



# AUSTRALIA

**UNITED NATIONS  
SECURITY COUNCIL**

**"Women and Peace and Security"**

**Statement by**

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**New York  
25 July 2002**

**(Check Against Delivery)**

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Mr President

Thank you for convening this important meeting on women peace and security. It is appropriate given that women and children remain overwhelmingly the principal victims of conflict, and the still very marginal and neglected role that women play in conflict prevention and resolution.

Mr President

As we see it, two basic challenges face the international community as we address the issue of women, peace and security.

First is the ongoing task of making it the accepted wisdom that conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace building all benefit enormously from the proper application of gender perspectives. This is gradually being achieved within the UN system and it can be assisted by the further development of focused training strategies and the appointment of gender specialists.

The more important aspect of this challenge, however, is how to incorporate gender perspectives and enhance the role of women in communities experiencing conflict or at risk of conflict. This is where the bulk of our future work should lie if we want to see widespread benefits of applying gender perspectives to conflict situations.

The second challenge is how to continue to transform general principles and statements of intent into meaningful and practical programs, policies and activities in the field. Work is being done in this regard already, particularly in newer UN Peacekeeping missions, but very much more will be needed.

Mr President

The forthcoming Secretary General's study on women, peace and security -- which Australia has supported with a grant of A\$100,000 -- together with the complementary study being undertaken by UNFEM on the impact of armed conflict on women and women's role in peacebuilding should provide us with a good basis for developing strategies and approaches which have real impact.

We welcome the intention of the drafters' of the Secretary-General's study to provide practical and focused recommendations. Consistent with this, we would be cautious about recommendations for more action by UN legislative bodies on this subject. In our view, it would be more productive to allow SCR 1325 to be regarded as the definitive statement of the Council's view on gender and security rather than risk diminishing the Council's coin by issuing further resolutions. The key task should be to turn SCR 1325 into a living document of use to practitioners and to communities in conflict. The study could consider recommending how this might be achieved. To the extent it does, it will be of value beyond a specialist readership.

We also see merit in the study providing concrete examples of situations where the participation of women and the application of gender perspectives helped provide the conditions for a cessation of hostilities and the creation of viable, productive post-conflict communities. In Australia's region, the Bougainville peace process benefited enormously from the active participation of women's groups which played a vital conciliatory role in bringing warring

factions together and in fostering more harmonious community relations. In the Solomon Islands too women have played an important supportive role in the quest for peace. The study's inclusion of such examples, would enhance its practical value as a tool for positive change.

Thought also needs to be given to the question of how success and progress are to be assessed. In this regard, it will be necessary to carefully distinguish means and ends. For example, appointing gender specialists, while a worthwhile objective, is still primarily a means, a step, towards an end and not an end in itself. The real test is in the field: have women been more directly involved in conflict prevention and peace building? Have their needs been better met? Have their perspectives been valued and built into UN peace activities? Have their interests been taken into account in strategies which address the political-economy of conflict?

We would also place high value on developing accountability measures to track the state of and any progress in bringing perpetrators of crimes against women to book and in establishing mechanisms to address cultures of impunity.

An outcome-oriented approach informing the request made by the Fifth Committee to the Secretary-General to develop a coherent policy on gender mainstreaming in all the UN's peacekeeping activities, may also help to resolve current difficulties over the creation of the Gender Advisor position in DPKO. Australia firmly supports the establishment of this position.

Thank you Mr President