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**PERMANENT MISSION OF
THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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**AMBASSADOR
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NETHERLANDS
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**Open debate
Women, Peace and Security**

**SECURITY COUNCIL
NEW YORK, 28 October 2004**

Mr. President,

I speak on behalf of the European Union. The Candidate Countries Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Croatia¹, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, and the EFTA country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

Mr. President,

We are here to discuss the plight and the might of women in conflict. Four years ago, the Security Council adopted resolution 1325, which dealt, for the first time and in a comprehensive manner, with issues related to women, peace and security. We all know that "1325" has had a tremendous impact *outside* the UN. The Secretary-General's report that is before us today (S/2004/814) concludes that the resolution has been effectively utilized by civil society organizations as an advocacy and monitoring tool. And indeed, this landmark resolution has created quite a constituency. Many non-governmental organizations, not in the least women's organizations, worldwide, have adopted "1325" as their own. The shadow report on the implementation of 1325 presented by the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security reflects this commitment.

How much of an impact has 1325 had *inside* this building? Have the UN-system and the UN's member states been equally enthused? I quote from the Secretary-General's report: "Despite significant achievements, major gaps and challenges remain in all areas". Women's participation in conflict prevention and peace processes doesn't seem to be taking off. Integration of a gender perspective in peace agreements must still be improved. And the representation of women in decision-making positions remains the exception rather than the rule.

Mr. President,

Why? Why do we, in this day and age, still have to ask specific attention for the fact that the world population is made up of women as much as of men? Why does it not come naturally to us, to take gender concerns to heart? Out of 191 member states, there are only 11 female Permanent Representatives. Twenty-two of my colleagues in the European Union are men. Does this explain why only few Security Council resolutions pay attention to gender concerns? Is it lack of understanding? Is it lack of political will? I believe it might be both, and I believe "1325" teaches us an important lesson in this respect.

Undoubtedly, awareness about the importance of adopting a gender perspective in peacekeeping *has* increased significantly following the adoption of resolution 1325. Our understanding of the subject has grown. Training, at all levels, ranging from troop contributors to members of the Security Council, has contributed to that cause. Most recently, DPKO has issued its Gender Resources Package, which is an impressive piece

¹ Croatia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association process

of work, and we would like to commend Under-Secretary-General Guehenno for this. Most peacekeeping missions have appointed gender advisers: 10 out of 17 missions now have a full-time position. This is all valuable progress. However, unless we demand accountability at the same time, these efforts will not bear maximum fruit. In our career paths, gender has never been a critical success factor. Therefore, it is important to build on the foundation that 1325 has laid.

In his report, the Secretary-General expresses his intention to develop a comprehensive, system-wide strategy and action plan, with particular emphasis on monitoring and reporting mechanisms. The European Union expresses its hope that such a system-wide approach, which encompasses all UN bodies and includes clear time frames, will **lead** to accountability. Resolution 1325 is not a resolution that can be dealt with separately, once a year. Each report presented to the Council, and each resolution adopted by the Council should contain a gender perspective. In fact, it is essential that a gender perspective be incorporated from the earliest stages onwards, both at Headquarters and at field level, including in the planning of new operations. And finally, commitments made must be met by adequate resources. Performance indicators, in this respect, are invaluable. We call on the Security Council to consider how best to keep track of its own record in integrating resolution 1325 into its daily work, including through the possible designation of a focal point for monitoring implementation.

Mr. President,

On the issue of gender-based violence. I have listened carefully to the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Louise Arbour, when she stated that violence against women is a particularly grave human rights violation. Many women and girls bear witness to the fact that in conflict situations, civilization may cease. Violence against women, including rape and sexual slavery, is often used as a weapon of war, in order to dehumanize women themselves, or the community they belong to. We have seen recent examples of such horrendous acts in Darfur, Sudan. We know of similar appalling acts of violence against women and girls in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In Myanmar, we see patterns of systematic violations of the human rights of women, including sexual violence, by the regime's armed forces. The European Union condemns such practices in the strongest terms. Under all circumstances, states *must* take all necessary measures to prevent violence, to protect women and girls from violence and to promote the full enjoyment of their human rights.

Impunity should be a dead end street. The European Union welcomes the fact that provisions sanctioning systematic and large scale sexual and gender-based violence have been incorporated in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court as war crimes and crimes against humanity. The European Union wholeheartedly agrees with the Secretary-General that international and national courts should have adequate resources, access to gender expertise, gender training for all staff and gender-sensitive programs for victim and witness protection in order to more effectively prosecute those responsible for such crimes. A recent conference on gender justice organized by UNIFEM and the International Legal Assistance Consortium provided compelling evidence for this.

Finally, the UN-system, as well as troop contributing countries, should be part of the solution, not the problem. Under no circumstances can gender-based violence be condoned in peacekeeping or other UN-led operations. International missions should not contribute to the existence and spread of sexual exploitation. The development and follow-up of Codes of Conduct are important. We note in this regard the UNSG Bulletin on the protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. The European Union insists on a zero-tolerance response, by which it means: prosecution and punishment of perpetrators. We welcome the strong action taken by the UN humanitarian organizations when violations occurred in recent years.

Mr. President,

There is only one long-term solution to gender based violence: gender equality. As we look forward to the discussion at the 2005 comprehensive review of all the commitments contained in the Millennium Declaration, including peace and security and development, we should keep this firmly in mind. While we commemorate the fourth anniversary of 1325 today, we also take note of the fact that exactly twenty-five years have passed since the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, by the General Assembly, in 1979. As stated in the pre-amble of the CEDAW Convention, the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields. Resolution 1325 reminds us daily of our solemn obligation to achieve gender equality.

Thank you Mr. President.