

**Statement of Ambassador Munir Akram of Pakistan,
in the Open Debate of the Security Council
Resolution 1325 (2000): Women, Peace and Security
October 28, 2004**

Mr. President,

I join others in congratulating the U.K. Presidency for convening this open debate on women, peace and security, as we mark the fourth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). Pakistan believes it is timely to focus on strengthening the UN response to gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict situations. We thank the Benin delegation for organizing the Arria-formula meeting last week, which enabled us to share perspectives with the representatives of civil society.

2. We also deeply appreciate thoughtful presentations by Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guehenno, High Commissioner Louise Arbor, and Executive Director Thoraya Obaid and look forward to hearing from Ms. Agathe Rwankuba and Executive Director Noeleen Heyzer.

Mr. President,

3. History bears witness that women and girls suffer disproportionate violence and exploitation in conflict situations. They are purposefully targeted by combatants and armed elements, become victims of sexual violence and abuse, suffer enormously as refugees and IDPs, and are largely excluded from the peace and reconstruction processes. The Security Council acted decisively in 2000 to close this window of vulnerability. Resolution 1325 made a landmark contribution to the normative framework being developed for the protection of women and girls in armed conflict. The resolution elevates women from being hapless victims of conflict situations to equal stakeholders in prevention and resolution of conflicts, and in post-conflict reconstruction.

4. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his follow-up report on the full implementation of resolution 1325. The report graphically illustrates just how much ground we have covered in implementing resolution 1325 and how far we still have to go before our cherished goals can be fully realized. The Secretary-General's recommendations deserve a careful study as they provide a good basis for further action.

5. In its comprehensive review of implementation of the resolution, the report highlights the “major gaps and challenges that remain in all areas.” We note with particular concern the Secretary-General’s observation that “although the occurrence of violence against women in armed conflict is now increasingly acknowledged and widely documented, our collective response, as measured against the magnitude of this violence, remains inadequate.” The Secretary-General particularly laments “our collective failure” in preventing such violence and protecting women and girls from the horrors of gender-based violence and heinous violations of international human rights, criminal and humanitarian law.

Mr. President,

6. As Amnesty International has noted: “Violence against women is often used as a weapon of war, to punish and dehumanize the women and persecute the community to which they belong.” Horrific levels of violence against women have been witnessed in conflicts in the Balkans, in Africa and elsewhere. Murder, systematic and widespread rape, and other forms of gender violence continue to be reported from various ongoing conflict situations.

7. This morally unacceptable scourge of gender-based violence persists because a culture of impunity pervades the situations of armed conflict. Most acts of violence against women are never investigated -- either due to indifference, or inaction, or complicity of the relevant authorities. The perpetrators are rarely, if ever, prosecuted. The victims often have little or no access to the justice system. This all must change if we seriously want to stop gender-based violence.

8. The *first priority* must be to end impunity. My delegation, in previous debates on this item, has called for the adoption of a Declaration whereby the targeting of women -- especially the use of rape as an instrument of war -- will be considered a “war crime”, susceptible to national and international punishment. We are encouraged to see the emerging legal framework of protection for the rights of women, particularly the criminalization of many types of gender violence in international Conventions and the Statutes of international criminal tribunals. In certain individuals cases, the ICTY and ICTR have variously recognized rape as “torture,” “crime against humanity,” “genocide,” and “war crime.” The proposed Declaration will reinforce these jurisprudential benchmarks and send an unambiguous

message to the perpetrators that they will have to account for all their insidious acts.

9. The *second priority* should be to demand from all parties to conflicts full respect for and compliance with international humanitarian law and other relevant instruments on the protection of women. Pakistan has earlier proposed initiating a study of recent and ongoing conflict situations to identify crimes committed against women, with a view to seeking redress and compensation for the victims. The United Nations has an indispensable role to play in this context.

