

Angolan Statement on Women, Peace and Security

Mr. Lucas, Permanent Representative, Angola, Security Council Open Debate on women, peace and security, 28 October 2004

Today, the Security Council is meeting four years after the adoption of its important resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. It is an occasion on which to assess the progress achieved and the gaps and challenges remaining in the implementation of the resolution. The presence of distinguished personalities at the meeting attests to the importance of this debate and of the subject matter we are addressing. Resolution 1325 (2000) deals with fundamental issues relating to the Security Council's mandate and the wider concerns of the international community.

The main thrust of the resolution regards the participation and involvement of women in our collective efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, the protection of women and girls from human rights abuses — which constitute the most abhorrent and condemnable aspect of present-day conflict — and the mainstreaming of gender perspectives in issues directly related to conflict and post-conflict situations. Those are the main subjects dealt with by resolution 1325 (2000), which the Security Council, the United Nations system, States, civil society and other actors must address in order to advance the fundamental role that women can and should play in ensuring a more peaceful, just and equitable world.

The Security Council's adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) reflected a three-fold reality. First, it recognized women's potential in contributing to the prevention of conflict. In their communities, women are the most reliable source of information about mounting tensions and signs of instability, not to mention signs of gender violence, and if their views are taken into account, they can play a decisive role in providing early warning of conflict.

In the report before us (S/2004/814), the Secretary-General acknowledges the unique role played by indigenous women in conflict resolution as mediators and peace-builders and, in that context, expresses his intention to develop a strategy and an action plan to increase the attention focused on gender perspectives in conflict prevention and to ensure that women's contributions, needs and priorities are included in conflict-prevention strategies and earlywarning efforts.

The second reality is that women and girls are the most conspicuous victims of violence in situations of armed conflict, as a result of non-compliance by parties to conflict with international humanitarian, human rights, refugee and criminal law. Indeed, there has been international recognition of the seriousness of genderbased violence and a growing international commitment to ensure accountability. Key challenges confronting States and the international community include the need to apply increased pressure on parties to armed conflict to cease such violence, to bring to justice the perpetrators of such crimes against women, to ensure the effective prosecution of gender-based violence and to end impunity.

The third reality is the need to mainstream gender perspectives in relation to issues directly related to conflict and post-conflict situations. The adoption of the resolution provided an impetus to include gender concerns as a regular part of peacekeeping mission mandates, and gender advisers have been included in every multidimensional peacekeeping operation. The development of a comprehensive strategy and action plan for mainstreaming gender perspectives into peacekeeping operations, in particular in the planning of new operations, as stated in the Secretary-General's report, would translate into reality this important policy principle, embodied in resolution 1325 (2000).

We still have a long way to go towards fully implementing resolution 1325 (2000), and the remaining challenges must be addressed by all stakeholders. Member States, the Security Council, the United Nations system and civil society organizations must pool their efforts, enhance coordination and adopt creative approaches to advocacy, education and mobilization in all areas relating to the resolution. Civil society and its organizations are already playing an important role in this respect, and that potential should be further enhanced. The role of women's networks in improving conditions for women is well known; if properly supported, they can play an increasingly important role in conflict prevention and peacebuilding and in ensuring access to justice for all women.

Monitoring and reporting on implementation are crucial issues in making resolution 1325 (2000) fully operational. The recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report give particular emphasis to that issue by establishing provisions for monitoring and reporting on all areas related to the resolution. The Secretary-General expresses his intention to routinely incorporate gender perspectives in all thematic and country reports to the Security Council and to continue to closely monitor the progress made.

Taking account of proposals made during the open debate last year (see S/PV.4852), we are of the view that the Security Council should consider establishing a mechanism to monitor the progress accomplished on this very important issue.

In conclusion, I would like to express my country's commitment to the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). In July this year, an Angolan delegation met with experts from the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to discuss Angola's first report to the Committee.

The Angolan Vice-Minister for Family and the Promotion of Women, in a statement to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-eighth session, declared:

"Despite the recognition given to Angolan women for their efforts and their involvement in peace promotion, they seldom have an equal participation in decisions that lead to peace. Nor do they participate in conflict resolution. Even so, women are often the first to reach across ethnic and religious divides in order to rebuild communities and families torn apart due to violence."

Nonetheless, Angolan women are making great strides. They are showing remarkable will and determination to overcome their present situation, and we are convinced that they will be successful in a relatively short period of time.

The Declaration of heads of State or Government of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) committed SADC member States to ensuring equal representation of women and men in the process of decision-making at all levels and in SADC's structures, and to attain, by 2005, 30 per cent representation by women in political structures and decision-making bodies. It is our hope that that Declaration will be translated into reality and will provide a decisive boost for women's emancipation in Southern Africa, and in Angola in particular.

With the electoral process due to take place in 2006, Angolan women will have a unique opportunity to claim their fair share in the decision-making structures of the country — an endeavour to which we believe they are equal.

Finally, we are pleased to express our full support for the presidential statement that the President of the Security Council will deliver later on behalf of the Council, which contains important proposals for the further implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).