

CHILE

MISION PERMANENTE ANTE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS

SECURITY COUNCIL

STATEMENT OF THE DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVE
OF CHILE TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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“WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY”

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(Check against delivery)

Mr. President,

I wish to thank you for this timely debate and to congratulate you on your resolute and outstanding performance as President of the Security Council during a particularly demanding month.

Mr. President,

One year has gone by since the Secretary-General submitted to us his report containing a large number of recommendations, which we firmly supported, although it seems that progress towards their implementation has not been what we expected.

I will begin my statement by quoting textually an extract from this report, which we believe to be particularly significant because it explains in simple terms the situation to which we are referring and which has given rise to this and other discussions: *"Women do not enjoy equal status with men in any society. Where cultures of violence and discrimination against women and girls exist prior to conflict, they will be exacerbated during conflict. If women do not participate in the decision-making structures of a society, they are unlikely to become involved in decisions about the conflict or the peace process that follows."*

We fully concur with this statement, since it shows that in order to achieve the full participation of women in all stages of a conflict situation, from prevention to reconstruction, it is necessary to approach the problem from a broader perspective, in which gender equity is achieved in all areas of action.

Thus far, we have worked to ensure that women are adequately protected in conflict situations and the vast majority of decisions have been taken in their name.

In this regard, we fully agree with the Secretary-General when he stated in his report that the participation of women and girls and the mainstreaming of the gender perspective into both informal and official processes are key to ensuring that political structures, economic and social institutions and the security mechanisms agreed upon in peace talks facilitate the achievement of greater equality between women and men.

Mr. President,

Even though the most extraordinary social, political and economic transformation of the last century has been the emergence of women as leaders in almost all countries and social classes, unfortunately, the indices of the participation by women in decision-making processes, in general, are still extremely low, especially in conflict situations. In our view, only the full participation of women in global affairs can open up greater opportunities for achieving world peace.

There is still no unanimous view as to the possible reasons for the failure to achieve gender balance and equity. At the recent seminar last November in Chile on "The role of women in peacekeeping operations", mention was made of various currents of research on this topic. Some see the problem in terms of women encountering more difficulties in progressing within a static and highly hierarchical organization, while others are of the opinion that the culture of an organization shapes the view of what men and women can achieve and if a certain job is believed to be only for men, then women will not be expected to be successful at it. Still others believe that it is a cultural problem in which women are not seen as "providers", since men are the main providers.

Some years ago, the Secretary-General said that if we accept that in any society gender equality is more than a goal in itself, if we believe that the empowerment of women is a crucial tool for overcoming the challenges of sustainable development, if we argue that the participation of women is a requirement for promoting good governance, if we insist that women's rights are essential for ensuring the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance; if we are convinced of all these things in relation to all the societies that we are trying to help in this world, how then can we be incapable of applying this same approach in our own societies, in our own homes?

Mr. President,

The time has come to bridge the gap between talk and action. In numerous and comprehensive discussions we have covered nearly all elements related to the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into the stages of any peace process. We have available to us a great deal of information on the problem of women and girls in the field, their strengths and weaknesses. We have pledged to take a series of steps and we have managed to create a solid international legal framework. However, in practice, we still have not been able to implement all of the above.

We believe that one of the courses of action to take in order to achieve the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) is to seek to develop efficient follow-up mechanisms that would permit us to more systematically monitor implementation.

Permit me to refer here to one of the proposals made last year by the distinguished representative of the United Kingdom, namely, to request each year a member of the Council to follow-up the implementation of our agreed decisions on mainstreaming the gender perspective, by working with the relevant organs of the Secretariat to achieve this goal. Perhaps now is the time to explore this type of initiative. Chile stands ready to participate in this exercise.

In this connection, it should also be mentioned that another initiative to explore is that the reports of the Secretariat on peacekeeping operations contain a specific chapter on gender issues in relation to resolution 1325 (2000), so that ongoing evaluation takes place of how mandates on the status of women in peacekeeping operations are being fulfilled.

It should also be mentioned that the proposals emanating from the seminar held in Chile included a number of interesting ones which I take this opportunity to highlight: one was the development of regional approaches to identifying strategies for the implementation of the resolution. To this end, approaches could also be made to appropriate regional entities both within and outside the United Nations system that can collaborate in implementation activities. The seminar also recommended the establishment of a high-level gender unit with adequate resources within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to coordinate and provide backstopping for the work of high-level advisers on gender issues in all missions and to develop mechanisms to ensure systematic linkages between the Security Council and civil society. In all of these proposals, we believe that the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General has important contributions to make, especially in the area of linkages between the Council and civil society.

With regard to the latter, Mr. President, I wish to reiterate that the task of achieving the full implementation of this crucial resolution is a joint one, in which not only governments but also the United Nations system and civil society must participate. We cannot but highlight the acknowledged role of civil society, especially the networks of women's organizations working in the field, whose sacrifice and dedication have been, in some cases, critical to improving living conditions in conflict situations. Chile considers their work in these and other areas to be of particular importance and we have demonstrated this by our participation in numerous activities in collaboration with them.

Mr. President,

The process of peacekeeping operations has evolved from inter-State conflicts to intra-State conflicts, which have their origins inter-alia, in economic, social and ethnic factors and the unequal distribution of resources. To this end, the United Nations, and especially this Council, has steadily improved its reaction capacity and developed mechanisms to deal with such situations. Where we are still falling short of our commitments is in ensuring that women play their due role in these processes. We wish to reiterate our commitment to achieving this objective.

Thank you very much.