10. The *third priority* should be to build the wherewithal of “gender justice” in post-conflict situations -- incorporating gender perspectives across the broad spectrum of reconstruction efforts. This would *inter alia* require reforming and rebuilding of the judicial, legislative and electoral sectors as well as economic, social and political empowerment of women – within a culturally sensitive framework. The post-conflict Rwanda presents a good example of targeted activities in this regard, where almost 49% of the seats in parliament are held by women. Such high level of participation guarantees the integration of gender perspective and helps make peace sustainable.

Mr. President,

11. Resolution 1325 also underscored the desirability of expanding the role and contribution of women in United Nations field-based operations. The Secretary-General has noted in his report that the most significant progress in the implementation of resolution 1325 has been made in the peacekeeping arena.

12. As the largest troop contributing country, Pakistan fully recognizes the important role of women in peacekeeping operations. We are proud of our female military officers who served as doctors and nurses in difficult and dangerous operations in Africa and the Balkans. We fully support mainstreaming of gender perspective in peacekeeping operations and believe that the appointment of gender advisors in the field, and at the headquarters, have served a useful purpose. Therefore, we are supportive of appointment of gender adviser in the DPA as well. In recruitment of senior-level women, we attach importance to equitable geographical representation and preference to major troop contributing countries.

13. Pakistan is equally conscious of the importance of gender sensitization of peacekeeping troops and is complying with this important aspect by incorporating the two UN Standard Generic Training Modules in its training doctrine. We are, therefore, fully supportive of the efforts of the DPKO in developing training materials that could be used in pre-deployment and induction training of personnel.

14. Pakistan had proposed in the debate last year that peacekeeping operations monitor and regularly report to the Security Council on the situation of women and girls in their mission areas. We are, therefore, glad to support the Secretary-General's intention to include specific monitoring and reporting mechanisms in his comprehensive strategy and action plan for mainstreaming gender perspectives in peacekeeping operations.

Mr. President,

15. Despite best intentions and continuous efforts, the wider implementation of resolution 1325 remains a formidable challenge -- both in its goals of *protection* and *increased participation*. We must think of creative ways of moving this work forward. But fundamentally, in our view, three requirements remain indispensable: ***First***, universal awareness about resolution 1325 and the obligations it entails for all actors; ***second***, sustained and long-term political commitment of the Security Council, Member States and national and international stakeholders; and ***third***, commitment of substantial human and financial resources.

Mr. President,

16. For their part, the Security Council and the United Nations system could do much more to advance this process of protection and participation of women. We propose the following ten measures:

One, the UN must develop a comprehensive strategy for conflict prevention and resolution, with special emphasis on the protection of women and girls and their rights and interests in conflict situations.

Two, the Council must continue to strengthen provisions in its resolutions on full compliance with international humanitarian law, end to impunity, and accountability for the perpetrators of crimes against women.

Three, the Council must persist in including gender perspectives in its resolutions relating to peacekeeping operations.

Four, systematic efforts must be undertaken to address the so-called “gender deficit” in the disarmament, demobilization, and re-integration (DDR) processes.

Five, the United Nations and its agencies should develop ways to address the special needs of women and girls affected by conflict, including health and psychological care.

Six, the Council and the UN system must work to ensure the fullest possible participation by women in peace processes as well as in post-conflict peace-building activities.

Seven, the Council must continue its practice of yearly review of the implementation of resolution 1325.

Eight, the issues of women and peace and security should be included in the Terms of Reference for all Council Missions. The Missions should interact with local women groups to get first-hand knowledge of their concerns in conflict situations.

Nine, the Council and the UN must strengthen the partnership with civil society, by acknowledging and supporting the good work of NGOs in this field and holding Arria-formula meetings on resolution 1325 at least once every six months.

Ten, the Council should enhance its coordination with the General Assembly and ECOSOC, with a view to evolving a composite approach particularly with regard to economic, social and political empowerment of women and their participation in post-conflict reconstruction.

I thank you, Mr. President.