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Réunion publique du Conseil de sécurité sur les femmes, la paix et la sécurité

Intervention prononcée par S.E.M. Jean-Marc de la Sablière,
Ambassadeur, Représentant permanent de la France auprès des Nations Unies

(vérifier au prononcé)

New York, le 26 octobre 2006

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Public debate of the Security Council on women, peace and security

Speech by H. E. Mr. Jean-Marc de La Sablière
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations

(check against delivery)

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MISSION PERMANENTE DE LA FRANCE AUPRES DES NATIONS UNIES
245 EAST 47TH STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10017 TEL. (212) 308-5700

UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION

I am pleased, Mr. President, that you have taken the initiative to hold this public debate on women, peace and security.

Mr. President,

France fully aligns itself with the statement that will be made shortly by the Finnish presidency of the European Union.

Last year, at the 5th anniversary of the adoption of SCR 1325, we took stock for the first time of the implementation of this founding text. This review allowed us to identify some progress, especially in the consideration of the role of women in the various resolutions adopted by the Security Council. Unfortunately, it also revealed a number of lacunae and promises not kept.

Have we made progress since?

The report that the Secretary-General presented to us on the first years of the implementation of his plan of action in SCR 1325 within the UN system provides us with some useful indications. In this regard, I warmly thank the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, Rachel Mayanja.

The area where SCR 1325 has changed the course of things the most is that of peacekeeping operations. We can see in it the result of several factors coming together:

- the integration on a more systematic basis now of the problem of “women, peace and security” in mandates given by the Security Council;
- the relatively clear distribution of the roles of various actors in the framework of peacekeeping operations, a guarantee of better coordination;
- the extremely positive role played by the advisers or Gender Focal Points today, seen in all operations; I would also like to congratulate Jean-Marie Guéhenno again for the key role played by the DPKO in this area.

I would like at the same time to draw the attention of all to the very severe condemnation contained in the presidential statement that the Council will adopt today, concerning the cases of sexual abuses committed by the personal of peacekeeping missions.

Do we have the means to move forward on other aspects, such as the protection of women against violence in the context of armed conflicts or the participation of women in post-conflict phases?

With regard to the protection of women during conflicts, the Darfur crisis and the situation in Ituri show that violence, especially sexual violence against women, continues alas to be widespread, and often carried out with impunity.

The Secretary-General’s in-depth study on all forms of violence against women also depends on the gap between the progress that we have made in the normative sphere—be it through SCR

1325, the progress in international humanitarian law and the Statute of the International Criminal Court—and the persistence of the phenomenon on the ground. France and the Netherlands are submitting a draft resolution to the General Assembly this year in which one of the points asks each of the United Nations organs to examine respectively the means that it can employ to reduce this gap between the norms and the reality on the ground.

We believe that the new Human Rights Council, which is now able to follow situations throughout the year and meet on an emergency basis, has an important role to play in this area, whether by reacting in the event of serious violations of women's rights, addressing recommendations to other bodies, or supporting cooperation actions undertaken by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission should also enable us to move forward on the participation of women in post-conflict phases and reconstruction. The need to integrate sex-specific approaches and to involve representatives of civil society, especially women's organizations, was specifically mentioned in the mandate of the PBC. The first country-meetings recently organized on Sierra Leone and Burundi confirmed the validity of this reference and the centrality of the role of women in building sustainable peace.

What are the areas, in our view, which take priority to ensure the full and complete participation of women in peacebuilding and reconstruction?

- The rehabilitation of victims, particularly of sexual violence. How can a lasting peace be restored when women, who have already been victims of violence during the conflict phase, see themselves ostracized within their own community? It is particularly important that DDR programs give full consideration to the fate of women who have been involved, usually by force, with groups of combatants.
- The administration of justice. How can women express and take part in civic life if they have to be in contact with their former butchers and live in fear? How can we ask them to have recourse to justice if justice is synonymous with further humiliation, denial and potential reprisals? The fight against impunity and the adoption of a sex-specific approach by the judicial system are indispensable.
- Participation in decision-making processes. Women's access to elective office is a key element. In this we can only welcome the examples of Rwanda and Burundi. But we also need to make sure that women, especially through their organizations, are involved in all the administrative processes.
- The establishment of institutions endorsing parity. The reconstruction phase of institutions offers a unique opportunity for countries emerging from conflict to set up institutions that conform to the most advanced standards in law. Instruments such as the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women must be a benchmark to all the actors in reconstruction.

Mr. President,

I listened very closely to the speeches by Ms McAskie and Ms Heyzer. We also keep in mind what we were told by the NGOs at their Arria-format meeting yesterday afternoon. I would like to thank them for their contributions which will continue to spur our action in the Security Council on the implementation of SCR 1325./.