

Security Council Open debate on women, peace and security – 5th October 2009

Statement of the Representative of Ukraine

Ukraine

Mr. President,

Let me thank you and the Delegation of Viet Nam for organizing this open meeting and giving the Council and member-states an opportunity to have a broad exchange of views and proposals on such an important issue as empowerment of women for sustainable peace and security.

We would also like to commend determined efforts of the Security Council members aimed at finding effective ways to protect women and to ensure their full participation in endeavors to maintain peace and security. In this regard I would like to express our support to the Security Council Resolution 1888 adopted last month under the presidency of the United States.

Mr. President,

Ukraine, in line with the European Union, considers gender equality, gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women not only as an important objectives, but also as the means to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and an essential part of the development agenda.

Ukraine as a non-permanent member of this Council back in year 2000 was one of 15 countries that voted for the Security Council Resolution 1325. This decision of this Council, no doubt, was and it is the milestone document on empowerment of women. We welcome the last report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of this Resolution and support its recommendations. At the same time, my country shares concern expressed by the Secretary-General regarding the lack of implementation of Resolution 1325.

Mr. President,

The question before us today is a complex one. In response to the increased targeting of women and other civilians that has become a shameful instrument of contemporary warfare, the international community did a lot but much remains to be done yet.

The Security Council has adopted several resolutions on the protection of children and civilians in armed conflicts wherein it urged all parties to take special measures to protect women and girls from rape and other forms of gender-based violence.

However, in spite of all international efforts, women continue to be the most vulnerable victims of armed conflicts, targeted for the most brutal forms of sexual violence. In addition to that, women also experience the trauma of losing relatives and friends in times of armed conflict and of having to take responsibility for the care of surviving family members. They also constitute the majority of refugees and displaced persons.

My country is greatly concerned about this situation and strongly condemns the targeting of women and girls in situations of armed conflict. In this regard, we welcome the Security Council efforts to pay a special attention to the particular needs of women affected by armed conflict when considering action aimed at promoting peace and security.

It is important that the Secretary-General's reports to the Council dealing with specific conflict situations and developments in the field also incorporate gender perspectives in addressing various aspects of conflict analysis and conflict resolution. It is also important to be sure that personnel involved in United Nations peacekeeping and peace-building operations has appropriate training on the protection, rights and particular needs of women. Security Council resolutions setting up or extending peacekeeping operations should provide a clear mandate to address the protection of women and girls affected by conflict against all sexual violence, abduction, enforced prostitution, trafficking and threats imposed by military, paramilitary and other groups.

We believe the Security Council has a special responsibility to support women's participation in peace processes by ensuring respective gender balance in United Nations peacekeeping missions. We welcome the fact that The Council has already recognized the important role of women in conflict resolution, peacekeeping and peace-building and has

underscored the importance of promoting an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes when addressing armed or other conflicts.

Mr. President,

The presence of women in United Nations missions can foster confidence and trust among the local population - critical elements in any peacekeeping mission. In performing their tasks, women are perceived to be compassionate, unwilling to opt for force over reconciliation, ready to listen and learn and are widely seen as contributors to an environment of stability and morality that fosters the progress of peace.

At the same time, women are still underrepresented in decision-making with regard to conflict. Their initiatives and visions for peace and security are rarely heard of during peace negotiations. In this regard, I would like to stress that women should not be viewed primarily as victims of armed conflict; the international community should use the potential of women as agents of preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and peace-building.

Being an active participant of the United Nations peacekeeping efforts, Ukraine has been contributing for years women civilian police and military observers to the United Nations peacekeeping missions. We reiterate our readiness to continue working constructively with other Members States in order to ensure the protection of women in armed conflicts and women's participation in peace processes.

Thank you.