



PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

by

H.E. Mr. Aminu Bashir Wali
Ambassador/Permanent Representative
of Nigeria to the United Nations

on

Women, Peace and Security

to

The Security Council

at the

59th United Nations General Assembly

New York, October 28, 2004

Mr. President,

Nigeria welcomes the open debate on this important issue of Women, Peace and Security. We recall that the item was adopted by Security Council Resolution 1325 of October 2000. We note that the debate is taking place at the fourth anniversary of the unanimous adoption of the Resolution. We also recall with interest that the landmark resolution reaffirmed the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building and peacekeeping. It also reaffirmed the role of women in humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction and stressed the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

Mr President,

In situations of conflict, women and children constitute the vast majority of civilian casualties as they are the most vulnerable. Many women and children suffer forcible displacement, injuries and death. They also suffer greater difficulties in making a living during and after conflict, in addition to other indignities like torture and rape. Consequently, Nigeria believes that all efforts aimed at conflict resolution and peace-building should include the strengthening of the safety of women through the maintenance of the rule of law, and the protection of women's rights. The government of Nigeria has long recognised the importance and significant contribution of women to national development and in particular, their role in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace - building efforts. In this regard, the Nigerian constitution guarantees the participation and representation of women at all levels of government. This includes women's participation in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts and politics.

Resolution 1325 (2000) recognizes the negative impact of armed conflict on women and the need for effective institutional arrangement to guarantee their protection. It also recognizes that the full participation of women in the peace process would contribute significantly to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security. The resolution further encourages the incorporation of a gender perspective into UN peacekeeping operations and called for measures that would ensure the protection and respect for the rights of women and children.

Nigeria reiterates its support for this resolution. In particular, we commend the mainstreaming of gender perspective into peacekeeping operations. In this regard, it is gratifying to recall that during the last decade, the international legal framework has recognized the need to address some of the particular crimes and indignity suffered by women

and girls in armed conflict. Such crimes include rape, enforced prostitution, women trafficking and enslavement. We welcome the fact that such crimes are included in the definitions of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and as components of the crime of genocide as well as torture. In addition there has been an increasing awareness and recognition of the peculiar circumstances and plight of women and girls during armed conflict and its aftermath, particularly in relation to sexual violence.

The international community cannot afford to continue to ignore the exposure of women and children to the dangers of communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, (STDs) to which women are vulnerable. We note that the plight of women becomes particularly exacerbated in situations where conflicts have destroyed the healthcare infrastructure necessary for prevention and cure. There is therefore, the need to rebuild health and social services, develop appropriate legal institutions, create administrative structures, establish mine action programmes, repatriate refugees and deliver humanitarian aid to women and girls who suffer abuses.

We recognize that no lasting peace can be established without the participation of women and girls and the inclusion of gender perspectives in both formal and informal peace processes. This is clearly in conformity with the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multi-dimensional Peace Support Operation. The United Nations and the international community should therefore, ensure that all peace accords address the consequences of the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, their contribution to the peace process and their needs and priorities in the aftermath of conflict.

In line with the implementation of resolution 1325, Nigeria as a major troops contributing country, includes women as members of its peacekeeping troop. This is in recognition of women as able partners in all spheres of development, particularly, in peace initiatives and post-conflict resolution.

Mr. President,

We are concerned that although resolution 1325 has called for the establishment of the Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues (OSAGI) regrettably, that office is not adequately staffed and funded. The fact that the office is funded through voluntary contribution has limited its financial capacity, and therefore, its ability to perform. Accordingly, we call for better funding from the United Nations regular budget, to

enable the office to implement fully the humanitarian and human rights law that protect the rights of women and girls during and after conflicts.

We are also concerned that the requirement for gender training of peacekeeping personnel as contained in the operative paragraphs 5, 6, and 7 of the resolution, under consideration, is not being implemented. We therefore urge that gender-training module which, indeed, is compulsory for peacekeepers during their induction program, should be implemented. In this regard, we welcome DPKO's effort in developing a gender and peacekeeping training package. To further improve the situation, we call on the DPKO to set up a mechanism for the sharing of best practices with troop contributing countries on strategies aimed at the recruitment of women.

In conclusion, we reaffirm our support for resolution 1325 and call for an improved implementation of gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping operations. In particular, we call for an increase in the number of female experts as members of United Nations peacekeeping operations, as well the active involvement of women in every peace process. In our view, this would facilitate the deployment of such female experts to counsel and deal with peculiar needs of women who were victims of abuse.

I thank you.