

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security
Tuesday, 26th October 2010, Security Council Chamber (GA-TSC-01)

Statement by Ms. Thelma Awori of the Civil Society Advisory Group to the United Nations on Women, Peace and Security

I am grateful for the honour and privilege of addressing the Council today and of sharing the perspectives of civil society. A full statement has been distributed, and out of respect for the time constraints of this meeting I shall limit myself to reading out a few paragraphs of that statement. I ask members to kindly take the time to read the full statement later.

I would like to begin with one clear message from civil society: We can no longer afford to wait. It is time for action, not words. The experiences of women during war are horrendous and their exclusion from peace processes is frustrating. This exclusion is costly not only to women but to the sustainability of peace. Survivors of conflict and millions of women and men around the world are looking to the Security Council today to be bold. Communities rebuilding after conflict cannot afford to omit more than 50 per cent of their population from these efforts. To do so would mean institutionalizing inequality, which is a recipe for further conflict and instability.

The Security Council now has at its disposal all the tools it needs to build a pragmatic programme of accelerated implementation of its landmark resolution 1325 (2000). We have no need now to wait another 10 years for action. Indicators are in place, as requested by the Council, and these will provide a system for organizing evidence and an impetus for cooperation within the United Nations and between the United Nations and Member States. We look forward to the Council endorsing these global indicators.

We urge the Security Council to endorse the seven-point action plan included in the Secretary-General's report (S/2010/466). There should be systematic procedures to ensure that mediators consult with women and that negotiators dialogue with women's groups. We look forward to seeing a greater number of women mediators.

We all have our roles to play in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Civil society has been at the forefront of these efforts, bringing to public awareness the scope and breadth of the problem. We have done much, but there is much to be done. Civil society will continue to work to empower women in war-affected regions, and to work on the ground with policymakers to bring about global peace and human security. We urge Member States to commit to powerful and concrete steps to fully implement resolution 1325 (2000) and to support UN Women as a system lead on women, peace and security. We urge Council members to be bold in meeting this challenge. We look forward to the Council taking up its commitments by endorsing the global indicators on women, peace and security; by setting up consistent leadership and action on women, peace and security; and by ensuring that there is accountability for those whose lives have been affected by the conflict. Member States should ensure that UN Women is fully equipped with the resources to become the United Nations system's guide on women and peace and security. A large portion of such resources should be used to support programmes that allow women to participate directly in all aspects of conflict reconciliation, prevention and reconstruction.

Let us look at the past 10 years as years of preparation, of building awareness of the breadth and depth of the problem, of putting in place the structures and the tools. But we must also note that these 10 years of preparation have been costly to women's health and well-being. Hence the urgency of action. This second decade must be the decade of action on resolution 1325 (2000). We cannot wait another 10 years for action.