators related to peacekeeping are, in fact, part of our existing reporting templates and guidelines.

Our greatest indicator of success must remain, however, the extent to which our collective energies contribute to building a sustainable, nationally owned platform from which local women, working with men, can themselves define, shape and influence the course of peace in their countries.