



PHILIPPINES

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STATEMENT

of

H.E. Mr. Hilario G. Davide, Jr.
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Philippines
to the United Nations

UN Security Council

Open debate on

SCR 1325: Women and peace and security

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PHILIPPINE MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Mr. President,

Thank you for giving the floor to the Philippines.

First of all, the Philippines commends and congratulates you and the Security Council for conducting this open debate on the issue of "Women and Peace and Security". The Philippines also commends the Secretary General for the preparation of the background report on the subject contained in document S/2008/622.

Forthwith, the Philippines invites attention to the fourth paragraph of the Report under the heading, "Impact of Armed Conflict on Women: critical themes and issues of concern":

"4. Despite the Security Council's repeated appeals to respect the equal rights of women and their role in peace processes and in peace building, millions of women and children continue to account for the majority of casualties in hostilities, often in flagrant violation of human rights and humanitarian law. In armed conflicts and post-conflict situations, women bear the brunt of shattered economies and social structures."

The succeeding paragraphs 6 and 7 put in details the horrors of rapes and sexual and physical violence women suffer in some parts of the world. At a time when the United Nations just celebrated the 63rd anniversary of the entry into force of its Charter and the Member States await the commemoration on 10 December 2008 of the adoption and proclamation of the General Assembly of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, these findings on the tragic conditions of women in crisis and conflict situations hit our minds, rend our hearts, prick our consciences.

The fifth paragraph of the Report states that the overriding concern for women in crisis and conflict situations is their physical security and that of their children. Thus, the Philippines appreciates the role and contribution of the Security Council, acting within its mandate, in securing peace and security for women. At this time where violence against women, particularly sexual violence, is increasingly being used as a deliberate and systematic weapon of war, it is extremely important that the Council must remain seized of the issues of women in crisis and conflict situations. In this regard,

the Philippines welcomes the adoption by the Council of resolution 1820 in June 2008 where it recognizes sexual violence as a security problem when such is used or commissioned as a tactic of war.

The Secretary General's extensive report on the efforts by Member States, United Nations entities, international and regional organizations offers much encouragement and hope. We commend these stakeholders for their gender-responsiveness, mainly guided by Security Council resolution 1325, as they tackle the complicated and complex issues of various conflict situations.

However, the report is also quick to admit that despite these efforts, gender-based violence is still persistent and that the efforts to address this problem need to be improved and coordinated effectively.

Mr. President,

The strategies inspired by resolution 1325 that are carried out by UN entities and other organizations have increased their impact on

the ground. However, we would like to highlight the issue of sustainability of successful results. In this respect, the United Nations should lead in giving more emphasis to the effective transfer of skills and capacities to the national and local authorities and civil society actors on the ground. This is important to enable enhanced national ownership of activities in support of gender equality and women's empowerment.

While I speak about capacity building, I should also stress that gender training and education in the context of conflict should include the sensitization of men and boys on their particular role in instilling a culture of gender equality and women's empowerment. Men, who are the predominant actors in conflicts, should be made aware that they themselves are the best agents to promote gender equality and change a culture of impunity for violence against women to a culture of respect for the fundamental human rights of women.

While I have touched upon the role of men and boys in ending gender violence in conflict, I should also underscore that the role of women as agents of peacekeeping, peacebuilding, conflict

prevention, resolution and post-conflict reconstruction is at the heart of securing the peace for women. Resolution 1325, which put the spotlight on the role of women as active agents for their own peace, paved the way for a paradigm shift. The old paradigm saw women and girls as mere victims. Now, through 1325, there is broad realization that women themselves are the key to preventing and resolving conflict. In order to make this happen, however, there should be affirmative action that promotes women's participation and leadership in decision-making. Unfortunately, even with our gains in the area of gender equality, women continue to be under-represented in the processes, institutions and mechanisms dealing with all aspects of conflict and the restoration of peace. Women should be provided the political space, along with technical knowledge and capacities, in order to bring out their natural abilities as peacemakers, peacekeepers and problem-solvers.

Mr. President,

I would like to also highlight the need for the United Nations to improve on its monitoring and reporting on gender issues in conflict

situations. It will not aid the Council's consideration when country-specific and thematic reports are inconsistent and scarce on information on the gender issues in conflicts. Thus, the Philippines welcomes the efforts of the Secretariat to improve the monitoring and reporting aspect so that the Council can meaningfully and effectively assess the situations and provide the necessary guidance. The support of Member States in this regard is indispensable.

In conclusion, Mr. President, it is clear that there remains a gap between our aspirations for women affected by conflict and the actions on the ground. This gap should never be widened. It should be made smaller by strategic international cooperation, particularly through regional approaches that maintain the focus on gender-based solutions to conflict. Accordingly, the Security Council should maximize its role as a catalyst for and an instrument of cooperation. It should take advantage of its prominent and unique role in the international community to rally more collaborative actions to support gender-responsiveness when dealing with the various dimensions of conflict. This would be another way to give authentic meaning to the forthcoming celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the Universal

Declaration of Human Rights whose opening paragraph of its Preamble proclaims that “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world”.

Thank you.