

**Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security**  
**October 28, 2011, Security Council Chamber**

*Statement by H.E. Mr. Schaper, Representative of the Netherlands*

I thank you first of all, Madam, for having organized this important debate and for giving Member States the opportunity to participate in it. My delegation would like to make a few remarks in addition to the European Union statement, with which we align ourselves, and others underlining the importance of women's participation in mediation and conflict prevention.

Resolution 1325 (2000) is considered internationally to be a milestone for women's roles in peace and security. As United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said, it is an imperative to human security, and its full implementation is our common responsibility.

On 4 December 2007, the Netherlands adopted its first national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The Dutch national action plan relies on a broad support base, and is unique in its kind as it was signed jointly by Dutch Government and civil society. The plan has led to many joint activities benefiting from the complementarity between Government bodies and civil society. A further element of the Dutch national action plan is that we strongly believe that the ownership of these activities should be with the national stakeholders — the Government and civil society — of the fragile States for which they are developed.

A good example of such a joint achievement, in our view, is the security sector development programme in Burundi. Based on research done by the Dutch non-governmental organization Oxfam Novib, a gender perspective in the security sector was developed by the Burundian Ministries of Defence and Public Security, together with the Dutch Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs. This led to specific empowerment programmes for female military personnel and to a high number of female applicants for the Burundi police force.

Another example is the number of Afghan women in Government and Parliament. The Netherlands Government, together with other Governments, the Afghan Women's Network and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) — now UN-Women — organized meetings and lobbies that resulted in more female candidates being nominated for political positions.

In past years, important initiatives and strategies have been developed, and many examples of joint achievements, such as the ones I mentioned in Burundi and Afghanistan, are at hand. The Netherlands is one of a group of countries that work hard and make real progress. These are important accomplishments, but far more needs to be done. To quote our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Uri Rosenthal:

“Women represent 50 per cent of human capital, and it is in every country's own interest — and especially in the so-called fragile States — to make sure that women are actively involved in society, the economy and political decision- making. They must be part of the power structures; that is what empowerment is about”.

Only if we manage to include women can we be more assured that peace in those societies will be sustainable, and, by doing so, global stability will be promoted as well.

At this very moment, the Dutch ministries and civil society are developing the second resolution 1325

(2000) national action plan for the period 2012-2015, to be launched in December.

While the first action plan focused on the physical and legal security of women and men, this second national action plan is fully dedicated to the enhancement of female leadership and the political participation of women in conflict-affected societies. Peace and security are linked to the playing of active, powerful roles by women. The power of women to positively influence situations of crisis was shown beautifully by the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize winners Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Leymah Gbowee and Tawakkul Karman. In his words of congratulation, the Dutch Minister for Foreign Affairs said:

“The fact that these three women have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their struggle for freedom, peace and stability in the world is an excellent example of the fact that women are not solely victims, but current and future leaders.”

Accordingly, it is not surprising that the Netherlands continues to emphasize that the local men, and especially women, living the daily reality of a conflict are the key stakeholders in any intervention. Individual local women and men, women’s organizations and women’s movements are the real drivers of durable change. Concretely, this means that the second resolution 1325 (2000) national action plan emanates from a demand-driven approach. This plan is about the women, be it at the community or national level, who have the courage to step up and become leaders and to play their part in conflict mediation, resolution and reconstruction. Thus our national action plan is created to support the needs of those strong, knowledgeable women and their movements. We believe they know best what to do in their situation and in the context of their culture.

We are on the eve of a new decade of promoting women, peace and security. Together we are responsible for implementing our joint commitments now.