

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security – 29 October 2008
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CONGO

Mr. Biaboroh-Iboro (Congo) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, Sir, I would like to express my delegation's pleasure at seeing you presiding over this traditional debate on implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). A debate on this issue of universal importance follows up on the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing; it is an issue which today continues to be of major concern.

I take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his report on women and peace and security (S/2008/622), which enlightens us with regard to implementation of the resolution at all levels. We also thank Ms. Rachel Mayanja, Mr. Alain Le Roy, Ms. Inés Alberdi and Ms. Sarah Taylor for their informative statements.

At the current stage, what assessment can we make of the effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), eight years after it was adopted? My delegation has studied the Secretary-General's report with keen interest and wishes to make the following comments.

In general terms, a reading of the report makes apparent weaknesses in the statistics that could allow us to better assess the impact of actions taken with regard to women's participation in the various areas studied. For instance, in paragraph 41, there is nothing to support the assertion that peacekeeping missions have facilitated the participation of women in the elections of some countries. Furthermore, there is a discrepancy between the many measures taken by Member States and the international community to increase the participation of women in certain domains and the actual results that have been achieved. We can ask ourselves about the relevance of some of the measures taken.

As for the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, it is undeniable that sexual violence has become commonplace, and the general climate of impunity does not favour the rigorous application of resolution 1325 (2000). Indeed, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in Uganda, in the Sudan, in Burundi, in the Central African Republic and in Haiti, past and ongoing conflicts have all been characterized by the massive and systematic use of sexual crimes, usually committed by armed groups if not by forces of law and order or even by peacekeeping troops. Moreover, sexual violence is common in post-conflict periods as well.

My delegation welcomes the adoption of resolution 1820 (2008), but we eagerly await the publication of the Secretary-General's report on that topic. My delegation also expresses its support for the principle of zero-tolerance advocated by the United Nations, which should be more rigorously enforced.

As for the protection and representation of women, despite efforts made by the United Nations and the remarkable on-site work of non-governmental organizations, much remains to be done, particularly in combating sexual violence and in promoting the access of women to decision-making positions, especially in the areas of peace and security. We will need greater mobilization, by both the international community and Member States, in order to maintain previous gains with a view to reducing the inequalities observed at various levels in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

We wish to congratulate the 10 Member States who have drawn up national plans of action to

establish strategic measures in the framework of the full application of the resolution. We urge the other Member States to do the same.

As for measures aimed at capacity-building for Member States, my delegation notes the efforts made with a view to managing activities to support gender equality and the emancipation of women. Nevertheless, we feel that the international community, including the United Nations, has an essential role to play in national capacity-building, in particular as it regards defining policies and strategies on women, peace and security. Greater financial and human resources must be allocated in order to achieve the objectives.

There is no peace without sustainable development and there is no development without a lasting peace. In this interplay, the role of women alongside men must be addressed and must be promoted and strengthened in all peace processes. It is regrettable that women are not called on much in the decision-making on crisis resolution and are generally skipped over in negotiations or peace agreements processes.

My country, which has experienced internal armed conflicts for an entire decade, has not been spared that situation, but the Government is taking measures to integrate the gender dimension when we draw up policies and programmes. At the subregional level, Congolese women are taking active roles in activities related to the security and stability of the Great Lakes region.

In seeking lasting peace, the first ladies of Africa took stock of the problem in 1997, in Nigeria, by establishing the Mission of the First Ladies of Africa, known as MIPREDA. As part of that process, the sixth conference of that organization was held in Brazzaville from 12 to 15 February 2008 with the theme "Civil and humanitarian diplomacy and gender issues in the maintenance of peace in Africa". At the end of the conference, the First Ladies adopted, in the spirit of resolution 1325 (2000), a declaration and a plan of action for 2008-2010, seeking to increase the involvement of women in the management, settlement and prevention of conflicts and in the peacebuilding process. They also established a continent-wide network of women involved in peace negotiations.

My delegation hopes that the presidential statement to be issued at the close of this debate will contribute to promoting the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), which, in our view, is inseparably linked to other relevant decisions of the Security Council, particularly 1612 (2005) on children in armed conflicts, 1625 (2005) on conflict prevention, 1674 (2006) on protection of civilians in armed conflicts and 1820 (2008) on sexual violence against women.