

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security
November 30th 2012, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Ms. Boissiere Permanent Mission of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations.

Trinidad and Tobago welcomes yet another opportunity to participate in the discussion on the important subject of women and peace and security, and we commend the Council for its organization of this forum. We also express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the issue (S/2012/732), as well as to the Executive Director of UN-Women and to the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations for their informative briefings and to the representative of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security for her presentation this morning.

Trinidad and Tobago is fully committed to the achievement of the goal of gender equality and the empowerment of women. In that context, we agree strongly on the need to strengthen efforts to ensure that women are equally represented in all spheres, including at all levels of decision-making processes in the field of peace and security, given the important and valuable contributions that women have made and can continue to make to conflict resolution and peacebuilding initiatives.

As a State that subscribes to the rule of law in the promotion and maintenance of peace and security, as well as in the empowerment and advancement of women, Trinidad and Tobago has implemented in its domestic legal system its obligations under the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the 1977 additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions, in addition to other fundamental instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Notwithstanding the importance of the implementation of the provisions of important legal instruments and agreements on peace and security, Trinidad and Tobago is also of the view that the prosecution of those accused of committing crimes against women and girls during armed conflict is a critical factor in achieving lasting peace. We believe that any failure to prosecute the perpetrators of grave crimes against women and girls would not only contribute to the culture of impunity, but would be at variance with resolution 1325 (2000). Consequently, as a founding member of the International Criminal Court, Trinidad and Tobago has given domestic legal effect to the Rome Statute, which established the Court, and encourages others to adhere to the instrument.

Trinidad and Tobago comes from a region that has become a significant casualty in the diversion of small arms and light weapons, which has led to an increase in armed violence in our country. That places a tremendous burden on women in our society — economically, socially and psychologically — as they are forced to cope with the numerous consequences. The Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago has therefore formulated a number of initiatives to address the problem. However, since the problem involves the entire international community, we believe that a systematic approach is required to appropriately address the challenges posed by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The problem clearly requires a coordinated international response. In that regard, Trinidad and Tobago, a strong advocate for a robust and legally binding arms trade treaty, was disappointed by the failure of the United Nations to adopt such a text earlier this year. Nevertheless, we remain hopeful that Member States can reach agreement on that fundamental instrument and that it will be successfully adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty to be held in March 2013.

Trinidad and Tobago agrees that the full, equal and effective participation of women is critical to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and related resolutions, as well as to the implementation of the future arms trade treaty. Their participation would also be especially relevant, in as much as the Treaty relates to the prevention of the transfer of conventional weapons, which are likely to be used in the commission of gender-based violence against women and girls.

In an effort to create greater awareness of the important role of women in matters relating to peace and security in general and those relating to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control in particular, Trinidad and Tobago successfully hosted, at the margins of the high-level segment of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly this year, a ministerial panel discussion on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. The event witnessed the participation of Government ministers and other Government officials, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and representatives of civil society. The event was also marked by the adoption of a ministerial declaration on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

Additionally, efforts have been undertaken during this session of the General Assembly to strengthen draft resolution A/C.1/67/L.35/Rev.1 on the subject of women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, which was first piloted by Trinidad and Tobago in the First Committee in 2010. The draft resolution was again adopted by consensus during this session of the First Committee, with a notable increase in sponsorship. That further demonstrated that States continue to recognize that there cannot be sustainable peace and security without the full, effective and equal participation of women.

Trinidad and Tobago also commends and supports the significant role of United Nations agencies and bodies in gender-mainstreaming initiatives and in providing information about the ways in which women have contributed and can continue to contribute to peace in our societies. UN-Women, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean have done a significant amount of work in that area, and we look forward to their continued efforts in that regard.

Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to working with other Member States, as well as its partners at the regional, hemispheric and international levels, to provide an environment that promotes the involvement of women as equal partners in matters related to peace and security, including at all levels of decision-making processes.