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**Mission permanente de la Suisse
auprès des Nations Unies à New York**

**Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United
Nations in New York**

Seul le texte prononcé fait foi

Conseil de sécurité

**Débat ouvert
sur**

**Femmes, Paix et Sécurité :
Violence sexuelle dans des conflits armés**

Déclaration prononcée par

M. Andreas Baum

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Security Council

**Open Debate
on**

**Women, Peace and Security:
Sexual Violence in Situations of Armed Conflict**

Statement by

Mr. Andreas Baum

**Deputy Permanent Representative of Switzerland
to the United Nations**

New York, le 19 juin 2008

Madam President,

I would like to thank the United States for organising today's open debate and for giving non-members the opportunity to speak on this very important issue. Sexual violence in armed conflict is a very serious protection gap that has rightfully been recognised and addressed in Security Council Resolution 1325. We look forward to the adoption of a Security Council Resolution affirming that the prevention of acts of sexual violence can contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security.

We are deeply concerned that sexual violence against women and girls still exists in the context of armed conflict. Such conduct is unacceptable, and even more so when committed by peacekeeping personnel.

Switzerland has adopted a national action plan to implement Resolution 1325, and it attaches highest priority to combating gender-based and sexual violence in the context of armed conflict. Practical measures are urgently called for in order to strengthen prevention and protection against sexual violence. To this aim, the following four lines of action should be considered:

- Firstly, Switzerland stresses the importance of the **fight against impunity**. Acts of sexual violence must not go unpunished. The prosecution of persons suspected of having committed such acts is - first and foremost - the task of States. However, when States are unwilling or unable to prosecute acts of sexual violence amounting to war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide, such cases must be referred to the International Criminal Court. The ICC clearly has a crucial role to play in fighting impunity. It is therefore essential to **build up national law enforcement capacities** to ensure that States are able to prosecute the perpetrators of sexual violence. Without enhancing the understanding of the root causes, the mechanisms and the consequences of acts of sexual violence – the perpetrators of gender-based and sexual violence will continue to go unpunished. Furthermore Switzerland underlines that military disciplinary measures at commander level cannot be a substitute for military criminal prosecution.

- Secondly, **systematic gender training** should be provided to personnel working in the security sector, including those active in the armed forces, police, justice and penal systems, as well as UN personnel. Security sector personnel must be able to respond in an appropriate and timely manner to the different security needs of women and men. It is therefore crucially important that **senior management personnel be** included in gender training programs to ensure that dealing with sexual violence against women is understood as an **integral part** of the protection of civilians in armed conflict. We welcome the relevant references in the resolution that has been submitted for today's debate.
- Thirdly, the Security Council should consider establishing a monitoring mechanism to increase accountability and to ensure the integration of Resolution 1325 into the country-specific and related thematic work. To this end, the Council should also set up a structure for obtaining timely, accurate and **reliable information on sexual violence** committed in situations of armed conflict and beyond. UN field missions could be entrusted with this task and thus serve as an "**early warning system**". Additionally, the Security Council might wish to ask the Secretary-General to submit reports on "lessons learned" based on the expertise of UN specialised agencies or programmes, such as UNIFEM and UNICEF, and take into account the security assessments of local and international women's groups.
- Fourthly, the Security Council may wish to consider the problem of sexual violence against women and girls as referred to in **Resolution 1325 in conjunction with** Resolutions 1265 and 1674 on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflicts and Resolution 1612 on Children and Armed conflict.

Finally, Switzerland supports the implementation of the Secretary-General's **zero tolerance** policy on this issue and the establishment of conduct and disciplinary units in all peacekeeping missions. Furthermore, cooperation with the Office of Internal Oversight should be strengthened. The goal is clear: all UN personnel – military or civilian – must be trained in and be held responsible for maintaining the highest standards of conduct.

Thank you Madam President