



PERMANENT MISSION OF FINLAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
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United Nations Security Council  
Open debate on Women, Peace and Security  
New York, 5 October, 2009

Statement on behalf of Finland

Permanent Representative

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(check against delivery)



Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Members of the Council,

The EU Presidency has already spoken, and I associate myself fully with his statement. I have the honour of making a few additional remarks.

Nine years ago the Security Council adopted resolution 1325 for the protection, participation and promotion of women's rights in conflict- and post-conflict situations. Last year the Council adopted resolution 1820 condemning sexual violence as a tactic of war and last week the resolution 1888 to further strengthen the UN's response to sexual violence in conflict. We welcome the recent developments and the resolution just adopted, which draws our attention to the crucial question of women's empowerment and participation in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Mr President,

You have chosen a very pertinent focus for this open debate on "Women, Peace and Security".

Building sustainable peace requires much more than the mere absence of violence. Restoration of the rule of law, local economy and basic services should be the priority in any post-conflict situation. This should happen alongside the obvious necessity of ensuring everyone's physical safety and security – including the freedom from fear of sexual violence or harassment.

After a violent conflict, women are often the best experts in identifying the most crucial needs of their communities. Their experience, knowledge and determination are needed for the markets to start buzzing with life again, for their children to go to school and for the community to heal. Yet they are still too often left out from the peace negotiations and the following processes where priorities and budgets for early recovery and peacebuilding are planned and decided upon. Finland emphasises the right of women to fully participate in post-conflict peacebuilding.

We do not only need to make sure that we have women present at the table at all levels of decision making. We should consider working towards agreeing on international standards regarding participation of women and men to peace and post-conflict processes. We also need to make sure that, women can fully use their potential, skills and leadership for a quick and sustainable recovery and peacebuilding. To this end, Finland, together with Liberia convened the International Colloquium on Women's Empowerment, Leadership, Development, Peace and Security in Monrovia last March. What we now need is a new approach to security and development that empowers also women and puts them at the center of social and economic policies and political decision-making together with men, and guarantees their human rights.

Mr. President,

The UN plays a unique role in conflict prevention, mediation, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. However, during the 60 years of UN peacekeeping, no more than seven women have served as Special Representatives of the

Secretary General in the field. No woman has ever been nominated as a lead mediator in a UN -led peace processes.

This has to change and we, the UN member states, need to ensure that the change also takes place. The use of affirmative action has in many countries produced positive results.

We urge the UN to lead by example. We commend the Secretary General for his efforts to increase the number of women in senior leadership positions, and encourage him to do even better in the years to come. We welcome the call, in the Resolution just adopted, to the Secretary-General to develop a strategy to this end. The Secretary General should ensure that all his envoys and representatives include women in all formal peace processes they lead. They should actively seek the views of women also outside of the formal negotiations. Furthermore, we encourage the UN, together with the World Bank and relevant regional organisations, to include a requirement of women's participation in the standards of post-conflict needs assessments, and a tool to track the gender-specific budget allocations.

Mr President,

Next year we will celebrate the tenth anniversary of the resolution 1325. There has been progress in its implementation but a lot of work remains to be done before our commitments are fulfilled.

The unanimous decision by the General Assembly to create a new gender entity was long awaited worldwide. Now we must set up an ambitious goal of having the new entity up and running by mid-2010. This will be a crucial step forward in enhancing an effective contribution by the UN in the promotion of women's rights and participation worldwide, including in conflict and post-conflict situations

The recent adoption of resolution 1888 and its request to appoint a Special Representative of the Secretary-General to provide leadership and improve coherence and coordination of the UN's action against sexual violence in conflict was an important step forward. Ensuring full participation and rights of women and girls is the best way to prevent sexual violence, and the mandate of the new Special Representative should be put in use with that in mind.

Moreover we need indicators for tracking what has – or has not – been done, and in this regard we are particularly happy that the new Resolution sets a timeline for the development of global indicators. Indicators need to be complemented with a mechanism for monitoring compliance and the political will to make the cost of non-compliance much higher than today. Ultimately, the cost of excluding women from peacemaking and peace-building is peace itself.

I thank you, Mr. President.