

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security
Tuesday, 26th October 2010, Security Council Chamber (GA-TSC-01)

Statement by Melissa Boissiere, Permanent Mission of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations

Trinidad and Tobago welcomes the opportunity to make its contribution to the debate on this significant topic almost a decade to the day after resolution 1325 (2000) was adopted by the Security Council. We also thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2010/498) on this important subject.

Trinidad and Tobago recognizes the competence of the Council under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter in matters related to the maintenance of international peace and security and wishes to support the efforts made by the Council to integrate a gender perspective into that traditionally male-focused thematic area. It is our view that the seminal character of this resolution cannot be overemphasized, as it was the first to recognize the need for the involvement of both women and men in efforts to attain sustainable peace and security. The significance of the resolution is also observed because of its call for the integration of perspectives on the special needs of women and girls in relation to post-conflict reconstruction and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration initiatives.

Our support for the resolution is based not only on our legal obligations under the Charter, but also on our own national laws, which have entrenched the inalienable rights of women into our domestic legal framework. We note with satisfaction that resolution 1325 (2000) highlights the cross-cutting nature of gender considerations in all areas related to peace and security. In a similar manner, Trinidad and Tobago has developed a draft national policy on gender and development, which seeks to underscore the essential contribution of women to national development and integrate the gender perspective into all levels of national policy.

Trinidad and Tobago also supports the important role of United Nations specialized agencies and bodies and the role they play in gender-mainstreaming initiatives and the promotion of women. In this regard, we are particularly encouraged by the establishment of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), and we congratulate Michelle Bachelet on her appointment as Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the Entity. Additionally, we have made annual contributions to the United Nations Children's Fund and, in the past, to the United Nations Development Fund for Women.

We subscribe to the rule of law in the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security as well as in the empowerment and advancement of women. In keeping with that approach, and in recognition of the importance of the achievement of some of the measures outlined in resolution 1325 (2000), Trinidad and Tobago, as a responsible member of the international community, has implemented in its domestic legal system not only its obligations under the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Additional Protocols of 1977, but also its obligations under other instruments, including, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The vulnerability of women and girls in situations of armed conflict and, in our specific circumstances, armed violence, continue to engage our attention. Consequently, we have implemented and continue to implement measures to eliminate and mitigate the effects of armed violence, particularly against women and girls in our society. As such, and in light of the 15-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which, inter alia, calls for the elimination of violence against women, Trinidad and Tobago has developed a procedural manual on domestic violence to guide the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service in addressing this issue. We also offer gender training workshops to members of our armed forces.

Notwithstanding the importance of the implementation of agreements on peace and security, Trinidad and Tobago is of the view that the prosecution of those accused of committing grave crimes against women and girls during armed conflict is a key factor in the attainment of lasting peace. As a result, Trinidad and Tobago as a founding State of the International Criminal Court has given domestic legal effect to the Rome Statute, which established the Court, and has also encouraged adherence to the instrument by Member States of the subregion of the Caribbean Community. Any failure to prosecute the perpetrators of grave crimes against women and girls would not only contribute to a culture of impunity, but would also be at variance with resolution 1325 (2000).

In the spirit of advancing the dual agenda of the attainment of international peace and security and the empowerment of women, the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago announced during the general debate of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly (20th plenary meeting) our intention to introduce in the First Committee at the present session a draft resolution on women, disarmament, nonproliferation and arms control. It is our view that this draft resolution complements Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) by focusing on the participation of women in processes geared towards the advancement of disarmament and international peace and security. The draft resolution seeks to emphasize the value of women as contributors to the achievement of international peace and security and encourages Member States to promote and support their involvement at the policymaking and other levels. The draft resolution has since been introduced in the First Committee as document A/C.1/65/L.39/Rev.1 and has already attracted support from Member States. Trinidad and Tobago welcomes further support for this initiative and looks forward to the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus.

In conclusion, Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to working with other Member States as well as its partners at the regional and hemispheric levels in order to provide an environment which promotes the involvement of women in matter relating to peace and security.