

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

Statement by Mr. Araud, Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations.

I thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this open debate. I also thank Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson; Ms. Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director of UN-Women; Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping; and Ms. Bineta Diop, President of Femmes Africa Solidarité, for their presentations.

The Security Council recognizes two facts. On the one hand, women are the main civilian victims of conflict. On the other, they are never or rarely involved in the political negotiations to end crises. The Council has drawn two main conclusions from that: their protection, which must be strengthened, and their necessary participation in peace and conflict resolution processes.

That appeal was heard in part. Today, 12 years since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the United Nations increasingly takes the role of women into account in its peace and security activities. Women are ever more present, including as executive directors, in mediation teams and in United Nations field missions.

Under the leadership of Ms. Bachelet, UN-Women has improved the consistency and coordination of efforts to protection and promote women. The Security Council takes better account of the issue of women in its resolutions. However, we need to do more in that regard. France wants to see an increase in the number of advisory posts for the protection of women, in particular,

Those developments should not let it be forgotten that women are still to a large extent excluded from conflict prevention and resolution processes, which is still too often the exclusive remit of men. In crisis situations, in particular, women remain the main target of intolerable violence. In post-crisis situations, their suffering is often ignored.

That shortcoming is also often evident in peace agreements. In 2011, nine peace agreements were signed in the world but only two, in Yemen and Somalia, included specific provisions on women. It is precisely in transition situations that progress for women can be achieved.

There must therefore be even more in-depth consultation with women's organization in civil society. In that context, informal meetings of the Security Council with women active in the field must continue and be promoted and their number increased.

I also wish to commend the tireless efforts of Ms. Bineta Diop, who, as the head of Femmes Africa Solidarité, is working to implement resolution 1325 (2000) in several African States, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Côte d'Ivoire, and in Darfur. In the recent tragic days, I would like to underscore the events in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, where, once again, the civilian population, and women in particular, are the victims of clashes.

Women in conflict situations continue to be regular target of unacceptable violence. That happens when they become involved. Recently, we have also seen defenders of women's rights targeted by all kinds of extremists, who want to silence them. In Afghanistan, women who play an active

part in the reconstruction of their country and participate in political life are threatened by extremist groups. They also remain the primary target for sexual violence, which is still used as a weapon of war to terrorize civilian populations.

On many occasions, the Security Council has made statements on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo — which I have already mentioned — condemning the savage campaigns of rape and sexual violence by rebel groups in the Kivus. Also in Mali, women are the first victims of the violence unleashed against them by Islamic groups that have taken control of the north of the country. There are worrying reports by Islamist groups of the number of unmarried women who have had children. Clearly, such women will subsequently be the targets of violence. We cannot remain inactive given that reality.

In that connection, I commend the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Thanks to her efforts, we now have a list of groups systematically using sexual violence. That list should help put an end to their impunity. In view of such crimes, combating impunity is indeed essential. In that regard, the International Criminal Court should fully play its role. Furthermore, France also welcomes the policy of zero tolerance towards United Nations personnel implemented by the Secretary-General, which must continue.

In 2010, France adopted a national action plan for the implementation of the resolutions on women and peace and security. In that context, we are cooperating at the international level, in partnership with UN-Women. We are thus funding programmes to combat violence in six African countries and in the Arab world, including Jordan, Mali and Niger. Those programmes are being implemented by UN-Women in close coordination with civil society organizations. Since 2011, we have also worked with UN-Women to improve women's access to justice in Afghanistan.

Members can therefore rest assured of the commitment and resolve of France to promote and to defend women's rights and to work tirelessly for the implementation of the resolutions on women, peace and security.