

**Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security**  
**October 28, 2011, Security Council Chamber**

*Statement by H.E. Mr. Mikec, Representative of Croatia*

Let me begin by extending our congratulations to you, Madam President, and to your delegation on your presidency of the Security Council for the month of October and by assuring you of our full support, as the issue at hand is of vital importance to the Republic of Croatia.

Croatia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the delegation of the European Union. I would like to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

The adoption by the Security Council of resolution 1325 (2000) bears testimony to the progress made during the past decade in the area of women and peace and security. That landmark resolution has brought much-needed attention to the question of women's empowerment, which represents a priority for my country. While all the resolutions on women and peace and security are equally important, resolution 1325 (2000) serves as an umbrella resolution in addressing women's empowerment, their task as peacebuilders and their fragile position as victims of war.

The Republic of Croatia welcomes the latest report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of that resolution (S/2011/598\*), the recommendations contained therein and the presidential statement adopted by the Council today (S/PRST/2011/20). Furthermore, Croatia commends the roles of and work done by both the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Wallström, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Ms. Coomaraswamy.

We call upon the Security Council to intensify its efforts in the fight against impunity and to provide strong and effective leadership in strengthening the rule of law, with the ultimate aim of eradicating this abhorrent behaviour. The Council should include sexual violence as a priority element in resolutions mandating its sanctions committees, and they should explicitly include sexual violence as a criterion for the designation of political and military leaders for targeted measures. Perpetrators of sexual violence, including commanders who commission or condone the use of sexual violence, should be held accountable. Furthermore, we encourage strengthening the coordination among United Nations agencies both at Headquarters and in the field, especially in monitoring and reporting on situations where parties to armed conflict engage in rape and other sexual violence as means of war.

Although women are widely recognized as effective agents of peace, they still have little access to decision-making positions and peace negotiations. Women in the aftermath of conflict have little or no protection or access to services, justice and economic security, and those are the areas in which women's needs and gaps in response are most evident. Furthermore, the inclusion of women and gender expertise in peacebuilding activities is essential to reconstituting political, legal, cultural and socio-economic and social structures. Gender equality brings new degrees of democratic inclusiveness to peacebuilding, faster and more durable economic growth, and human and social capital recovery.

Those opportunities, however, can be enhanced significantly depending on how the international community sets its priorities for recovery and uses its strategies for peacebuilding. Those priorities should consist of specific national and international policies aimed at increasing women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution, mediation, peace negotiations and peacebuilding. The integration

of the resolution has to be country-driven, and Member States need to take responsibility for its success by ensuring that it is integrated into national policies. We urge countries to apply a broad gender-mainstreaming approach across Government, for instance through a system-wide approach that links development, humanitarian and defence issues. All plans should include civil society consultations, as well as monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

I am very pleased to say that the Croatian Government has recently adopted its national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and related resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009). The basic objective is to support and monitor their implementation at all levels. At the local level, that can be done through the mitigation of the effects of conflicts and crises and by mainstreaming the gender awareness of our local population, while at the national level it will be set as part of Government programmes. Furthermore, Croatia will remain actively involved in the work of international organizations engaged in the areas covered by the resolutions in question.

As a country with authentic experience in the field of conflict prevention and resolution, as well as mediation and peacebuilding, Croatia is actively contributing to the realization of the objective of the resolution during both times of conflict and times of peace. As a way of contributing to international peace and security, Croatia is increasingly taking part in peacekeeping operations, thereby informing our perception of the role of women in preserving peace as special and unique. The lack of women's empowerment poses a major setback to the full achievement of human rights and overall economic and political development and progress.

Croatia's policy in this regard is directed towards the substantial deployment of women in peacekeeping operations, in both the armed forces and police, as their presence reinforces the importance of women's perspective and represents added value for all initiatives aimed at achieving peace. Our national action plan will contribute to the implementation of specific tasks in a more consistent and coordinated manner, setting up measurable appropriate indicators and raising interest in women's participation in issues related to peace and security.

Following the completion of the four-year period the plan has been set up for, it will be revised in the light of its performance. Specific measures in the plan are suitable for implementation in coordination with efforts by civil society and religious organizations engaged in providing humanitarian aid and development assistance.