

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security
Tuesday, 26th October 2010, Security Council Chamber (GA-TSC-01)

Statement by His Excellency Mr. Hamidon Ali, President of the Economic and Social Council

At the outset, Sir, I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to address the Security Council in my capacity as President of the Economic and Social Council on the important issue of women, peace and security.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women are cross-cutting issues for all development policies and, indeed, increasingly for all international policies. The Economic and Social Council has taken the full dimension of this requirement and reviews on an annual basis how the United Nations system mainstreams gender perspectives in its activities. This exercise is of much relevance to the activities carried out in the field of peace and security, as many of the issues at stake are multifaceted.

Over the years, the Economic and Social Council has promoted a comprehensive approach to peace, stability and development. Its discussions on the transition from relief to development, leading to groundbreaking agreed conclusions in 1998 and an annual follow-up process at the Council's substantive sessions, are based on the demonstrated need to integrate relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development into a continuum that increases the coherence of international support. Peacebuilding is an additional dimension of international efforts that can now be added to this approach. The Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti has also formulated specific recommendations on the gender dimension of international support to Haiti. I invite the Security Council to take them into account.

Violence against women in conflict and postconflict situations is both a development and a security challenge that calls for action on a common front by United Nations Charter and other intergovernmental bodies. Violence against women profoundly affects not only the health and safety of women but also the political, economic and social stability of their nations. As such, United Nations intergovernmental bodies — in particular, the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and its Commission on the Status of Women, as well as the Peacebuilding Commission — all have a role to play in fostering international action to eliminate this scourge and deliver results.

I therefore wish to suggest a sharing of tasks among these various bodies in order to accelerate mutually reinforcing efforts in this crucial field. For example, the Economic and Social Council could ensure follow-up and monitoring of the indicators developed by its Statistical Commission on violence against women. Given its strong experience in reviewing the achievement of development objectives, particularly the Millennium Development Goals, the Council could engage in this task with the real knowhow and institutional backup of the United Nations system at large.

2010 has been a very constructive year for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women at the United Nations. The Commission on the Status of Women reviewed the Beijing Platform for Action in March; the Economic and Social Council adopted a ministerial declaration on the matter in July following its annual ministerial review devoted to gender equality and the empowerment of women; and the General Assembly decided on the creation of UN Women in July, a major step forward for the operationalization of United Nations work in this field.

2011 will provide important opportunities to follow up on those events. At its coordination segment in July, the Economic and Social Council will review the coordinated follow-up and implementation of the ministerial declaration adopted this year. In so doing, it will focus on the further mainstreaming of the gender dimension in the work of the system at large and will address the programmatic aspect of the work of UN Women. The specific constituency, institutional weight and networks of the Council, which relate to what is commonly presented as its convening power, will be used to ensure the political significance and broad visibility of this exercise. This opportunity could be used for a joint event with the Peacebuilding Commission in order to review the status of women in peacebuilding settings. It could also be an opportunity for a presentation by the President of the Security Council to the Economic and Social Council.

By maintaining close dialogue among our different bodies, we can strengthen the impact of the United Nations voice in our common areas of work. I trust that this meeting today has been a valuable step in this direction.