



**The Permanent Mission of Iceland  
to the United Nations**

**Statement by  
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to the United Nations**

Open debate in the Security Council on Women, Peace and Security

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Mr. President

First allow me to thank the Chinese Presidency of the Security Council for organising this open debate on Women, Peace and Security. I also express my gratitude for the **concept paper** [S/2008/655] submitted to strengthen the focus of our debate.

Iceland welcomes the **follow-up report** submitted by the Secretary-General on implementation of resolution 1325 in document S/2008/622. Iceland fully supports the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report and we further encourage the Council to follow up on the recommendations by the Secretary-General.

Mr. President

Security Council resolution **1325** on women, peace and security, continues to need full and effective implementation.

It is well known that women and girls constitute the largest and most vulnerable groups of victims in armed conflicts. Iceland welcomes the adoption of Security Council resolution 1820 (2008) recognising sexual violence as a security problem requiring a systematic security response by stressing that sexual violence, when used or commissioned as a tactic of war, can significantly exacerbate situations of armed conflict and may impede restorations of international peace. Iceland will continue to advocate the implementation of this important instrument.

**Impunity** continues to be a major problem. A climate of impunity on sexual violence continues to exist. We all have to join forces to end impunity for such crimes.

There is a need to make full use of available expertise, including from human rights mechanisms; therefore Iceland encourages strengthened partnership with the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR). Iceland fully endorses strengthening of human rights monitoring capacity of the OHCHR within peacekeeping operations and country missions.

Although **some progress** has been made in advancing the fight against violence against women in conflict situations as well as in incorporating aspects of 1325 in peace operations, when it comes to women's access to peace negotiations and political participation in post conflict situations we have seen **less success**. Here the obstacles are harder to overcome. Women's inclusion means power sharing in structures and political contexts where this has often not happened before.

At the same time, 1325 has considerable potential. It already gives a conceptual framework for women (and men) around the world to cooperate on bringing about the

proper participation of women. There are also other commitments made by the international community such as the Beijing Platform for Action which calls for a 30 per cent minimum representation of women in decision-making bodies.

Iceland is of the view that **equal participation of women in peace processes are fundamental** for achieving, maintaining and promoting sustainable peace and security.

In this context I would like to pay tribute to the work of the **International Women's Commission** for a just and sustainable Palestinian Israeli peace. The work of this group of eminent women from both sides of the community has stood out as a beacon. At this very difficult time in the peace process, this is a group which we should continue to support.

Mr. President

The Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the University of Iceland will host an **international conference in Reykjavik in June 2009**, with the focus on the implementation of UNSC 1325 - how to ensure that women are included in formal and informal peace processes.

Mr. President

Iceland introduced a national **Plan of Action for the Implementation of Resolution 1325** on 8 March this year. In relation to the plan several projects have been funded that directly relate to the goals set out in the Action Plan, such as research by the Institute for Security Studies in relation to the access of women to peace processes.

In relation to the action plan, increased effort has been put into participation in UNIFEM's work, support in the Balkans, funding in Afghanistan and secondment in Liberia. A main theme that Iceland believes to be important is the training and education of peacekeeping personnel and experts seconded to various international work, as well as working on increased awareness in international bodies and organisations that Iceland is represented in.

Mr. President

Gender equality and women's empowerment have been the driving force in the development of Icelandic society, contributing to the advancement of women in political decision making, participation in the formal labour market and progressive legislation on parental leave. I am proud to announce that on 19 June 2008, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Iceland in

setting up an International Research Centre for Gender Equality and a Training Programme.

The Research Centre and Training programme will be launched in December 2008. The objective of the Centre and the Programme is to contribute to research, promote information and provide training on gender equality and gender perspectives, in particular in peace-building, post-conflict reconstruction and development.

Mr. President

The UN as a whole should redouble its efforts to recruit more women at all levels. The same appeal goes to all UN member states. It is our responsibility to ensure that the UN has a solid basis to recruit from.

Thank you.