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UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

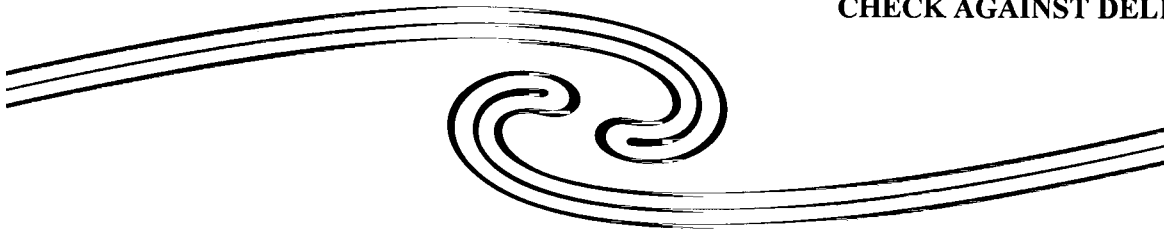
WOMEN AND PEACE AND SECURITY

**STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NEW ZEALAND
MR MICHAEL POWLES**

**ON BEHALF OF THE COUNTRIES OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM
REPRESENTED IN NEW YORK**

TUESDAY 24 OCTOBER 2000

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY



Mr President

May I congratulate you on taking the initiative in holding this timely and relevant Open Debate. I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the countries of the Pacific Islands Forum represented in New York, Australia, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu and my own country New Zealand.

The past few years have seen increasing recognition of the many roles of women in relation to peace and security, and the effects on women of armed conflict. The rights of women, their empowerment, and the maintenance of peace and security are fundamentally linked. The Beijing Platform for Action notes that "Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in, and access to the decision-making process and positions of power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace". It also recognises the leading role that women have played in the peace movement, and that women's "full participation in decision-making, conflict prevention and resolution and all other peace initiatives is essential to the realisation of lasting peace". In other words, women have both a key interest, and a key role, in the maintenance of peace and security.

The Beijing + 5 review, reaffirmed the importance of gender-sensitivity and analysis in assessing the impact of conflict, in working with those affected by it, and in action to bring about lasting peaceful solutions.

Beijing + 5 also recognised that situations of armed conflict are inextricably linked to violations of women's human rights, including through violence against women. It was noted that such violence was often of a sexual nature. Our delegations welcome the recognition of the seriousness of such acts in the Statute of the International Criminal Court, which makes certain forms of violence against women war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Mr President

The differential impacts of conflict on women, and the important role women have in peace-building, has been apparent from experience in the Pacific region. Women have disproportionately borne the effects of conflicts in the region, such as the secessionist crisis which stretched from 1989 to 1998 on the Papua New Guinea island of Bougainville. Women's insistence that peaceful means be found to air grievances and attain a durable peace has been a constant underlying strength of the Bougainville peace process.

Women's groups in the Solomon Islands have played a key role in bringing the parties together and maintaining the momentum which culminated in the recent settlement agreed at Townsville. We hope they and other members of civil society will continue to be involved closely in the peace-building process.

In these countries, as in the aftermath of recent events in Fiji, women's full participation in peace building is essential.

Mr President

A gender-sensitive approach to peace-making, peacekeeping and peace-building is essential and underlines the importance of ensuring adequate gender representation in all areas of the UN's work dealing with peace and security issues. While the number of women serving in peace and

humanitarian operations, has been growing in recent years, the number of women employed in professional and policy positions continues to be low. We urge the Secretary-General to work towards gender equity throughout the Secretariat, including the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and to ensure that sufficient women officers and gender expertise are included in UN peace processes and operations and fact-finding missions. In this regard we welcome the Brahimi Report's recommendation regarding equitable gender distribution in the appointment of mission leaders. Accordingly we hope that Member States will incorporate a gender perspective into their decisions on the implementation of the report.

In particular we are concerned by the complete absence of women envoys or Special Representatives and encourage the Secretary-General to urgently address this imbalance.

Mr President, I would now like to say a few words on behalf of my own delegation only.

New Zealand was proud to host the Commonwealth South Pacific Gender Symposium on Peace and Politics this June. The participants noted that women and children suffer the impacts of violent conflict disproportionately - yet they are often the ones left to cope with and mop up these impacts. The symposium recognised women's roles as mediators and leaders for peace and called upon governments to increase women's participation in the process of peacebuilding. Participants considered it essential that gender and conflict training be provided for armed forces and police. New Zealand strongly supports this proposal and commends the Secretary-General's efforts to include gender affairs officers in operations such as UNTAET. Through their work, the rights of women and girls are being promoted in all areas of UNTAET's activities.

The Commonwealth Symposium also noted the increase in domestic violence during armed conflict and the need to address this during and after the conflict. We are pleased to note that the police training curriculum developed by UNTAET in East Timor includes modules on human rights, including women's human rights, and that recruitment for the East Timor Police Academy has attracted a substantial and growing proportion of women. This should help to ensure gender-sensitive perspectives in the local police force and attention to women's well-being in situations of domestic and wider violence.

Women and children also tend to suffer disproportionately from the imposition of comprehensive economic sanctions. As we noted earlier this year, New Zealand supports "smart sanctions" to reduce the incidence of humanitarian suffering and mitigate any unintended negative consequences particularly on women and children. The Council should also encourage impact assessment studies before, during and after the imposition of sanctions to ensure that their effects are appropriately focused and monitored.

In conclusion, the Pacific Islands Forum delegations appreciate the opportunity to emphasise the need to integrate a gender perspective into this Council's work. A dual approach is needed. Firstly, gender issues must be mainstreamed into all aspects of the UN's activities for the maintenance of peace and security. Secondly, women's participation in those activities must be improved. Today's open debate is a welcome step towards achieving those goals, and we hope that the Council will formulate an innovative and comprehensive programme for progress in these two very important respects.