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**Statement of Mr Jean-Marie Guéhenno  
Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations  
Open Meeting of the Security Council on  
Women, Peace and Security  
Wednesday, 29 October 2003**

Mr President,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Three years ago, the Security Council took a bold stance on the role of women in conflict by adopting resolution 1325. It recognised that women and girls both bear the brunt of armed conflict and are integral to any lasting solution. The implications for peacekeeping operations are significant, and they call for a radical change in the way we do our work.

I welcome this opportunity to take stock of the past year's efforts to implement resolution 1325 in peacekeeping operations, and to highlight some of the challenges for the year to come. Our Senior Gender Advisor in MONUC, Ms Amy Smythe, will speak after me on the practical realities of implementing 1325 at the field level in the Democratic Republic of Congo. I would also like to acknowledge the contributions received from our partners in the UN system, as well as NGOs, for this presentation.

As we know, women and girls do not experience conflict in the same way as men and boys. Women and girls suffer disproportionately during and after war. Existing inequalities are magnified and social networks break down, making them more vulnerable to sexual violence and exploitation. We've learned that, when DPKO comes into such volatile environments, we need to listen to their voices. Only in this way, can we understand how best to help women and girls, and foster an equitable peace.

Women are also a source of strength and inspiration. We recognise the enormous, positive impact that women can have, when their knowledge, skills and motivation are harnessed in the name of peace and rebuilding a country. DPKO has benefited from collaboration with such agencies as UNIFEM that have strong links with national women's networks.

Over the past twelve months, DPKO has taken concrete steps to implement resolution 1325. This is particularly the case in multi-dimensional peacekeeping operations such as Sierra Leone, the DRC, Kosovo, Timor Leste and Afghanistan. In all of these missions, gender experts - working either alone or as part of a larger Gender Affairs Unit - are playing an active role, putting gender issues at the centre of peacekeeping.

DPKO has been working on the following five main areas highlighted in resolution 1325:

1. Increasing the number of women in peacekeeping operations;
2. Integrating a gender perspective in peacekeeping operations;
3. Training in gender awareness and HIV/AIDS issues;
4. Preventing and responding to serious misconduct by peacekeeping personnel; and,
5. Trafficking.

Mr President,

Let me start with the issue of gender balance amongst peacekeeping personnel. The importance of having equal numbers of men and women on our staff, at all levels of the organisation, is a given. But we need to lead by example. DPKO often finds itself in the awkward position of advocating for more women in national police forces than it has in its own ranks.

Women make up 4 per cent of total civilian police personnel in DPKO missions, and figures are equally low for the military. I urge member states to continue their efforts to provide more women civilian police and military personnel to peacekeeping operations. I also call for the inclusion of women and men with experience in gender-based crimes, to help us address the high rates of violence against women that are common in post-conflict situations.

DPKO is addressing this challenge in-house. We have started, on a pilot basis, to encourage more women applicants by targeting professional women's associations with our vacancy announcements. At the Director level and above, the number of women has increased fourfold over the past year. In the 15 DPKO peacekeeping missions, women currently represent one-third of all professional staff. We recognise, however, that our figures offer no grounds for complacency. DPKO intends to be more effective in the coming year in identifying suitable women candidates for senior positions, and in recruiting professional-level women in missions.

But, all too often, gender mainstreaming is reduced to an accountancy exercise where managers focus on the number of women amongst their staff. We tend to overlook the need to include a gender dimension in the programmes they are managing. Gender balance is essential, but it is only half of the story. We also need to make sure that our programmes take into account the different needs of women and men, and that they tap into their strengths. Let me give you an example of how looking at our disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programme in Sierra Leone from a gender perspective has made it more effective.

In the past, adult, male ex-combatants were the focus of our attention. They were the ones registered and given a package of benefits to help them return to civilian life. This meant that women who were either ex-combatants, or working in support roles - such as cooks, wives, or even girls abducted and forced to work as sexual slaves - were being left out of the picture. Now, our help is also directed towards these women and girls, and tailored to meet such special needs as trauma counselling for abducted girls who worked as sexual slaves.

To help “demystify” gender mainstreaming, a number of practical field manuals are being produced. A gender resource package is in the final stages of being developed. It will cover a wide range of topics, from general information on gender concepts and practical checklists highlighting gender issues in peacekeeping, to guidelines on establishing gender units in the field. In addition, in the coming year, we will be producing a field manual on gender issues for military commanders, as well as one on gender issues in mine action.

I would like to thank Member States for having approved, this year, the post of Gender Advisor based at DPKO headquarters. We have temporarily filled the position, until the recruitment of the post is concluded early next year. The Gender Advisor has already begun to assist us in coordinating our efforts on gender issues in a more effective way, and in facilitating cross-regional learning. One of her first tasks will be to take stock of all the positive efforts made to-date in the area of gender mainstreaming, identify some of the main gaps, and help us identify a comprehensive strategy to move forward. A network of gender focal points will also be established in the coming year to assist in mainstreaming efforts.

Mr President,

I would now like to turn to gender mainstreaming in missions. Some peacekeeping operations have restrictive mandates that focus on military tasks, and opportunities for gender mainstreaming are limited. However, the scope for gender mainstreaming is much broader in multi-dimensional peacekeeping operations. At present, we have gender advisors or specialists in five multi-dimensional missions: in Kosovo, Sierra Leone, the DRC, Timor Leste and Afghanistan. In addition, gender advisor posts have been established for Liberia and Cote d’Ivoire.

