

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security
Tuesday, 26th October 2010, Security Council Chamber (GA-TSC-01)

Statement by H.E. Mrs. Claudia Blum, Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations

Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. Colombia appreciates the convening of this open debate to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security.

I would also like to take this opportunity to especially congratulate Under-Secretary-General Michelle Bachelet on her appointment as the first Executive Director of UN Women. I am grateful for her presence here today and for her comprehensive statement.

In his report on women and peace and security (S/2010/498), the Secretary-General acknowledges that significant progress has been made in several areas. However, he also warns that much remains to be done to realize the vision of resolution 1325 (2000). In particular, the report refers to the need to redouble efforts to ensure that women can play their rightful role in conflict prevention and resolution and in reconstruction processes. Similar efforts are needed to protect women from abuse during conflict, including gender-based violence.

In order to meet the various existing international commitments with regard to the promotion and protection of the rights of women, including Security Council resolutions on women and peace and security, Colombia has at its disposal a significant constitutional, legal and institutional framework and gender-based strategies that cover social, economic and cultural aspects.

Among recent developments, I would like to mention that, as recognition of the particular needs of women and with a view to ensuring a life free of violence, in December 2008 we adopted law No. 1257 of 2008. That law sets out standards of awareness, prevention and punishment for forms of violence and discrimination against women. It extends the concept of violence against women to any act or omission that causes death, injury or physical, sexual, psychological, economic or patrimonial injury because of gender, as well as threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether in the public or private spheres.

In addition, under decree No. 164, of 25 January 2010, the national Government set up the Inter-Agency Group to Eradicate Violence against Women, a body that will facilitate comprehensive, targeted, accessible and quality care to women who are victims of violence and will act as a forum to coordinate and organize the various entities engaged in that task.

Furthermore, the Presidential Advisory Office on Gender Equality, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Population Fund and the International Organization for Migration jointly run the Integrated Programme Against Gender Violence, which seeks to help prevent, treat and eradicate gender-based violence affecting Colombian women both publicly and privately. The Programme underscores the most frequent and severe cases nationally and gives particular attention to displaced, indigenous and Afro-Colombian women.

In peacebuilding, State bodies work together in joint efforts to guarantee the protection of women from risks that affect them in areas where there are illegal armed groups. Furthermore, ensuring inclusion of the gender perspective and the full participation of women in the prevention of violence is being promoted. In that regard, with the support of the European Union and citizen participation, the Peace Laboratories programme is being promoted in areas affected by violence. That initiative explores paths of dialogue and coexistence, peaceful mechanisms for resistance and protection of the civilian population. Women are beneficiaries and/or agents of projects that promote peace in those areas.

Moreover, guidelines for the displaced population are being drawn up with a targeted gender approach. Their goal is to provide effective care that responds to the specific needs and impact that displacement has on women. The guidelines are based on three guiding aspects: participation a focus on law, and a genderperspective approach.

The national policy for the socio-economic reintegration of people demobilized from illegal armed groups seeks full inclusion of the gender perspective approach in institutional actions. Likewise, there is a programme for the prevention of domestic violence in families with reintegrated persons.

Although Colombia has a significant legislative framework and public policies that mainstream the gender perspective and variables, there persist challenges such as full integration, a review of indicators on the basis of international standards and the adoption of specific measures against gender-based violence.

For their part, the bodies responsible for implementing the Organization's policies and mandates on women and peace and security within the United Nations system must strengthen coordination and cooperation and avoid duplication of work. My country trusts that the new gender framework adopted by the United Nations and, in particular, the new entity UN Women ensure consistency in the Organization's activities.

Strengthening the role and capacity of women and respect for their rights are priority areas for the Government of Colombia. As a member of the Security Council's Group of Friends of resolution 1325 (2000), my country reaffirms its commitment to implementing policies, plans and programmes that broaden and strengthen the role of women in peacebuilding.