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Security Council Debate
on
Women, Peace and Security

Statement by
H.E. Ambassador Gerhard Pfanzelter
Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations

New York, 27 October 2005

Mr. President,

Austria fully endorses the statements of the European Union as well as the Human Security Network and would like to elaborate on the following points:

In 2000, Security Council Resolution 1325 called for women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. Little progress has been made in the meantime. Women still remain marginalised in the processes of peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction.

At the 2005 World Summit a few weeks ago, our Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their commitment to the full and effective implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 and to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Mr. President,

Austria firmly believes that women have to be able to participate fully in peace negotiations, peace agreements and the development of a stable society.

Now, the creation of a Peacebuilding Commission provides us with a unique opportunity to ensure the involvement of women in UN-led peacebuilding processes. Austria believes that we should make use of this opportunity by integrating a gender perspective both in the mandate and the structure of this new UN body. This was proposed in a letter addressed by women foreign ministers – including Austrian Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik – to the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly.

The Peacebuilding Commission should ensure, as part of its mandate, that women and women's groups are represented in peace processes, thus enabling them to play a meaningful role. Concerning the structure of the Peacebuilding Commission, Member States and organisations involved in its work should bear in mind the desirability of gender balance in all meetings of the Peacebuilding Commission. Austria believes that a Gender Advisor should participate in all meetings of the Peacebuilding Commission in its country specific configurations in accordance with para 100 lit. d of the outcome document of the 2005 Summit.

Moreover, Special Representatives, Special Envoys and other emissaries involved in peace negotiations should have firm guidelines to enhance women's participation in peace processes and transitional structures. Experience shows that a determined policy of the international community in the immediate post-conflict phase in favour of women's participation, inter alia by ensuring that post-conflict legislation gives them a right to participate, can increase the long-term participation of women in political processes in their countries. As an example, the OSCE, which is currently taking action to enhance implementation of Resolution 1325, has already achieved important results regarding the role of women in elections, as voters, candidates and officials, with its Handbook on monitoring Women's participation.

Finally, Mr. President, Austria welcomes the United Nations system-wide action plan for the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 proposed by the Secretary-General in his report. Now we have a window of opportunity with the UN reform process. It is up to each of us – Member States and the United Nations – to seize this opportunity and to enhance women's participation in conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction.

Thank you.