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**STATEMENT BY
AMBASSADOR HENRI-PAUL NORMANDIN
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CANADA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL
OPEN DEBATE ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY**

NEW YORK, 29 OCTOBER 2008

**DÉCLARATION DE
L'AMBASSADEUR HENRI-PAUL NORMANDIN
REPRÉSENTANT PERMANENT ADJOINT DU CANADA
AUPRÈS DES NATIONS UNIES**

**AU DÉBAT PUBLIC DU CONSEIL DE SÉCURITÉ SUR
LES FEMMES, LA PAIX ET LA SÉCURITÉ**

NEW YORK, LE 29 OCTOBRE 2008

Mr. President,

On behalf of the Government of Canada, I wish to thank China, as President of the Security Council, for convening this open debate on women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

In the landmark resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, the Security Council called for women's participation and their full involvement in all efforts to prevent conflicts, resolve conflicts and build lasting peace. Eight years later, we have only begun to answer that call.

The UN and its Member States have undertaken some important work toward increasing the representation and participation of women. We now have a significant body of research findings on which to base our work, and many clear and widely-known best practices. For instance, when women are visible among military and civilian personnel in peacekeeping operations, they send a powerful signal to women in the community. When sexual violence cases are prosecuted at the outset, impunity for crimes targeted at women is diminished as an obstacle to women's engagement in building peace. When women are at the peace table, a more inclusive and sustainable peace is negotiated. It is now widely-known that women's full and equal participation is not only just: It is also fundamental to the achievement of peace and security.

Mr. President,

We know what is needed: vastly increased representation of women at all levels of decision-making. As negotiators, mediators and observers in peace negotiations. As civilian police, peacekeepers, military observers, and human rights and humanitarian personnel in UN field operations. As Special Representatives of the Secretary General.

As of today, there is only one woman among the Special Representatives of the Secretary General. Among UN Special Envoys, there are none.

Mr. President,

In his most recent report, the Secretary General noted the excellent work done by UNIFEM and UNDP, among others, in promoting women's participation in both formal and informal peace processes, including those in Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nepal, Somalia and Sudan. In Sudan, Canada has provided technical assistance to integrate women's rights and equality concerns into peace negotiations and to strengthen the participation of women in the Darfur peace process. Canada is also assisting UNICEF to roll out mobile mine risk education (MRE) teams in Sudan. At present, nearly half of MRE team members are women who have been trained to deliver messages and information on the risk of landmines and unexploded ordnances to internally displaced persons, returnees and school children. In Nepal, Canada has supported the formation of more than forty women-led community peace groups, which have proven to be effective vehicles for reconciliation and local conflict resolution, as well as a registration process for ex-combatants through which 2,000 under-age fighters, some of them girls, will receive access to rehabilitation services. In Peru, Guatemala and Colombia, Canada has supported grassroots women's organizations to address impunity and seek reparation for gender-based violence during armed conflict.

Only 7.4 per cent of UN police personnel in peace support operations, and 10 per cent of those deployed by Canada, are women. Canada is undertaking recruiting efforts to increase the representation of women police officers in missions with an awareness of the impact this can have on the host country's perception of the role of women in peace and security. In this regard, we look to India's all-female Formed Police Unit, the UN's first all-female contingent, deployed to Liberia, as an inspiration and model of best practices. This contingent has inspired Liberian women to take part in their country's reconstruction, to join the police force and to contribute to the country's overall security.

Canada has deployed a gender advisor to Afghanistan's Ministry of the Interior to assist in the development of policies and programs aimed at increasing the representation of women in the Afghan National Police. This project has had tangible success in raising gender awareness among police, collaborating with international agencies on police-related gender matters, acquiring funds for gender initiatives, and introducing gender-related programs into policing such as a family response unit and a pilot female patrol in a women's park. Increasing the participation of women in police and civilian units in UN peace support operations, along with the role of gender advisors, will assist operations to fulfill their protection.

With the adoption of Resolution 1820 in June this year, the Security Council recognized the critical relationship between sexual violence as a weapon of war and the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as the fundamental importance of women's participation in all processes related to ending sexual violence in conflict. Canada is pleased to be supporting the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre in the development and delivery of two courses on "Sexual and gender-based violence Intervention, Prevention and Investigation" to 60 African police personnel currently deployed to UNAMID to take place in November and December 2008. The training of primarily female investigators as well as their male counterparts will enhance UNAMID's capacity to accurately report and illustrate the nature and scope of this violence in the mission area. Canada calls upon the Security Council to identify, report and respond systematically and comprehensively to all sexual violence in the countries on the Council's agenda. The evidence demonstrates that part of this response must be support for women's participation in the peace process.

Despite efforts such as these – and many more such efforts have been undertaken by Canada and other Member States and by UN entities: -- progress has been slow and unreliable.

New research by UNIFEM demonstrates that in the minority of cases in which this information is available, women's participation in negotiating delegations to peace talks has averaged approximately 7 per cent in recent years. Clearly the ad hoc approach that has been applied to women's participation in peace and security efforts until now is not having the desired effect. Increased women's participation requires a long-term commitment to apply systematically the measures that are known to have a positive and sustained impact. It requires the systematic inclusion of women in all peace processes, including peace talks. By now this should be a standard practice.

We know that well-trained, well-resourced, full-time gender advisors can provide valuable technical guidance to UN mission staff. Currently there are thirteen full-time gender advisors in UN peacekeeping operations, including integrated missions such as

UNMIL, UNOCI, MONUC, MINUSTAH, UNAMID, UNMIS and UNAMA. Every UN mission should have a full-time gender advisor whose work is systematically integrated throughout the operation, with institutionalized access to the mission leadership, and stable resources to carry out their functions. By now this too should be a standard practice.

Mr. President,

Canada is convinced that a sustained and systematic approach to the inclusion of women in the promotion of peace and security will enable us to reach our shared goal of full, equal and meaningful participation by women across all efforts to build and maintain peace and security. Lasting peace depends upon it.