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**Women and Peace and Security**

**Statement in the Security Council on 24 October 2000  
By Mr John Grainger, Counsellor  
Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom  
of Great Britain and Northern Ireland  
to the United Nations**

- Thank you, Mr. President.
- The Representative of France will shortly be making a full statement on behalf of the European Union, which the United Kingdom supports. I will therefore limit myself to a few additional points.
- Sir Jeremy Greenstock has repeatedly said that a careful consideration of the needs and rights of ordinary people should be at the heart of the Security Council's activities on conflict. We need to remember that civilians, so often the tragic victims of conflict, are individuals in specific circumstances.
- The human toll of conflict hits women and girls hardest. They are exploited and targeted, often deliberately as a strategic weapon. They form the majority of refugee populations and of the internally displaced. And they continue to be at risk even after the conflict, as the international human rights and humanitarian standards that should guarantee their security are all too rarely implemented.
- We cannot treat this situation purely as a symptom of conflict. It is also a cause. Because of women's unique position in the social fabric, these threats continue to damage the long-term prospects for peace and security.
- This is the challenge that the Security Council faces. Much of what needs to be done will have to be incorporated into our regular work, as we examine individual country situations. But let's use this debate, and the resolution that will eventually be adopted, as an opportunity to push forward the agenda. We need to focus on concrete deliverables in areas where we can really make a difference.
- We should concentrate in particular on three themes:
  - First, how do we make sure that the rights and particular concerns of women and girls are properly considered and acted on in the Council's everyday work?
  - We need the right sort of information to know what the problem is and the right sort of analysis to make our judgements. This is particularly the case when considering concrete operational issues, such as disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes, where women and girls may have different needs from male combatants.
  - One way of doing this would be to encourage the Secretary-General to incorporate analysis on gender issues in his regular reporting to the Council on country-specific issues. The Brahimi report recommends that an information and strategic analysis secretariat be established to improve the UN's capacity to gather and analyse information. We support that recommendation and hope that gender expertise will be incorporated in this Secretariat.
- Second, what can we do to mainstream gender within the objectives and organisational structure of peacekeeping operations?

- Where the Secretary-General has recommended that specific gender concerns should be addressed in peacekeeping mandates, we should incorporate them into the heart of our decisions. Gender expertise should be included in peacekeeping operations and their staff mandated and resourced to address women's particular concerns. Peacekeeping operations should also work closely with NGOs and civil society on the ground in these areas.
- We need to develop a greater sensitivity to the impact of peacekeeping operations on local populations. At yesterday's Arria format meeting, we heard some dreadful tales of abuses of women's rights committed by the peacekeepers that are meant to provide stability and protection.
- That is why the United Kingdom and Canada have jointly financed work in collaboration with the Lester Pearson Peacekeeping Training Centre to produce training materials on gender for peacekeepers. We hope this work will be of use to as wide a possible spectrum of the troop contributing countries. We also encourage the Secretary-General to provide training on the rights and particular needs of women and girls to civilian staff serving in peacekeeping operations.
- My third point, Mr President, is that we should not fall into the trap of seeing women and girls only as the victims of armed conflict. They can also play key roles in unlocking the door to peace.
- The full representation of women's groups at all levels of peace negotiations is vital to building sustainable peace and security. With this in mind, the United Kingdom is embarking on an ongoing programme of support for UNIFEM to build its capacity to act as a catalyst for women's participation in peace processes. This excellent programme will see a review of activities by women's civil society, the development of an information repository and of local field based activities. We are proud to be able to help.
- The United Kingdom is very pleased that Namibia has organised this timely debate today. We look forward to listening to the views of non-members, just as we welcomed the spirited discussion that took place with NGOs at yesterday's Arria formula meeting.
- We particularly welcome the role of Angela King and of UNIFEM in providing support and advice in this process. However, we should not forget that it is the responsibility of all those involved in peace and security to ensure that gender considerations are mainstreamed into UN activities.
- The next step is to negotiate a resolution that makes a difference. We should focus it on the areas where results can be achieved and concentrate on delivering a step change in the way the Council addresses the special needs of women and girls. The United Kingdom stands ready to play its full part in driving this important agenda forwards.