

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security
November 30th 2012, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Tanin, Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations.

As this is my first statement before the Council this month, allow me to begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your assumption of this month's presidency of the Council. I would also like to welcome your focus in this debate on the specific role played by women's civil society organizations in conflict prevention, resolution and recovery. Thanks must also be extended to Ms. Bachelet and Mr. Ladsous for the expertise they provided through their briefings earlier today. I also thank the Secretary-General for his report on women and peace and security (S/2012/732).

In the 12 years since its adoption, resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent related resolutions have been helpful tools, not only to bring to the attention of the international community the importance of the women and peace and security agenda, but ALSO to strengthen women's participation rather than simply branding them as victims. The Afghan Government remains committed to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in Afghanistan and its promotion worldwide.

Afghanistan is designing a comprehensive plan for implementing resolution 1325 (2000) through its National Action Plan for Women. The Government of Afghanistan is fully committed to implementing the Plan, which will be a four-year plan focused on women and peace and security. We appreciate the generous support of the Government of Finland for help in the drafting process.

We have established a steering committee comprised of seven line ministries, the Commissioner for Human Rights and members of civil society, which meets under the chairmanship of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to effectively coordinate the implementation of the National Action Plan. In addition, we have established a technical working group at the Director General level from those line ministries and an advisory committee, which includes the United Nations offices in Kabul and international staff. The inclusion of United Nations partners has been invaluable in bringing together knowledge and expertise from post-conflict countries in order to enable Afghanistan to move towards a fuller implementation of the National Action Plan. We are looking forward to the support of UN-Women in assisting the Afghan Government in the implementation of the National Action Plan for Women.

Cooperation on the bilateral level has also played a significant role in ensuring that our architecture to implement resolution 1325 (2000) is firmly in place through the provision of technical and financial support, and we look forward to engaging with our bilateral partners through the transition and beyond.

The Secretary-General expresses concern in his report in regard to the slow global progress in women's participation and representation in peace talks. The Afghan Government recognizes the vital role that women have to play in the peaceful resolution of conflicts, and remains committed to focusing on women's rights throughout the peace process. Women are playing an important role in Afghan-led reconciliation, including through participation in the High Peace Council.

We see a marked improvement in the position of women through a pronounced presence of women in political and social life. Currently, there are 69 female members of Parliament, making up more than a quarter of the total number of parliamentarians. There are also encouraging signs for the future of women's social participation. In 2001, 5,000 girls were enrolled in school in Afghanistan; now, according to figures from 2011, there are 2.7 million girls enrolled in schools across the country. The continued participation of young women in education will ensure a brighter future not only for them but also for Afghanistan, as they become the police officers, Government officials and leaders of the next generation.

Additionally, we have ensured that there are strong links between women in Government and civil society groups to coordinate activities to encourage more involvement of women at all levels. Our civil society has been vital in helping Afghanistan to rebuild itself from decades of conflict.

Women's civil society groups have been particularly crucial in acting as a united voice for Afghan women. An informal advisory group comprised of Afghan Government representatives, women Parliamentarians and civil

society members meet directly with President Karzai on a regular basis to discuss issues of women's security, women in leadership, women's rights and cases of violence against women. Civil society organizations played a defining role in the drafting of the Elimination of Violence Against Women Law enacted in 2009, and offer continuing support for the National Action Plan. Currently, a strong coalition of civil society groups has focused on providing training on the legal and civil rights of women and the relevance of implementing resolution 1325 (2000) to men and women alike in provincial districts.

Violent attacks against innocent Afghan women, men, girls and boys in some parts of the country remain a threat to the overall peace and security of Afghanistan. Violence against women and girls in the country is unacceptable. The Government of Afghanistan and the international community must continue to address ongoing violence with a view to bringing much-needed lasting peace to Afghanistan and promoting a stable situation in which the human rights of all Afghans can be fully respected.

To that end, by focusing on training and equipping the army, we have seen an encouraging growth in the number and capacities of our security forces. Those efforts have included women's participation in the Afghan National Army, in which they serve in a variety of capacities, including highly technical roles, such as pilots. Women also continue to join the Afghan National Police, despite receiving threats against their lives and discouragement, at times even from their own families. Women's participation in those capacities ensures that women in the community have trusted mentors within the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police.

The Government of Afghanistan looks forward to continued cooperation with the international community in its efforts to honour and implement resolution 1325 (2000) in Afghanistan and worldwide. Through resolution 1325 (2000), the international community made a commitment to the women and peace and security agenda that still requires our full attention and dedication.