**Statement by the United Kingdom on Women, Peace and Security
Sir Emyr Jones Parry, United Kingdom, President of the Security Council, Open Meeting: SCR1325, Women, Peace and Security, 28 October 2004**

I associate myself with the remarks to be delivered subsequently by the Netherlands, on behalf of the European Union. May I extend my thanks to all those who are participating in today’s meeting.

Much of today's meeting has looked at how the United Nations can better ensure sustainable peace, by strengthening efforts to further SCR1325 implementation. There is more the Council must do too, as well as the wider UN membership, here in New York. But crucially SCR1325 must also be implemented at the national level, by all UN Member States, if it is to be fully effective. The UK is therefore currently examining how it can best use the opportunity of our presidencies of the G8 and EU next year to ensure wider implementation of SCR1325.

In London we are currently developing a Government wide Action Plan for our implementation of SCR1325 linking development, humanitarian, defence and diplomacy work. The UK Ministry of Defence has recently launched action across the armed services to ensure that the provisions of SCR1325 are implemented systematically into the Ministry's planning, doctrine and training programmes. The Department for International Development is acting similarly, and developing case studies of Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, and the DRC.

But efforts at the national level have to be complemented by action overseas.

In Afghanistan, the UK worked to get Afghan women to take their rightful role in the recent elections, in voter registration, as campaigners and officials, and to take up their quotas for representation in Parliament. We can all be pleased that in Afghanistan, women represented over 40% of the voter turnout recently.

In June this year, the UK organised a training seminar in Cairo, to assist Iraqi women develop their positive participation. We have also held workshops in Baghdad and Basra which have helped women on the role of democracy and democratic values – thus combining women’s rights with long-term conflict prevention.

The UK is funding a local project to empower Arab women with leadership skills and provide active role models to encourage women to become future election candidates. In the DRC we are working closely with partners to develop action plans to ensure women's full participation in the elections as voters, potential leaders, civic educators and election observers, as well as contributors to the ongoing peace and transition process in the DRC . And in East Timor we are funding training workshops for election candidates and helping the civil police integrate gender perspectives into their work.

But equally important is to recognise and to support the role that civil society can play, which is absolutely crucial in implementing SCR1325. That is why theUK is cooperating with NGOs in many areas and in many theatres of conflict.

Civil society has played a key role in driving forward the implementation of SCR1325, through advocacy, training and awareness raising. I would like to commend those civil society representatives here today for their dedication and their work in holding the UN, and the Security Council in particular, to account for its action on SCR1325. Their contribution to this process is vital.

And I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Madame Agathe Rwankuba for travelling from the DRC to be with us today. It is important that the voices of civil society are heard in this Council. Because often it is the NGO community who really bear witness at the heart of conflict situations.

SCR1325 explicitly calls on all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence. It emphasises that it is the responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for war crimes, including those crimes relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls. The Council must assume responsibility for enforcing these provisions of the resolution. That means ensuring that these aspects are fully included in resolutions which set up peacekeeping operations and mainstreamed into the work of all members of the UN family in the field. The UN system and Member States, we all must work harder to implement SCR 1325. I hope today's meeting will spur us all on to face the challenges.

But we must also recognise our responsibility to improve the situation faced by women in post-conflict situations. Suffering from sexual violence does not end with the signing of a peace accord. We know that on the one hand we must do more to prevent women becoming victims of conflict. But we must also ensure that women are not also victims of the post-conflict situation too. Conflict or the social and economic uncertainties of the post-conflict environment often forces women into prostitution or sexual slavery as the only means to survive or to support themselves and their families. Our obligation is clear. We have to create a post-conflict environment which offers hope.

Women must be full and equal participants in the building of peace, in the development of post-conflict legislative, judicial and constitutional structures. Because it is only in this way that these structures will be fully representative of the post-conflict society and therefore fully able to meet the needs and demands of all. This is sustainable peace.

We must never allow the sexual exploitation and abuse of women in any circumstance in post-conflict situations, regardless of who is responsible for the exploitation and abuse. We have to be very clear on this. UN personnel are our representatives on the ground. They embody our determination to bring peace, security, justice and equality. If they, of all people, abuse their position of trust, they are also abusing the will of the international community.

The UK hope the adoption of the PRST by the Council today is the first step in addressing the challenges identified in the Secretary-General’s report. When we next review progress we need to demonstrate that we have made real improvements in implementation. If we want to do justice to peace, we must do justice to 1325.