

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security
October 28 2011, Security Council Chamber

Statement by H.E. Mr. Apakan, Representative of the Turkey

At the outset, I wish to thank you, Madam President, for organizing this open debate on an issue of the utmost importance and to express our deep appreciation for your valuable efforts in this field.

Further, I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and pertinent report (S/2011/598*). We welcome the concept note on women's participation and role in conflict prevention and mediation (S/2011/654). Let me also state that we welcome with satisfaction the progress that UN-Women has achieved under Ms. Bachelet's visionary leadership.

Since the adoption of landmark resolution 1325 (2000), progress has been achieved across a broad range of issues aimed at enhancing the protection and promotion of the rights of women and girls in conflict affected situations. A stronger gender perspective in post-conflict processes, as well as in United Nations programming and reporting, has been steadily built. The issues of gender equality and the empowerment of women have become critical components of political deliberations and actions. All in all, a better understanding is taking hold. We heartily welcome and commend the United Nations entities, nongovernmental organizations and women's organizations that are working selflessly in this area.

Yet as today's debate and the Secretary-General's report have shown us, there remain formidable challenges before us. Many structural and institutional impediments persist. Women continue to be largely marginalized in the national and international decision making spheres because of persistent challenges, such as discriminatory laws, cultural stereotypes, lack of education, inability to access basic services, and sparse economic opportunities, to name a few. We firmly believe that the participation of women and the incorporation of gender perspectives in all contexts are vitally important.

We must expand the role of women everywhere. We need women to play a greater role in preventive diplomacy, mediation and peacekeeping. We need women to play a greater role in post-conflict reconstruction and institution-building, and we need a greater role for women in sustainable development and as agents for social transformation.

The integral link between peace, security, gender equality and development is evident. This interaction renders women's participation in peace processes and sustainable development mutually reinforcing. The issue of women's security should therefore be addressed through holistic methodologies rather than ad hoc solutions. In that regard, while we should put gender equality and the empowerment of women at the core of our efforts, we should further encourage and support their participation in the work of peace, including post-conflict recovery efforts and the sustainable development process.

In this context, we are particularly pleased to note that the interconnection between security and development has been acknowledged by the international community in broader terms. Millennium Development Goal 3 — promoting gender equality and the empowerment of

women — will no doubt help emphasize the effectiveness of the efforts in this area. I should also recall that the Programme of Action (see A/66/134) agreed on at the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least-Developed Countries in Istanbul in May proposes a number of joint actions on gender equality and the empowerment of women, concrete steps to be taken jointly by least-developed countries and their development partners.

The positive ramifications of increasing women's participation in every context and at every stage of political transition are widely recognized and critically important. Situations of political transition should be perceived as providing opportunities for enhancing women's roles in decision-making at every level. It is equally important to redouble our efforts to combat impunity. Unfortunately, armed conflict and post-conflict disorder hit women and children the hardest. Targeted measures should be directed at the perpetrators of sexual violence and rape. We should all ensure that effective international mechanisms are established to respond to such crimes and bring their perpetrators to justice.

I would like to conclude by emphasizing my country's strong support for the full implementation of all Security Council resolutions on women and peace and security. Mindful of the positive repercussions of women's increased participatory role in global affairs, we should strive to address the root causes of the challenges to it. Turkey is committed to promoting the rightful place of women in the economic, social and political life of our society.