

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

*Statement by Mr. Van Oosterom, Permanent Mission of Netherlands to the United Nations*

My Government welcomes today's debate and the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2013/525). We celebrate this year the thirteenth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), and we welcome today's important resolution 2122 (2013), which we sponsored. The resolution will advance today's agenda relating to women and peace and security.

We take this opportunity to make a few remarks in our national capacity, while we fully endorse the statement made by the observer of the European Union earlier.

We attach great importance to today's theme, which is close to our mission statement — "The Kingdom of the Netherlands, your partner for peace, justice and development". Let me highlight five points.

First of all, the Government of the Netherlands sees women as leaders. In our national action plan based on guidelines set forth in resolution 1325 (2000), as well as in our wider human rights and gender equality policies, we have chosen to focus on the role of women as political actors in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and recovery. We believe in the power of women as agents for peace and as representatives of communities living in conflict. During the recent opening week of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly, the Netherlands Minister of Foreign Affairs, Franciscus Timmermans, hosted an event with a group of Syrian women. He heard their recommendations and opened doors for them here in New York. Their stories inspired many and offered new hope for a solution to the horrific conflict in Syria. We stand ready to further support Syrian women's contributions to that end.

We encourage the Security Council to remain committed to the full agenda of resolution 1325 (2000), including the meaningful participation of women in all peace negotiations, security sector reform and decision-making related to conflict resolution and post-conflict rebuilding. We call upon the Security Council to more systematically implement the women and peace and security agenda.

Secondly, we support the women's agenda in countries in conflict or transition. In his report, the Secretary-General finds that deficits remain in opportunities for women to exercise leadership, with shortfalls existing in the resources provided to support women and strengthen their organizational capacities. Recognizing that fact, the Netherlands has therefore established a funding mechanism called "Women on the Frontline" for women's organizations in countries in transition in the Middle East and North Africa. We aim to support them with organizational and capacity development. Our aim is clear — women should be in a position to make their voices heard, demand their rights and contribute to the development of their countries.

We also welcome efforts by United Nations mediators to include women in peace and transition processes. Yemen is an inspiring example, where, against all odds, women are participating in the National Dialogue and are claiming their role in the next phases of transition. We also pay tribute to Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Mary Robinson's outreach to women early on in her mandate, as our Irish colleague briefly mentioned a moment ago.

Thirdly, we support legal systems based on equality. We need a gender-sensitive approach to the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict situations. Women and girls should have equal access to fair and transparent justice services and they should be able to influence justice policies and institutions in their country. In that respect, we also acknowledge the important contribution of the International Criminal Court and other special courts and tribunals in addressing gender-based and sexual violence in specific.

As the focus of today's debate is on the importance of the rule of law and justice, let me highlight an example. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, my Government is helping to establish a gender-sensitive judicial system, including by training women to become lawyers themselves.

Fourthly, we care about prevention and the protection of victims of sexual violence in conflict. The

Netherlands welcomes the continued high-level attention to the role of women in conflict situations. In June, the Council adopted resolution 2106 (2013); other international actors, such as the Group of Eight, have also shown real commitment to the prevention and prosecution of sexual violence in conflict. For my Government, that is a crucial part of the 1325 agenda.

We welcome and support the recommendation of the Secretary-General to ensure the full range of services to victims of rape, including access to services for the safe termination of pregnancies resulting from rape, without discrimination and in accordance with international human rights and humanitarian law.

The prevention of, and protection from, sexual violence is an issue that continues to demand our full attention. I am proud to announce that the Netherlands recently increased its contribution to the United Nations Trust Fund for the Elimination of Violence against Women by \$2 million, bringing it to a total of more than \$8 million.

Fifthly and lastly, we stand ready to share experiences and improve on our joint implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. We offer our full support and cooperation to the global review on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) that UN Women is currently undertaking. In that context, we are pleased to announce that, in late 2014, the Netherlands will host an international conference on lessons learned.

As I have said, the Kingdom of the Netherlands wants to be a partner for peace, justice and development. The role of women is crucial in all three dimensions.