

COLOMBIA



COLOMBIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR ALFONSO VALDIVIESO, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF COLOMBIA

OPEN DEBATE ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

New York, October 28, 2002

Mr. President:

Let me begin by expressing my appreciation to the delegation of Cameroon for convening this open debate, as well as to Ms. Angela King for the presentation of the Secretary General's report.

Likewise I wish to thank Ms. Noeleen Heyzer of UNIFEM for her statement presenting the Independent Experts' Assessment. We are confident that the study and discussion of this document will effectively contribute to improving the situation of women in the context of armed conflict and the promotion of a wider understanding of the equal participation of women in society, especially in areas related to peace and security.

The protection of women in situations of conflict as well as the role they can and must play in conflict prevention, peace keeping and peace building activities, is something to which Colombia attaches great importance. With this consideration in mind we have firmly supported resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and have been participating in the Group of Friends with a view to its full implementation.

How to promote a wider and effectively implementation of Res. 1325?

Mr. President:

The international community has recognized that peace is inextricably linked to equality between women and men. Unfortunately, the efforts so far made by member States, the Secretariat and some civil society organizations have yet to confirm the full implementation of the commitments contained in the Resolution 1325. Much more remains to be done.

To that end, the 136 recommendations included in the two reports constitute a valuable contribution to what should be a global strategy towards our common goal of gender equality in relation to peace and security.

Colombia considers that the implementation of Res. 1325 must be a process guided by goals to be met for the short, medium and long term. We believe that after a careful analysis of these recommendations the next step should be to prepare a plan of action, including priorities, time frames and distribution of responsibilities among all concerned.

In the Presidential Statement to be adopted on October 31st, the anniversary date of Res. 1325, the members of the Council will reflect the views expressed in this debate and their first reaction to some of the recommendations contained in the reports. Moreover, Colombia thinks important that efforts made by the Council go hand in hand with the work being done by the General Assembly to implement the commitments contained in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and those resulting from the special session on Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the XXI century, held in 2000.

Mr. President,

My delegation would now like to react to some of the issues contained in the reports.

In the first place, we recognize the need to facilitate an active involvement of women in peace processes and in the larger context of decision-making, in order to ensure that their needs are adequately covered in the social and political arrangements resulting from peace negotiations. We believe that the Council can play an important role in this regard by promoting inclusion of clauses favoring their participation in peace agreements.

We share the views of the Secretary General emphasizing the important role of women's organizations and we welcome his intention to establish a database of gender specialists and women's groups and networks actives in countries and regions in conflict. The meetings with these groups held by members of the Council in their Missions to the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kosovo and Sierra Leona, as well as those held under the Arria formula have contributed positive elements to the Council debates.

Secondly, I would like to refer to Peacekeeping Operations to reiterate the importance of effective integration of gender perspectives into mandates of all missions, standard procedures, manuals and other guidance materials for operations, as well as in the provision of gender sensitive staff training. We note with appreciation the efforts made so far by DPKO. We would like to see this made into a systematic process carried out by focal points and qualified personal both within the Department and in the field.

To this end we value highly the experience of including gender advisers in several peacekeeping missions, such as those in Timor Oriental, Kosovo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Bosnia Herzegovina and Sierra Leone. Likewise Colombia strongly supports the policy by the Secretary General of zero tolerance regarding the abuses committed by peacekeepers and humanitarian personnel involved in the protection of and assistance to communities affected by armed conflict.

Lastly, Mr. President, I would like to underline the importance of institutional arrangements to overcome the impunity of crimes committed against women and children, especially in the context of armed conflict. In this sense, my delegation considers that the strengthening of national legislation and capacity to address all forms of violence against women is at the core of any attempts towards national reconciliation. We believe that full support for all affected women and children should be an essential part of the reconstruction process of society and should be explicitly included in aid programs following conflict.

Mr. President:

In several opportunities Colombia has expressed the view that, one of the more outstanding aspects of Res. is 1325, the important role played by civil society organizations, especially women's organizations, leading to the adoption and implementation of the Resolution and its provisions.

My delegation is pleased to see this as a permanent and on going process, and wishes to express its full readiness to continue engaged with the Secretary General and Member States in the achievement of gender equality in relation to peace and security.

Thank you.