**Statement by Sir Emyr Jones Parry, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in the Security Council on UK Intervention: Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security
Statement, 29 October 2003**

Mr President,

I join those who have thanked Mr Guehenno and Ms Smythe for briefings, and in welcoming the presence of Ms Angela King with us.

Let me thank you Mr President for giving priority to this discussion, further proof of the an overdue sign of the Council’s intention to remain “actively seized” of this matter and, in doing so, to give a much needed impetus to the implementation of Resolution 1325.
Let me add that we associate ourselves fully with the statement which will to be delivered later by the Ambassador of Italy on behalf of the European Union.

All Security Council resolutions – by definition – concern themselves with issues of the utmost importance to global peace and security. But 1325 has very special qualities. It was a landmark. For the first time, we broadened our gaze from the traditional political and military aspects of peace and security and turned our attention to the rights of those mostly widely and frequently affected by conflict. Crucially, in doing so, we recognised that women were not just disproportionately affected by conflict, but also in many ways held the keys to peace.

We resolved that gender considerations must be fully and thoroughly integrated as a mainstream component of our conflict-related work, in all areas from conflict prevention to post-conflict reconstruction. Today’s discussion allows us to pause to reflect on the progress made, and the challenges that lie ahead.

1325 was not just an important statement of our commitment to work for women. It has also become a beacon of hope and a rallying call. Few Security Council resolutions have resonated so widely and so deeply into the heart of civil society. As a Council we cannot turn away from our commitments, or dash the hopes we have raised.

In the three years since we passed 1325 we have returned to this discussion on a number of occasions. We have also been helped by the very useful report and recommendations given to us by the Secretary General last year. But how far have we got with implementation?

Some progress is undoubtedly being made, but much remains to be done. Let me say a few words about the contribution we in the UK have been making.

We have identified a number of avenues for action, both directly on our own part and through support to key partners.

On our own part, we have introduced compulsory training on gender, child protection and human rights issues for all UK personnel embarking on peacekeeping missions. We have set about actively searching for, and deploying, female officers and experts to peacekeeping missions and other conflict prevention and conflict resolution missions (most recently, for example, deploying female police officers to Sierra Leone, and sending a senior gender expert to Baghdad to work with the CPA). We are developing a database of suitably qualified UK-based women with experience in conflict prevention and resolution work that are willing to join missions overseas. Once this is complete, we will be sharing it with DPKO.

My predecessor in this seat, Jeremy Greenstock, is working hard to get the women of Iraq fully and actively engaged in the reconstruction effort there. UK teams working in Iraq are being briefed on the importance we attach to this. On a recent round of briefing meetings in London Jeremy discussed the situation of women in Iraq with the UK’s Minister for Women, as well as meeting a visiting delegation of Iraqi women and representatives of UK NGOs active in this field.

In 2001, the UK Government created two Conflict Prevention Pools - together totalling more than US$200 million. To join up the resources and expertise of our Ministry of Defence, Department for International Development, and Foreign and Commonwealth Office - the three ministries involved most closely in conflict prevention and resolution work. By combining resources and efforts, impact is strengthened and focussed.

These pools have enabled us to give direct support to UN activities, including helping DPKO prepare a field manual for gender mainstreaming in field operations and enabling UNIFEM to gather information on women's peace-building and gender justice initiatives. We are also working with the Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights, an NGO that supports grass-roots activities in countries where there are multinational peacekeeping operations.

As well as funding specific gender initiatives, we insist that all activities supported through the Pools must integrate a gender perspective. We have seen that well-targeted funding, even at a modest level, can make a big difference - for example encouraging women to play an active role in Afghan politics by providing childcare facilities in the main parliament building in Kabul. We are currently evaluating the work supported through the Pools, including looking at the gender aspects and what has been achieved so far.

What impact are these and other efforts having? Are we still only scratching the surface? It is evident that we need to work harder at measuring the impact of our work – but there are encouraging signs. The ICC has shown its willingness to include within its remit certain crimes against women. Women now make up over a third of the new national Assembly in East Timor, with two female cabinet members and a 30 per cent female police force. And a survey published earlier this month stated that the country with the highest percentage of women parliamentarians is now Rwanda.

But we know that women and children remain the vast majority of those killed, wounded, abused or displaced in conflict. So what should the international community do next? And what is our role as Council members?

Conflict prevention is a huge field, but the role of gender is immensely important. We need to keep saying that until it is second nature. We must also remain committed to raising awareness of the positive role that women can play in peace building and reconciliation – not just seeing women portrayed solely as victims. We have heard today encouraging accounts of the positive impact that women can have.
The Council has a key role to play both in giving real meaning to the provisions of SCR1325, and holding both the UN system and ourselves to account.

The Security Council itself should, where appropriate, include gender in resolutions, mission mandates, and progress reports. The recent resolutions on Liberia, DRC, and Cote d’Ivoire are good examples.

As the Ambassador of Chile recalled, last year the UK joined a number of member states in suggesting that the Council might establish a mechanism through which it would monitor its own progress on these issues. This might be the right time for our experts, supported by the Secretariat, to examine in more detail whether such a mechanism would be useful.

A more co-ordinated approach between all actors - the UN, Member States, NGOs and other parties – is also necessary. Undoubtedly, more resources are required. Improving the situation for women in conflict will not come about with fine words in New York.

The Presidential Statement adopted on the second anniversary of 1325 asked for a comprehensive report in 2004. The UN Secretariat and Member States can both usefully contribute to best practice. And that should also include the possibility of widening this agenda and strengthening the coherence of our work with women with other pressing concerns related to the rights and protection of civilians - women and men, girls and boys - in conflict and post-conflict situations.

These are complex, but vital, issues. There are no easy answers. The Council must continue to focus on implementation. It must hold to account all those responsible for implementing 1325, we included. We must continue to support the wider UN in its efforts, and continue to welcome and demand briefings and progress reports such as those received today. Above all else, we should pledge ourselves to continue to place gender into the mainstream of our work, actively seeking all opportunities to do so – remaining, in the truest sense, “actively seized” of this matter.