

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Rule of Law and Transitional Justice in Conflict- Affected Situations, October 18th, 2013, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Masood Khan, Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations

We welcome the convening of this debate under your auspices, Mr. President. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his insightful briefing and for his strong leadership in advancing the agenda on women and peace and security. Pakistan welcomes the statements made this morning by Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the Executive Director of UN Women, and by Ms. Navanethem Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. We also appreciate the important civil-society perspective shared with us by Ms. Brigitte Balipou.

Appreciable progress has been made over the years in promoting the agenda on women and peace and security, but much remains to be done to fully translate the objectives of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent decisions of the Council into more tangible results on the ground. We do have a solid and comprehensive normative framework in our hands; resolution 2122 (2013), adopted today, further consolidates it. We should now focus on its implementation, which is key to overcoming operational gaps and challenges, and to delivering on our promise of peace and security for women, who are the most vulnerable group in armed conflicts. In conflicts, violence against women is widely used as an instrument of war. Urgent steps must be taken to stop gender-based and sexual violence and end impunity for perpetrators of sexual crimes.

Pakistan fully supports the objectives of the agenda on women and peace and security. We have played an important role in advancing those goals as a major participant in United Nations peacekeeping operations. Pakistani women peacekeepers have served as police officers, doctors and nurses in missions in Asia, Africa and the Balkans. Gender sensitization is a mandatory part of our peacekeepers' training.

We speak on the subject from experience, and our feedback to the Security Council is positive. The Council's decisions and direction are helping women caught in situations of armed conflict. We believe that the Council should continue to address those issues in accordance with its primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. The mandate for women and peace and security pertains to conflict and post-conflict situations on the Council's agenda. We should all adhere to the parameters of that mandate, which has set new standards, established new practices and raised expectations for improving the situation of women. Diverging from it would dissipate the consensus around the issue.

The rule of law is one of the key elements in the promotion of the agenda on women and peace and security. Gender-responsive transitional justice and reform of the justice and security sectors are prerequisites for promoting and protecting women's rights in conflict and post-conflict situations. The rule of law and transitional justice should continue to be developed so as to protect the rights of women in such situations. The emphasis should be on addressing the root causes of conflicts. Chronic conflicts and relapses into conflict blight some societies, countries and regions and keep them in a state of perpetual instability. The resolution of conflicts is, therefore, the best way to promote and protect the rights and interests of women in conflict situations. We must harness all our resources to prevent and resolve conflicts.

Given women's strong stake in peace and in how peace is negotiated, kept and consolidated, the role of women as peacemakers and peacebuilders must be integrated into the various stages of engagement, outreach and decision-making. Increased integration in pursuing the agenda on women and peace and security is useful for enhanced coordination and for avoiding duplication and the overlap of efforts and resources. However, too much integration can also carry the risk of losing the original focus on the primary objectives of that agenda. Including peripheral issues in the Council's work relating to women and peace and security would not only blur the focus but affect implementation.

The discourse on women and peace and security has followed two broad trends — women seen primarily as victims of conflict, on the one hand, and women as stakeholders and drivers of change, on the other hand. Both aspects are interrelated and require equal attention. As the Secretary-General said this morning, it is important that women's representation around the peace table be enhanced. But to enable women to act as agents of change, we need to invest more in capacity- building and training and in the economic and political empowerment of women.

We believe that the real value of thematic discussions in the Council is to help identify the related aspects in the Council's country-specific work in practical terms. It is there that the gaps in implementation lie and it is there that action is needed the most. As the Council saw first hand during its recent mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, there are continuing challenges in implementing the women and peace and security agenda on the ground. A proactive rather than a reactive approach is required to enhance implementation. Considering women as agents of change is an affirmation of such a proactive approach.

We hope that some of the practical recommendations contained in the resolution adopted today will infuse new momentum and vigour into our collective efforts to promote the women and peace and security agenda.