

37

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR YUSUF M. JUWAYEYI OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI IN THE UNITED NATIONS  
SECURITY COUNCIL, 24 OCTOBER 2000**

**WOMEN AND PEACE AND SECURITY**

**Mr. President,**

My delegation is pleased to see you presiding over matters of the Security Council during this month of October 2000. I am grateful that during your presidency you have taken the initiative to hold this Open Session on women and peace and security. My Government attaches great importance to the protection and security of women and girls both in situations of armed conflict and peace.

**Mr. President,**

Wars and armed conflict bring about untold suffering and misery to communities and nations for they entail devastating and horrific levels of violence and brutality employing any means. To-days wars and conflicts make little distinction between militants and civilians and between adults and children. Currently most of the wars and conflicts are taking place in developing countries where most of the population lives in the rural areas. Often, they are within countries rather than across borders. Women and children constitute a disproportionate

number of such populations and therefore suffer the brunt of the violence and brutality.

Armed conflict affects women and girls differently from men and boys. During armed conflict not only are women and girls killed, maimed, abducted, separated from their loved ones, subjected to starvation, malnutrition and forced displacement but they are also continually threatened by rape, domestic violence, sexual exploitation and slavery, trafficking, sexual humiliation and mutilation.

Rape and sexual violence perpetrated by the armed forces, whether governmental or other actors including in some instances peacekeeping personnel increases the potential for spreading HIV/Aids and other sexually transmitted diseases. No wonder most of the HIV/Aids victims in the developing countries are women and girls. HIV/Aids leaves millions of children orphaned and in most cases the responsibility to care for them lands largely on the shoulders of older women.

**Mr. President,**

All of these harmful and widespread threats to women and girls have long-term consequences for durable peace, security and development. The sad thing is that in most instances the women do not know why the wars and armed conflicts erupt due to the fact that they are either under-represented or not represented at all at the decision-making levels.

My Government applauds and thanks the Secretary-General, the United Nations bodies and agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGO's) international agencies and donor countries for the efforts they have made to protect and ensure peace and security for women and girls. Various international legal instruments particularly the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the corresponding optional protocols have been adopted by the General Assembly. International Criminal Tribunals have been established for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda and these have made great strides to help end the impunity for crimes against women and girls. Forms of sexual violence are now included as a war crime in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Beyond its emergency relief responsibilities the United Nations has increasingly become involved in efforts aimed at peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding. It is gratifying to note that the Security Council, even though it has taken five decades to do so, has now recognised the importance of women's role and of their increased participation in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building.

However, Mr. President, there is still a lot more that needs to be done. Appropriate solutions cannot be achieved if women are left out of the decision-making machinery. You are aware, Mr. President, that women continue to be under-represented in all peacekeeping, peacemaking and peace building efforts, including at the Department

of Peacekeeping in the United Nations. This should not be allowed to continue.

**Mr. President,**

In the long term however, the only way to truly ensure the protection and security of the women and girls is to prevent the wars and armed conflicts from taking place. Major root causes of most of the recent wars and armed conflicts have included poverty and lack of respect for human rights. These ills must be addressed first. My delegation recalls that at the end of the Millennium Summit World Leaders pledged to eradicate poverty and make the right to development a reality for everyone. This means promoting equality between men and women in decision-making. This further means the involvement and full participation of women in all issues including peacekeeping, peacemaking and peace building as well as at the negotiating table from the grassroots level to the decision-making levels. My delegation requests the Secretary General and the Security Council to urge Member States to ensure that training in respect for human rights and peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding should include all; civilians, the militants, the police, civil society, the women themselves, as well as peace-keeping personnel. Those who commit crimes against the women including the peace-keeping personnel should be brought to book.

**Mr. President,**

Let us heed the women's cry for an equal opportunity to voice their ideas in official peace negotiations and let us act now.

Thank you for your attention.