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**STATEMENT BY MR. FILIMONE KAU,  
CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES OF FIJI TO THE UNITED NATIONS,  
DURING THE SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN DEBATE  
ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY  
26 OCTOBER 2006, UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK**

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Mr. President,

Fiji aligns itself with the statement by the Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2006/770) on women, peace and security. The report has identified the gaps and opportunities presented by the System-wide Action Plan and accordingly provides for some remedies. We urge the Council to adopt its recommendations and also call on member states to play their roles as necessary.

Mr. President,

Fiji regards Security Council Resolution 1325 (SCR 1325) as the international instrument that provides guidance to national policies and practices in all aspects of conflict prevention, peace negotiations, and post conflict reconstruction. More important, the resolution is the authority on the gender dimensions and women's role in these areas and in particular peacekeeping and peacebuilding. We therefore support the call for the expeditious implementation of the actions that would enhance and accelerate implementation of SCR 1325, in particular by the UN systems through the engagement of member states and other actors. All parts of the United Nations system must, in partnership with member states, own and drive the process if gender equality measures outlined in the Resolution are to be realized.

We also call on the international community and partners to assist member states in need of assistance in the implementation process. An area needing immediate attention is the development of national action plans as a remedy for unsystematic and ad-hoc implementation at the national level. Small developing countries like Fiji need guidance and partnerships in areas of capacity and technical skills on the formulation and implementation of national plans and strategies on SCR 1325. Such action plans and strategies must be developed after wide consultations with civil society organizations and other stakeholders, and should include monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

For six years, the Security Council has been seized with the issue and despite some milestones, which include the formulation of the Plan, we believe more could be achieved. The options for a focal point and an expert level working group to ensure effective integration of SCR 1325 into the Council's work are propositions that Fiji continues to advocate. As a member of the inaugural Peacebuilding Commission, we will also be calling for more active efforts from both the Commission and the Support Office to ensure effective action oriented programmes for women's involvement in peacebuilding.

Mr. President,

Our Pacific leaders in their meeting held in Nadi, Fiji this week have reaffirmed their commitment to the operationalisation of SCR 1325 in Forum Island countries. The Secretariat of the Forum has been tasked to provide appropriate technical assistance to member countries through the frameworks of the Pacific Plan and the 2000 Biketawa Declaration.

We also commend other partners and in particular UNIFEM, which has been a strong player in advancing SCR 1325 through their Women, Peace and Security programmes in the region for their support and assistance in national programmes. Fiji has been a direct beneficiary of UNIFEM support programmes in the Pacific for which we are grateful and ask other UN agencies to follow suit.

A USAID funded project entitled 'Resolution 1325 for policy makers and NGOs' in the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Fiji, will see the training of a core group of women's NGOs and key policy makers on SCR 1325 and ensure its translation into local languages and adopt appropriate strategies for its implementation.

Mr. President,

Women in Fiji have been active in peacekeeping efforts even though we continue to be confronted with the challenges and limitations, including the lack of capacity and appropriate policy to ensure their full integration and empowerment. It is in this regard that we seek more assistance and partnership opportunities including sharing of experiences to enhance our women participation in peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Gender training conducted by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre for some Fiji Police and Military units particularly those involved in peace keeping activities is an example of effective partnership at the local level.

Mr. President,

In Fiji's Reviewed Women's Plan of Action (1999-2008) we have clearly acknowledged our commitment to SCR 1325 to further progress gender equality through various empowerment strategies for women in Fiji.

Whilst we have yet to fully realize the potential of our women in this area, the political will prevalent, and the efforts of our government and civil society, coupled with the support of UN agencies and the international community should yield some positive results in respect to the implementation of SCR 1325 in Fiji and the Pacific region.

Thank you, Mr. President.