

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security- 23 October 2007
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COSTA RICA

Mr. Urbina (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to start by thanking the President for convening this open debate on women and peace and security.

Costa Rica would like to reiterate its commitment to the defence and promotion of human rights of women and girls. It expresses its concern because, in spite of some progress made in this area, the Organization as a whole today is not sufficiently prepared to face the grave challenges that are urgent in this context. The violence against women, especially in situations of armed conflict, has become an endemic problem. For this reason, it should be approached comprehensively with a time-horizon that goes beyond the immediate and with mechanisms that go beyond well-intentioned improvisation.

It is ironic that women are excluded almost completely from the peace processes when it is they who most suffer the consequences of armed conflict. It is they who are the great majority of the refugees and displaced persons; and it is they who are the most likely to be victims of all consequences of wars. I say it is ironic because it is generally recognized that women are agents of change and engines for development. For this reason, Costa Rica would like women to have a major role and effective participation in any decisions taken in areas of conflict prevention and conflict resolution, as well as in the design and implementation of reconstruction and peacebuilding.

There are few situations where the link between peace, security, development and human rights is as clear as in gender-based issues. To ensure progress towards lasting peace and security and towards the effective protection of human rights of all individuals in situations of armed conflict, Costa Rica is convinced that it is necessary to give women effective empowerment. The United Nations should facilitate and promote national activities aimed at that objective.

Furthermore, the multidimensionality of the problems of women and girls in situations of armed conflict requires a systemic approach. In that connection, Costa Rica understands that all United Nations organs and programmes should participate in an active and coordinated manner in efforts to overcome the great challenges in this area. We are concerned at the compartmentalization of issues that, by their very nature, are entirely cross-cutting, as the Secretary-General indicates in his note contained in document A/61/583. For that reason, we consider it imperative to move forward without delay in discussing and taking swift decisions regarding the Organization's gender architecture.

At the same time, Costa Rica believes it is important to strengthen the political commitment of all actors. In that connection, we wish to reaffirm the importance of fulfilling the commitments set out in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as those made at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, particularly with regard to attaining the six strategic objectives of the Platform for Action pertaining to armed conflict.

We are convinced of the need to support States — particularly those that find themselves in or emerging from a situation of armed conflict — in capacitybuilding in the areas of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Mindful of that priority consideration, we urge that the 2008-2009 Action Plan be updated to make it a results-based instrument

through monitoring and reporting in its thematic areas. We look forward to the assessment of the results of this support tool.

Finally, despite all the challenges still facing us, it is important to highlight and recognize the efforts of the Security Council and of the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system aimed at the effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). We also welcome supplementary efforts in that regard, with special mention of the work of the International Criminal Court to criminalize sexual and gender-based violence and to protect civilians in armed conflict.

A coordinated, coherent and results-based response that promotes and encourages fulfilment of the commitments made by States over the years is the best way to guarantee that peace, security, sustainable development and respect for human rights will be the pillars supporting the future of our nations.