

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

Statement by Mr. Riecken Permanent Mission of Austria to the United Nations.

Austria aligns itself with the statement made earlier on behalf of the European Union.

We thank today's briefers, and are grateful to the delegation of India for rescheduling this open debate on the important topic of the contribution of women's civil society organizations to conflict prevention and resolution. We particularly welcome the participation in this debate of the representative of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.

Women and women's civil society organizations are all too often excluded from participating in peace efforts and negotiations. The very instructive data, collected against the indicators, contained in the Secretary-General's report (S/2012/732) clearly shows the need for improvement in the meaningful inclusion and participation of women from an early stage in all efforts towards conflict prevention and resolution, including peace negotiations and peacebuilding. Measures to improve women's security are crucial to ensuring their political and economic participation in post-conflict settings. We are concerned about the information in the Secretary-General's report on the high number of attacks on human rights defenders in some of the countries and territories reviewed in the past year. We fully support the Secretary-General's recommendation that the Security Council pay special attention to protecting women human rights defenders.

We should also step up our efforts with regard to women in decision-making positions. While temporary special measures, including electoral gender quotas, can be an effective tool for increasing women's political participation both as voters and as candidates, we agree that more attention must be paid to addressing the structural factors that discourage women's candidacy and electoral participation.

Much has been achieved in the 12 years since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). However, as the Secretary-General has pointed out, we clearly need to do more. The number of women in United Nations peacekeeping operations and political missions, including in senior positions in field missions, as well as appointments of women mediators, must be enhanced. We encourage the Security Council to include the consideration of issues related to women and peace and security in all its thematic and country-specific discussions, as well as to address it in missions' mandates.

In accordance with presidential statement S/PRST/2010/22, 1 would like to inform the Council about the measures taken by Austria in the past year to implement resolution 1325 (2000). Austria has completed the revision of its national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The revised plan, adopted in January, is guided by the United Nations indicators on women and peace and security. Civil society was closely involved in the revision process. This year Austria also adopted its third national action plan on combating trafficking in human beings. Women are particularly vulnerable to becoming victims of this sort of organized crime, mainly for sexual exploitation.

Austria has developed an interdisciplinary training course on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. The training course is tailored to the requirements of command personnel active in international crisis management. It will be held for the first time in December at the Austrian Peace Center in Stadtschlaining, with participants from 20 Member States and international organizations. Modules on women in armed conflict will make up an important part of the course, with the objective for participants to develop a gender-sensitive needs analysis and practical solutions aimed at effectively addressing those needs. Nine mission gender advisers have been trained and their deployment began to the Balkans in 2011. After a first assignment to Kosovo, which proved extremely successful, Austria will continue that engagement in 2013. Furthermore, Austria will continue with its support to UN-Women and has offered support for developing a national action plan for partnering countries with a view to launching concrete cooperation early next year.