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**Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United
Nations in New York**

Seul le texte prononcé fait foi

Conseil de sécurité

**Débat ouvert
sur**

Les femmes et la paix et la sécurité

Déclaration prononcée par

S.E. M. Peter Maurer

**Représentant permanent de la Suisse
auprès de l'Organisation des Nations Unies**

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Security Council

**Open Debate
on**

Women, Peace and Security

Statement by

**H.E. Mr. Peter Maurer
Permanent Representative of Switzerland
to the United Nations**

New York, le 29 octobre 2008

Mr President,

First of all, I would like to thank you for organising this open debate. Following the significant progress made last June with the adoption of Security Council resolution 1820, today's debate places emphasis on another key aspect of the implementation of resolution 1325: the equal participation of women in peace processes. To complement the statement by the permanent representative of Ireland made on behalf of the Human Security Network, of which my country is a member, I would also like to briefly make the following remarks from the point of view of Switzerland:

Mr President,

The Secretary-General's report provides us with valuable recommendations for all actors on increasing the participation of women in all stages of peace processes. Switzerland is committed to following up on the recommendations and is prepared to make an active contribution, as follows:

- First of all, it is women on the ground who are the vectors of change. Switzerland is concerned about the fact that they are not yet sufficiently represented in formal structures of peace processes. To increase their participation at negotiating tables, we must make their initiatives visible. Switzerland, through programmes to promote peace and human rights in Colombia, Nepal, or Burundi, for example, has supported and will continue to support various initiatives and projects designed to raise the participation of women.
- The United Nations play a key role in achieving this goal. This is why we actively support the enhancement of gender capacities in the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations by making available personnel and material on methodologies. For this reason also we support efforts to better mainstream gender equality in humanitarian action. In this context, I would like to mention the project of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee as a good example.
- Our National Action Plan 1325, which was adopted a year and a half ago, is a reference document for mobilising human and financial resources. Thanks to this instrument, we have been able to co-finance the UN "Stop Rape Now" initiative. And we are relying on this instrument both to increase the secondment of women in peace operations as well as to encourage women candidacies for higher-level positions within the UN. We hope that all contributing countries will succeed in significantly raising the visibility and the influence of women in this area.

- Finally, the Security Council has the power to integrate even more systematically gender issues in its mandates. It could take the opportunity to listen more frequently to experts (both men and women) in the framework of *Arria-formula meetings*. Furthermore, we hope that deliberations on an efficient mechanism for implementing resolutions 1325 and 1820 will lead to success.

Mr President,

The Secretary-General's report also reveals some shocking facts: in a number of conflicts, three out of four women are raped, and the perpetrators, with very few exceptions, are never convicted. Such crimes are the most serious assault on human physical integrity and can constitute genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The perpetrators must be brought to justice. Such crimes destroy the socio-economic fabric of communities and prevent women from becoming more involved in peace processes. Moreover, they are a major obstacle to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It is notably this very link which is at the heart of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development.

We are all – the States concerned and the international community, civil society and the United Nations – responsible for preventing such unacceptable crimes and for combating impunity. The international criminal tribunals, and in particular the International Criminal Court, play a key role in this regard. They have the appropriate means to prosecute these acts of violence.

Mr President,

In your capital Beijing in 1995, 189 countries made a commitment under the aegis of the UN to the vision of a more egalitarian society through signing a platform of action in close co-operation with civil society. The momentum this vision created significantly contributed to the adoption of resolution 1325 in 2000. It is high time that we look to the future and set new and ambitious aims for the medium term. In 2010, the resolution will celebrate its 10th anniversary. Switzerland supports the idea of a high-level review conference which could mobilise decision-makers and give new impetus to efforts to implement resolution 1325.

We share the analysis of the Secretary-General on progress made with its implementation. But we also acknowledge the fact that a considerable gap remains between reality and political intentions. We must therefore redouble our efforts and demonstrate that the celebration of the resolution's 10th anniversary is genuinely merited.

Thank you.