



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

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STATEMENT BY  
THE DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF THE  
NETHERLANDS

AMBASSADOR ALPHONS HAMER

IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL  
ON WOMEN AND PEACE AND SECURITY

NEW YORK, 24 OCTOBER 2000

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Mr. President,

The Netherlands welcomes the increased attention of the UN for the position of women in situations of conflict. Women and children constitute a disproportionate number of civilians affected by armed conflict. This open debate in the Security Council on the 55th United Nations Day is an important step in focussing attention on women-victims of conflicts and getting women more actively involved in conflict prevention and resolution as well as peace-building. The Representative of France will make a statement on behalf of the European Union to which my delegation fully subscribes. I will therefore limit myself to a few observations on the issue of women and peace and security.

Yesterday, the members of the Security Council had the opportunity to learn from the valuable contributions of some key NGO's active in this field. These NGO's clearly demonstrated that women have an important role to play in peace making. They furthermore called for an end to the impunity of perpetrators of sexual violence against women.

The Netherlands has been working actively to increase the involvement of women in peace-building activities. In Sudan and in Israel and the Palestinian territories, the Netherlands has supported women's organisations in taking a greater role in peace-building. We have also supported UNIFEM in the work it has undertaken in this regard. A peace agreement in which half the population has no part, has little chance of success. We would welcome continued joint efforts to increase women's involvement in peace-building activities, and we are ready to share with others the lessons learned of the activities undertaken.

The 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly encouraged the UN system to involve women in peacekeeping and peace-building activities, for instance by appointing more women as special envoys or special representatives of the Secretary-General. A gender perspective should be included in all policies and programmes while addressing armed conflicts, not only within the UN system but also in regional organisations involved in issues of peace and security such as the OAU, OSCE and IGAD. In this regard, the Netherlands has decided to fund a gender adviser for OSCE. We hope that with the necessary political support such gender advisers can help to mainstream a gender perspective into peace and security matters.

A landmark breakthrough in the protection of women in armed conflicts has of course been the inclusion in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of gender-based violence. Rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilisation and other forms of sexual violence are war crimes

when committed in the context of armed conflict, and under defined circumstances constitute crimes against humanity. We have to aim at preventing such gender-based violence, take measures to support the prosecution of all persons responsible for such crimes, provide avenues for redress to victims and increase awareness of the extent to which such crimes are used as weapons of war.

Refugees and internally displaced persons are likely to suffer the most in times of armed conflict. In this situation women, children and the elderly are most vulnerable. In its emergency aid programme the Netherlands pays particular attention, therefore, to the needs of women refugees, focussing for instance on the issue of reproductive rights. We have supported projects of UNFPA, UNICEF and the NGO CARE in Sudan and Somalia.

We must not forget that women and children are particularly vulnerable in post-conflict situations. As they go out to the fields in search of food and fire wood they are at risk of becoming victims of landmines. When setting up mine awareness campaigns, it is therefore essential that particular attention is paid to women and children.

To conclude, Mr. President, we believe that this Security Council debate constitutes an important step in the protection of women in armed conflict. In the follow-up to this debate the Council should further consider concrete ways and means of protecting the human rights of women during armed conflicts and ensuring adequate participation and representation of women in peacekeeping activities. The draft resolution presented to the Council seems to us the right way forward.

Thank you, Mr. President.