

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

Statement by Ms. Murmokaite Permanent Mission of Lithuania to the United Nations.

Let me begin by thanking India for convening this open debate on women and peace and security. Lithuania aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. My delegation appreciates the analysis and recommendations of the Secretary-General contained in document S/2012/732, which notes the significant progress achieved at the normative level. We believe that the focus should now be on implementation, which must be consistent, coherent and comprehensive. Continuous engagement by the Security Council on the subject is required, because mainstreaming gender perspectives into conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post- conflict rehabilitation remains an unfinished business.

In that ongoing endeavour, civil society organizations have an important role to play in monitoring implementation, holding international and national leaders to account, providing ideas and feedback on what works and how it works best and giving a voice to the most vulnerable groups. Furthermore, as some countries are renewing their national action plans, civil society organizations can provide useful inputs on the best practices and lessons learned, which would be helpful in further improving those plans.

Lithuania adopted its national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in December 2011. One of the first things we did in drafting the plan was to turn to women's non-governmental organizations for their input. Their insights and practical experience helped make our plan more focused, measurable and results-oriented. Lithuania will continue working with women's organizations, including in developing gender awareness and gender adviser training programmes intended for our future peacekeeping and civilian police mission participants.

As a member of the Group of Friends of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and the Group of Friends of Mediation, Lithuania concurs with the Secretary-General that the gender dimension of mediation must be clearly and consistently articulated. Women must be part of the process, as mediators and peace negotiators, as that makes it possible to take into account their needs for political, economic and social empowerment. Special envoys, United Nations mediators, peacekeeping operations, political missions and peacebuilding support offices should regularly consult with women's organizations on the ground and maintain their efforts aimed at facilitating and supporting women's equal participation as active agents of change with full involvement in peace negotiations, post-conflict reconstruction, electoral processes and recovery. We call on the Security Council to make sure that all peacekeeping missions' mandates have an integrated gender perspective.

An important factor affecting women's greater participation in conflict resolution and post-conflict recovery is their safety and security. Sadly, women and girl activists and women's rights defenders are often subject to intimidation and violent attacks, including sexual violence. We must step up our efforts to provide protection for women human rights defenders and must tackle impunity with due severity and determination.

Creating an enabling environment for women's equal participation also requires a change in mentality and efforts to overcome existing gender stereotypes and prejudices. That, in turn, demands consistent efforts to involve male local activists, traditional leaders and, more generally, the male half of the communities concerned, including boys. Furthermore, it is of the utmost importance that sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations staff and related personnel should be fully eliminated. Such cases constitute a double breach of women's rights and dignity, by both local militants and warlords and by those who are supposed to protect them on the ground. We fully support the Secretary-General in his call to enforce a zero-tolerance policy vis-à-vis sexual exploitation.

My delegation would like to stress the importance of further efforts in raising awareness of, and ensuring consistent adherence to, the implementation of necessary measures in the codes of conduct of States' armed forces. Sharing best practices and encouraging the integration of measures for the protection of women in armed conflicts into operational documents should be a part of our efforts.

Finally, let me also note that my delegation supports the Secretary-General on the need to look into the gender aspect of armed violence fuelled by the availability, limited control and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. In that regard, my country looks forward to the upcoming final conference on the arms trade treaty in March 2013 and strongly

supports calls for including a gender perspective in the future treaty, including in connection with the need to retain the obligation on exporting States to avoid arms being used to commit or facilitate gender-based violence or violence against children.