

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security
28th of October 2011, Security Council Chamber

Statement by H.E. Ambassador, Cesare Maria Ragalini, Representative of Italy

Madam President,

I congratulate you on organizing this open debate of the Security Council and commend your commitment to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. I thank the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN Women, the President of the ECOSOC and the representative of the “Working Group on Women, Peace and Security” for the comprehensive scope of their briefings. And I join the previous speakers in recognizing the pivotal role of UN Women in advancing the “Women, Peace and Security” agenda.

Madam President,

Italy aligns itself with the statement that will be delivered by the European Union, and wishes to make some additional remarks in a national capacity.

Women’s participation in conflict prevention and preventive diplomacy is crucial to achieving peace, as the Security Council highlights in its decision to mark the 11th anniversary of Resolution 1325 on “Women and Peace and Security”. We welcome the Presidential Statement adopted today by the Council.

If we want to see tangible progress in this area, more needs to be done at the national, regional, and international levels.

First, women and women’s rights must be consistently included in peace talks. Women are formidable negotiators, mediators and peace-builders. But all too often they are denied access to negotiations at the highest level because of the lack of political will or commitment. A transparent and inclusive peace process involving representatives of every component of society, including women, is the most likely to succeed.

Second, women’s rights must be an integral part of peace agreements. One of the measurement of the success of a peace settlement is the extent to which obligations under the Convention on the Discrimination against Women and other international human rights conventions are fulfilled.

Third, it is not enough to simply advocate the participation of women in peace processes. We need to provide concrete support for women to build the skills needed for meaningful involvement. And education is crucial. At the same time, social barriers blocking women’s access to peace processes need to be addressed. Since men are also a part of the equation, civic education and human rights programmes for both men and women at the community level can help lift these barriers and hammer home the importance of gender inclusiveness. We must also support civil society organizations, in particular women’s groups, which are vital to creating better links among women and between state and community.

Last, it is high time we fully mainstream Resolution 1325 into the work of the Security Council. The Council should ensure that resolutions, including mission mandates and renewals, consistently integrate and substantively advance the “Women and Peace and Security” agenda. The Security Council should also benefit more regularly and frequently from briefings by the Executive Director of UN Women and relevant Special Representatives of the Secretary-General.

Madam President,

To achieve more consistent, serious progress in the implementation of 1325 at the global level, Italy welcomes the strategic framework and its concrete targets to guide the UN's implementation of Resolution 1325 developed by the Secretary-General, and the use of the set of indicators to monitor progress in implementing the framework. The framework will ensure a more comprehensive approach and more result-oriented action by the UN system. Regional organizations should consider adopting similar tools. At the national level, action plans remain a key instrument to ensuring implementation of the resolution.

In December 2010 Italy adopted a three-year action plan on Resolution 1325. The plan provides a strategic framework to improve implementation of 1325 by having a national focal point at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs monitor all relevant activities. The plan focuses on key goals such as: increasing the number of women in the national Police and in the armed Forces; strengthening the inclusion of women in peace operations and in the decision-making bodies of peace operations; protecting the human rights of women and children, in conflict and post-conflict; strengthening women's participation in peace processes; and engaging with civil society organizations to promote the implementation of Resolution 1325.

Since then Italy has had regular contacts with civil society organizations to benefit from their experience in the field, particularly in the collection of sex-disaggregated data. The national focal point is promoting awareness activities by disseminating the plan throughout all sectors of Government and society. At the international level, Italy has introduced “Women, Peace, and Security” as a priority question to be raised during the Universal Periodic Review of Human Rights Council, when the human rights situation of Member States under consideration are being addressed, in addition to bringing up the issue in bilateral contacts with the countries concerned.

Madam President,

In conclusion, eleven years after the adoption of Resolution 1325, we are all called to renew our commitment to ensure women may assert their right to determine the peaceful futures of their communities. Let's not miss this opportunity.

Thank you, Madam President.