

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Rule of Law and Transitional Justice in Conflict-Affected Situations, October 18th, 2013, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Raja Zaib Shah, Permanent Mission of Malaysia to the United Nations

At the outset, I wish to congratulate Azerbaijan on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I also express my thanks for convening today's open debate on the important issue of women, peace and security.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his remarks and other invited speakers for their valuable briefings on the issue.

Malaysia remains concerned about sexual and gender-based crimes and strongly believes that ending impunity is crucial in our quest to put an end to sexual violence in times of conflict. We note that progress has been made over the years, and we welcome the continuing work of the United Nations and other stakeholders, including the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, which focuses its efforts on strengthening the capacity of the national rule of law and justice actors. We feel that the Team's engagement with relevant Governments would strengthen their capacity to effectively address sexual violence against women and girls.

In our effort to secure peace and security, we must move urgently to replace the prevailing culture of impunity with one that promotes the rule of law, justice and accountability. Underlining the importance of ending sexual violence, Malaysia is pleased to report that it has joined many others in endorsing the Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, which makes clear the collective view on the need of greater action to address the issue.

My delegation is concerned with the often inadequate legal frameworks on women's rights in post-conflict countries. In that matter, we could take a page from the lessons learned through established courts, such as the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Criminal Tribunal of the Former Yugoslavia, which offer insightful lessons from the prosecution of sexual and gender-based crimes. Those could be applied to future tribunals and domestic judicial processes. Furthermore, Governments that have experienced conflict could consider allocating greater financial resources to investigate cases of sexual violence. There is also a need to ensure that international and national courts have adequate expertise. In that regard, countries in a position to do so should render assistance to post-conflict societies.

In addressing the issues of women's empowerment after conflicts, attention should be given to strengthening the security of women through rules and regulations. That could be done through setting up institutional and administrative machinery to plan, coordinate, implement and monitor development programmes for women. My delegation cannot stress enough the importance of increased access for women to education and employment, as well as the development of policies and services that offer equal livelihood opportunities to women. At the same time, we must also remember the importance of access to health care, especially for victims of sexual and gender-based violence.

Malaysia welcomes today's adoption of the resolution 2122 (2013) on the issue discussed. My delegation hopes that there will be sufficient impetus toward the actual realization of the resolution and the landmark resolution 1325 (2000). Malaysia therefore appreciates the ongoing update on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in the Secretary-General's report (S/2013/525) of 4 September. As mentioned in the report, there remains a deficit in opportunities for women to exercise leadership, and women are still underrepresented in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, protection and peacebuilding processes. My delegation believes that the greater active participation of women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding would go a long way towards including a gender perspective and allowing women to shape peace.

In that regard, there is a need to increase the number of women in high-level decision-making positions in peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations. Malaysia is also supportive of appointing more women protection advisers to monitor and report on sexual violence in all relevant situations. We appreciate the positive values they bring in creating greater awareness of sexual violence issues, reporting incidents of sexual violence and implementing Security Council resolutions on the ground.

We strongly believe that the subject of women, peace and security deserves the Security Council's sustained attention. Malaysia reaffirms its commitment to the efforts to address sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations. Nonetheless, we must insist that gender equality and efforts to encourage and instill a gender perspective be promoted during times of peace rather than solely during times of conflict. The respect and promotion of women's rights must become part of the culture of every society. In that regard, the Council can be assured of our continuous engagement and unrelenting support for the advancement of the issue in our pursuit of achieving peace and security at the national, regional and international levels.