

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security
Tuesday, 26th October 2010, Security Council Chamber (GA-TSC-01)

Statement by H.E. Mr. Emmanuel Isozè-Ngondet, Permanent Representative of Gabon to the United Nations

My delegation would like to begin by thanking you, Sir, for taking the initiative to organize this debate to assess the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) on its tenth anniversary, which the Council is celebrating today. We would also like to pay tribute to your country, Uganda, for the efforts made to organize this important meeting. My delegation also thanks the Secretary-General for his important communication.

We welcome the presence here of Ms. Michelle Bachelet, Under-Secretary-General for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and thank her for introducing the annual report of the Secretary-General on women, peace and security (S/2010/498). Lastly, we would like to welcome the participation of the Ministers who have come here to lead their delegations; Mrs. Asha-Rose Migiro, Deputy Secretary-General; His Excellency Mr. Hamidon Ali, President of the Economic and Social Council; Mr. Alain Le Roy, Under Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; and Ms. Thelma Awori. We thank them for their respective contributions.

In your concept paper, Mr. President, you invite us to review the progress made ten years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) by the Council. We would like to speak on two points — the progress we have made and the challenges that remain ahead as we seek to achieve the effective implementation of this major resolution.

The adoption of this resolution has marked a historic step in the United Nations consideration of the participation of women in the peace process and the strengthening of protection for women and girls from violence in conflict and post-conflict situations. Council resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009) have made it possible to better coordinate the efforts of the international community aimed at ensuring a greater involvement of women in seeking solutions to problems of peace and security. As the report of the Secretary-General rightly points out, this issue is now an integral part of the Security Council's agenda. Similarly, many reports of the Secretary-General on peacekeeping operations contain information on actions that are aimed at guaranteeing the participation of women in conflict prevention, management and peacebuilding.

At the national level, many countries have taken the issue on by adopting action plans that seek to give effect to the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. For its part, Gabon has taken concrete measures that make it possible today for many women to assume important responsibilities, including at the highest levels in all branches of the army and the police force. Their role in seeking solutions to security problems in our country is crucial.

The President of the Republic, His Excellency Ali Bongo Ondimba, has given expression to this important endeavour by promoting a woman of great experience to the high-level functions of the Minister of Defence. She now has the onerous responsibility of steering government action in the areas of defence and security.

Within the framework of the United Nations, we must welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General aimed at ensuring an increasing participation of women in positions of responsibility in peace missions. That has been the case in the Central African Republic, Liberia, Timor-Leste, Nepal and Cyprus.

Operationally, the important contribution of women in the various areas of peacekeeping operations is an achievement that deserves to be noted, as Ms. Bachelet and Mr. Le Roy have done so well. I would like to reaffirm here that the readiness of Gabon to continue to work closely with the United Nations and other Member States in order to assume its share of the responsibility in strengthening the progress achieved thus far.

While we are pleased with those important achievements, we are forced to acknowledge that much remains to be done in order to reach the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). This leads me to my second point.

Everyone agrees that women and children are the main targets of armed conflict. They make up the majority of refugees and displaced persons in the world. Violence against women and girls is a flagrant violation of human

rights. Those responsible for such heinous crimes should be prosecuted and brought to justice. In this area, the Security Council must ensure, through its sanctions committees, a scrupulous respect for international humanitarian law in armed conflict situations and promote capacity-building for States in the area of criminal justice in order to bring an end to impunity. Therefore, peace missions must be equipped with greater operational capabilities for the protection of women and girls. Indeed, the real challenge here is to transform the strategic vision expressed in resolution 1325 (2000) into a tangible reality.

From this point of view, the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report warrant our General's report points out that many of them will not be operational until two years from now. We therefore encourage the Secretary-General to continue his consultations with Member States and regional groups on the practical modalities of those indicators.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to provide its full support to the presidential statement (S/PRST/2010/22) that was adopted at the beginning of this discussion. We express the wish that, under the leadership of Ms. Michelle Bachelet, whose appointment we once again welcome, the new entity, UN Women, will enable better coordination and more effective action by the United Nations in implementing resolution 1325 (2000) throughout the upcoming decade. We are convinced that it is with the essential contribution of women that we will manage to achieve our aspirations for more peace and security in an international environment characterized by recurring conflict.