

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security
November 30th 2012, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Thomson Permanent Mission of Fiji to the United Nations.

Allow me at the outset to thank you, Sir, for having convened this important debate, which provides an opportunity for all Members to contribute to the discussion on the global women and peace and security agenda.

Fiji recognizes the importance of resolution 1325 (2000) and acknowledges the progress that has been made globally towards achieving its objectives. We appreciate the specific actions taken in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), as identified in the Secretary-General's report (S/2012/732), and we thank the Secretary-General for his report. We also appreciate the increased coordination and coherence in policy and programming in the area of women and peace and security through the work of UN-Women, and particularly in the Pacific region through a strengthened UN-Women's office in Fiji.

We recognize, however, that national implementation will remain the key to meeting the objectives of the resolution. In that respect, Fiji is working within the framework of its Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development to create enabling environments for women in both the public and the private domains. Recognizing the importance of women in public leadership positions, the Fiji Government has a target of achieving at least 30 per cent representation of women in all Government- appointed boards and committees. Meanwhile, Fijian authorities continue to implement and raise awareness of the Crimes Decree (2009) and the Domestic Violence Decree (2010), which contain provisions, inter alia, on sexual violence and trafficking.

Since our open debate in the Security Council on this subject last year (S/PV.6642), the Pacific region has taken the lead in developing and launching a regional action plan on women, peace and security. The plan will support national efforts to ensure that women are included as active participants at all stages of conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding. It is a landmark achievement for our region, and I would like to acknowledge the collaborative efforts of various United Nations agencies with regional intergovernmental organizations and with the Fiji- based civil society organization FemLINKPACIFIC, which allowed the plan to be articulated at the regional level.

In considering the crucial role of women as agents of positive change in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, Fiji has made a concerted effort to increase the number of well-qualified female peacekeepers that it sends to United Nations peacekeeping missions across the world. In its most recent nominations of police personnel for rotation in the United Nations Mission in Liberia and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, 55 per cent of police personnel nominated for deployment by Fiji were women. Bearing in mind in particular the growing role of peacekeeping missions in supporting the capacity of local authorities, Fiji will continue to send its best qualified people to mentor and train local counterparts, in particular in dealing with sexual violence and encouraging women's participation in helping to build post-conflict societies.

A discussion of women, peace and security is incomplete without factoring in the security challenges posed by the consequences of climate change. This is so because for exposed countries like Fiji, women and children are among the most affected by natural disasters. The realities of climate change and the consequent proliferation of natural disasters are inescapable challenges for our people and for our land. Adverse impacts on food security and access to arable land, as well as the destabilization of communities, disproportionately affect women. Women must therefore be part of the policy formation dialogue at the community and national levels with regard to responses to climate change.

We also recognize that women play a leading role in the rebuilding of communities after natural disasters. We therefore appreciate the theme of this year's International Day for Disaster Reduction that women and girls are the "Visible force of resilience".

Finally, we acknowledge that much progress has been made, but it is self-evident that the international community still has a long way to go to ensure that the dignity, peace and security of women worldwide are realized.