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Statement

by

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at

the United Nations Security Council Meeting

Women and Peace and Security

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I would like to thank the President of the Security Council for convening this meeting and particularly thank USG Guéhenno as well as Ms. Smythe for their excellent contributions to today's debate.

Germany, a relatively new member of the group of friends of SC resolution 1325, particularly welcomes the opportunity to contribute some ideas concerning the implementation of this landmark resolution in the field of peace-keeping operations. We recognise the great political and practical value of this resolution as well as the SG's recommendations in his report on women, peace and security of October 2002 with regard to its implementation. Much has been said about the terrible toll women have paid and continue to pay in conflict situations, for which they are largely not responsible. In this context, I would also like to point out the importance of including gender-related crimes and crimes of sexual violence in the Rome Statute of the ICC.

My government is convinced that the full and active participation of women in all political and economic decision-making, including peace processes, is a prerequisite for improvement of the current situation. Women are also indispensable agents in the process of building democratic structures and strengthening civil society.

Much remains to be done to implement the thrust of SC resolution 1325. Whether in the context of approving peace-keeping mandates or of reviewing the impact of sanctions, gender implications must be an integral part of the analysis and decisions of the Council. Unfortunately, this has not always been the case. Past Council resolutions, particularly those concerning the Middle East region, have too seldom included the necessary provisions. Sooner rather than later, we should guarantee that a gender perspective is fully integrated into resolutions and mandates.

Resolution 1325 is only credible if it is set as a benchmark and therefore visibly implemented by the peace-keeping forces.

Each female soldier or police officer patrolling with her male colleagues in the streets of Kabul demonstrates to the local population the aim of resolution 1325 better than any general informational efforts could. Therefore, Germany attaches great importance to adequate representation of female soldiers in the German contingents.

Germany will be leading a SC mission to Afghanistan in the coming days. We firmly intend to take up - in close cooperation with our Afghan partners - the gender perspective and to encourage them to provide for stronger involvement of women in decision-making processes, inter alia by discussing concrete measures that should be taken in order to improve the situation. We would like to ensure that the final report from this mission properly reflects this aspect.

Allow me to mention that the support of women's human rights and their empowerment in all spheres of life and decision-making is an overarching objective of all German projects in Afghanistan.

Hence we take gender mainstreaming issues into account in all of our projects and support equal participation of women, in particular in the fields of human rights, constitutional reform, training of police forces, access to the administration and education.

We welcome the very recent nomination of the assistant to the Senior Gender Adviser for UNAMA. We would like to express our sincere wish that the post of Senior Gender Adviser will be filled shortly. We welcome the encouraging developments and acknowledge the important contribution gender advisers can make. We must ensure that the post of gender adviser is tailored in a way that also attracts high-ranking UN personnel.

In peace operations, special gender advisers have been nominated as part of the human rights section. We understand that the cooperation between the gender advisers and other human rights personnel has been a very productive one. Yet we note that SC res. 1325 provides for a much broader mandate, including nation-building, security, DDR, economic and humanitarian affairs. Recent peace-building experiences have shown that national ownership of the processes involved is critical to their success. Facilitating active participation of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict management in all relevant fora therefore commands not only the additional attention of all UN personnel but of the Council as well.

In closing, let me underline the important role of NGOs regarding women's participation and empowerment in conflict resolution, peace and post-conflict rehabilitation processes. The active involvement of civil society should be further encouraged and supported.