Time and time again, we have seen that Gender Affairs Units or gender specialists in missions improve the mission’s effectiveness in discharging its mandate, and in helping us to have a “light footprint.” For instance, in Kosovo, where the mission has executive and legislative responsibilities, the Senior Gender Advisor has helped the transitional government draft a Law on Gender Equality. This law will have a lasting, positive impact on the lives of women and girls, and the process has provided the Kosovar transitional administration with the skills to carry out legal reform from a gender perspective, including after UNMIK is gone. In Sierra Leone and Timor Leste, DPKO

gender advisors are improving the quality of the mission's work by training national police forces in how best to handle gender-based crimes, especially domestic violence. In Afghanistan, gender analysis has helped the mission plan more inclusive elections. The mission's electoral unit analysed the potential challenges relating to the registration of women. It is now introducing a number of measures to facilitate women's participation in elections, such as separate registration facilities for women.

In Georgia, where there is no full-time, gender specialist, many important efforts to mainstream gender into programmes have still gone ahead. For instance, the mission there is facilitating the participation of women from the contested area of Abkhazia in conflict resolution and peace-building efforts.

Giving you these examples may make gender mainstreaming sound easy, but it is not. Our gender experts in the missions repeatedly express their frustration about the "lip service" paid to gender issues. We need to move beyond empty words and actually practice what we preach.

I intend to ensure that all future, multi-dimensional peacekeeping operations include strong gender expertise; for instance, in the form of a Gender Affairs Unit that has access to senior-level, decision-making in all areas of the mission's work. I hope that Member States will support this effort.

Mr President,

Training on gender awareness and HIV/AIDS is another key element of resolution 1325. DPKO has disseminated a generic "Gender and Peacekeeping" training manual to all peacekeeping missions and to Member States. In the past year, nine "Train the Trainers" courses have been conducted by DPKO for more than 350 training officers from Member States. I urge Member States to ensure that this training package is included in all pre-deployment training for both military and civilian police. On my side, I will ensure that gender training is included in all induction courses for new personnel.

DPKO continues to prevent and respond to the problem of HIV/AIDS in peacekeeping operations. At present, HIV/AIDS Policy Officers are deployed in four field missions (UNMEE, MONUC, UNAMSIL and UNMISSET). The focus in the past year has been on prevention through training, often carried out in collaboration with UN and national partners. For instance, in Sierra Leone, DPKO - together with UNFPA and UNIFEM - conducted four workshops in the past year on HIV/AIDS, gender and human rights for military and civilian peacekeepers. In Timor Leste, the mission has provided voluntary, confidential HIV counselling and testing since February 2003.

The grave allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation of refugees and internally displaced women and children by humanitarian workers and peacekeepers first arose in West Africa, have strengthened DPKO's resolve to uphold a "zero-tolerance" stance aimed at preventing and effectively responding to this very serious problem, which not only violates human rights but undermines the very core of peacekeeping.

Following a thorough review of existing policies and procedures on disciplinary issues for all categories of personnel, DPKO provided all missions in July of this year with an updated set of disciplinary directives. These cover the issue of sexual abuse and exploitation as well as other types of serious misconduct. In MONUC, senior managers recently received training on the directives. In UNAMSIL, a Personnel Conduct Committee receives and investigates allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation by peacekeeping personnel, and a telephone hotline has been set up for reporting incidents of misconduct.

In the coming year, DPKO will ensure that each mission has an active strategy to prevent and respond to the problems of sexual abuse and exploitation. Each mission will appoint a senior focal point to receive complaints of misconduct by peacekeeping personnel. DPKO will also continue to work on ensuring that senior managers in missions know how to use and apply the disciplinary directives, and that they have the in-mission capacity to investigate allegations. Training, reporting and follow-up mechanisms will also be strengthened. Lastly, DPKO will review existing efforts to prevent and respond to sexual abuse and exploitation, and identify good practice for replication elsewhere.

While we can – and should – do all of these things, we need your support to make a real difference. Personnel contributed for service in a peacekeeping operation are required to abide by the highest standards of integrity while in service for the United Nations. We expect contributing States to provide pre-deployment briefings to all their personnel on these standards and to vigorously pursue any breaches. We also seek systematic feedback on action taken by Member States against peacekeepers repatriated for serious misconduct.

Before closing, I would like to touch briefly on the issue of trafficking of women. We all recognize that this is a complex, multi-faceted problem that has links to organised crime networks. Experience also teaches us that there is no single, easy solution to this problem, DPKO is currently undertaking a lessons learned study on our anti-trafficking programmes in Bosnia and Kosovo. The results of this study will help us identify best practices and some lessons learned in tackling the trafficking of women.

Mr President,

We have made real progress on gender mainstreaming in our peacekeeping operations. Much of it is due to the presence of full-time gender advisors. We acknowledge that there is a long road ahead of us, and that gender mainstreaming in post-conflict environments is not easy. It will take a concerted effort of will. We must learn to see gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping not as an afterthought, but as the key to any peacekeeping mission's success. We look forward to strong collaboration with Member States as well as with our UN and NGO partners to ensure that peacekeeping operations bring lasting and positive change to the lives of women and girls, and their communities.