

**STATEMENT IN OPEN DEBATE
Women, Peace and Security**



Reunión de Examen de Seguimiento al OSI
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Within the UN system but elsewhere as well, there is growing international consensus that women's participation in conflict prevention and peace processes is a matter of having solid understanding and healthy perspective over the issue. We are told and we tell that the role of women in decision-making is important, legitimate, serves the cause of peace and fosters reconstruction and reconciliation.

It is most of the times argued that women's empowerment would ensure that those who are frequently the most vulnerable must play a role in the transformation and rebuilding of their societies.

This is an assumption that needs challenging. Women should be acknowledged as having a valuable contribution to their societies and to international relations not because of their high potential to become victims, but because they are recognized as valuable and skillful resources, able to make a difference and bring added-value to peace processes in all parts of the world.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Security Council resolution 1325 marked, in our view, our acceptance and endorsement of a different mindset about women in peace and security. We often predetermine policies and decisions categorizing women as vulnerable beings and identifying them primarily as likely victims. Resolution 1325, however, recognizes the true dimension of women's capabilities to contribute and to be equal partners with men in peace processes and to contribute substantially to the development of their societies.

And we have vivid illustrations of these facts. Women fight wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, contribute to post-conflict reconstruction in Kosovo and Bosnia, are excellent peacekeepers in Africa, act as devoted parliamentarians and make decisions in governmental structures in Rwanda, Uganda or Eritrea.

From the adoption of the Security Council resolution 1325 onwards, this Council - and the entire UN system, we should like to believe - have acted and given support towards a wider and more balanced presence of women in peace and security. The participation of women in conflict prevention and resolution is no longer narrowed to a matter of gender equality, and is no longer confined to a perspective of human rights, democratic practices or social justice. It is a matter of a whole new mentality, acknowledging that women embody political representation at all levels and in all societies and have the necessary knowledge, expertise and resources to participate in the advancement of their societies, through active contributions to DDR processes.

At this point, we wish to stress our view that the role of women as agents of development and peace should transgress boundaries and cultures. Engaging women in national and international affairs does not mean to change one's particular system of values. It is within the richness of each particular system that gender perspectives should be sought, put in the spotlight and mainstreamed into politics and policies.

Ladies and gentlemen,

States, UN, regional organizations and NGO's must work together in order to fill the gap that still exists between the discourse and diplomatic perspective, and the reality on the ground.

As a starting point in this direction stands the recent report of the Secretary General on women, peace and security, particularly the system-wide action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325. We convey our appreciation to the Secretariat for such a unique and complex work that we believe it is a useful tool and framework of action, at the same time, for gender mainstreaming in all activities being carried out by the UN system.

Continued implementation of resolution 1325 calls for ongoing scrutiny at national and international level over all forms of violence and abuses against women in conflict or post-conflict situations by combatants or UN peacekeeping personnel, trafficking in human beings, women refugees and IDP's.

In Romania we have organized this October with the valuable help and support of the United Nations Population Fund an international conference on the implementation of the Security Council resolution 1325. The conference in Bucharest brought together participants from Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Zambia, Palestine, Timor-Leste, Thailand, Sudan, Kosovo. They discussed the value of the resolution and how to move forward, share experience and methodologies for its implementation and, most important, how to narrow the gap between the text provisions and reality on the ground.

For it is indeed true that even when women are guaranteed their civil and political rights by a network of institutions and norms, legal stipulations, even when just and unambiguous, can not ensure by themselves gender equity in the diversity of social and political life. Empowering women is about overcoming prejudice and marginalization and gathering political will to recognize them as resourceful contributors to decision-making.

It is Romania's stand that we should all shift our approaches to women in peace and security from exception to rule, from discourse to practice and last, but not least, from category to full partners.



Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would not want to conclude before I turn to our colleagues from the Mission of Denmark and convey our appreciation for their dedication and professionalism in organizing the Arria Formula Meeting of two days ago. It goes without saying that the work, the views, the concerns and the lessons the NGO's can share enjoy the recognition of this Council and of our countries, in particular. We can not aim to a successful implementation of Council Resolution 1325 without a broad and inclusive consultation with the representatives of the civil society.

My thanks go also to the office of the Special Adviser of the Secretary General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. Our colleagues in the UN Secretariat have been helpful and contributed substantively to the outcome of our meeting today.

Thank you.