

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Rule of Law and Transitional Justice in Conflict-Affected Situations, October 18th, 2013, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Nazarian, Permanent Mission of Armenia to the United Nations

We thank the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN Women, High Commissioner Pillay and Ms. Brigitte Balipou, the representative of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, for their active involvement and valuable contributions. We also welcome the unanimous adoption of resolution 2122 (2013) by the Council earlier today, calling for higher levels of women's involvement in peacekeeping and peacebuilding. It is undeniable that the role, views and leadership of women are essential if we are to truly make and sustain peace.

As a country that hosts tens of thousands of refugees as a result of aggression and war imposed on Armenia, we attach particular importance to this debate. It is nothing new to say that the costs of conflicts are borne disproportionately by women and girls and, since it is primarily women who pay the price when peace is absent, they are important stakeholders in peacebuilding. As such, the inclusion of women in all stages of peace processes guarantees a more lasting and representative settlement.

We view this open debate as an opportunity to highlight the policies and programmes aimed at supporting national ownership and reform of justice systems that place women's rights and access to justice for women at their heart. As the recent declaration of the Peacebuilding Commission on women's economic empowerment for peacebuilding underscores, societies that invest in women see exponential dividends from such investments. We believe that justice sector reform must start with the reform of laws to ensure that women have equal rights in all spheres. It must include reforms to strengthen women's access to the justice system and to promote and protect their rights and to protect women from the violence and insecurity that too often accompany transitions from conflict.

Transitional justice mechanisms and reparations programmes in particular have an important role in and impact on societies recovering from conflict. When linked to development efforts, such measures can have sustainable and transformative impacts for victims, and for women victims in particular. The transitions that follow conflicts present important opportunities not only to address the injustices faced by women during times of conflict, but also to transform underlying inequalities and gender-based discrimination.

Having had the privilege to chair previous sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women, I would like to emphasize that the United Nations has made significant gains in securing commitments to gender equality and women's post-conflict empowerment. Specifically, the Secretary-General's seven-point action plan on gender-responsive peacebuilding is a well-conceived and realistic set of targets for the United Nations system.

Armenia also commends the efforts of the newly appointed United Nations Special Envoy Mary Robinson and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Margaret Vogt and others in establishing the gender-responsive mediation practices, in particular over the past year, which saw the appointment of gender advisers, early and regular consultations with women, the establishment of women's advisory bodies, and the implementation of the commitment to secure women a place at peace talks.

Recently, the United Nations has developed an increasingly sophisticated network for specialized gender experts for deployment to mediation, transitional justice and prosecutorial processes. Member States should avail themselves of these important resources. For example, the regular deployments of UN Women to commissions of enquiry over the past three years have produced a steady improvement in the extent to which human rights abuses against women are reported and acted upon. This is a direct result of the quality of expertise and the regular deployment of experts to those bodies.

To further promote the application of the women, peace and security agenda, Armenia encourages the Council to continue its efforts and to ensure the consistent and regular application of the agenda across all areas. The Security Council should recognize its own role to create opportunities for women to participate and exercise leadership.

We also believe that without women's civil society strength and women's leadership, there will be no effective prevention. Women's experiences of violence during and after conflict are much broader, and effective protection from all forms of violence and violations will be possible only through their empowerment and participation.

In conclusion, let me express our readiness to work closely with the Council, the United Nations bodies and the non-governmental organizations concerned to expand and implement the women, peace and security agenda by improving the situation of women around the world, including women affected by armed conflicts.