



**PERMANENT MISSION OF FINLAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS**  
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United Nations

Security Council

Open Debate on Women and Peace and Security

Statement on behalf of the Nordic Countries  
Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden

Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations  
H.E. Jarmo Viinanen

New York, 16 December 2010

(Check against delivery)

Madam President,

I have the honour to address the Council on behalf of the Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

At the outset, let me thank the United States for leading the Council's work in its efforts to address the scourge of sexual violence in conflict. Sexual violence is not only a grave violation of human rights and a threat against the health and lives of the victims and of their communities. It is also a serious impediment to peace, security and development. Resolutions 1820, 1888, and the one adopted today complement in important and concrete ways the landmark resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security by recognizing sexual violence as a security issue and a possible war crime and in **adding provisions on protection, monitoring and enforcement tools**. The Nordic countries fully support the resolutions and your work.

Let me also thank and give further encouragement to the Secretary-General's Special Representative Margot Wallström and to UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict. We look forward to the work of UN WOMEN in this field. SRS Wallström's briefing to the Council and the insightful report of the Secretary General that is before us today show that **all possible synergies and joint-efforts are needed for the UN to support national governments to fulfil their responsibilities** to prevent and effectively respond to sexual violence.

Madam President,

Preventing sexual violence should be our utmost priority. Unfortunately the report of the Secretary General clearly shows that in many situations of conflict national governments and the UN alike have failed to protect civilian populations from these acts of violence. Wide-spread impunity in many conflict situations has led to a culture of impunity and "normalization" of sexual violence after the conflict has ended. Conflict-related sexual violence must be treated in the same way as other threats against peace and security, and perpetrators must be investigated and prosecuted. Justice for survivors is essential in restoring confidence in the government and in building sustainable peace.

**Better monitoring and reporting mechanisms, effective measures against impunity and comprehensive reparations for victims all contribute to prevention** in the long term, and that's why I'm focusing on these aspects today.

Madam President,

We fully support the Secretary-General's recommendations to establish monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements on conflict-related sexual violence, including the listing of those parties who commit sexual violence in situations of armed conflict. We further support the Secretary General's call for a coherent and coordinated approach at the field level. We are therefore very pleased that the resolution adopted by the Council today endorsed those recommendations in full.

It is also of crucial importance that the information gathered reaches the Council and its sanctions committees in a timely manner. In this regard we welcome the intention of the Council to ensure the flow of information from the field to the Security Council and its sanctions committees, and to take action based on that information.

Monitoring, reporting and sanctions are not ends in themselves. Their aim is to change the behaviour of parties to conflict and promote adherence to national and international law. We were therefore particularly happy to note that the resolution adopted today also endorsed the Secretary General's proposal for a dialogue with parties to armed conflict, where verified behavioural change will lead to delisting, while sanctions will be applied against persistent violators.

All these provisions together build a long-awaited mechanism for accountability for sexual violence and we congratulate the Council for its decision.

Madam President,

Investigating and prosecuting all acts of conflict-related sexual violence are both legal obligations and powerful deterrents. This includes holding commanders accountable for ordering, condoning or failing to prevent acts of sexual violence committed by troops under their control. Sexual violence can constitute a war crime, a crime against humanity and genocide and it is important to stress the duty of all states to investigate and prosecute these serious crimes. We must find ways to strengthen national judicial systems and processes, including through the deployment of the Team of Experts on Rule of Law. We must also find ways to support crime victims and improve their access to justice. This can be particularly challenging in the case of women and girls who face social exclusion and stigmatization. In some cases it may be necessary to refer cases to the International Criminal Court. We also encourage the Council to use other mechanisms at its disposal such as fact-finding commissions and commissions of inquiry.

Justice should always be sought with the perspective of survivors in mind. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has recently convened a panel in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where survivors of sexual violence gave their views on justice and reparations. The findings seem to support a holistic approach encompassing not only access to justice, judicial remedies and financial reparations, but also attention to the security, health, education and economic needs of the affected communities. Attention when discussing such reparations must also be given to the overall governance situation in the DRC as well as the overall challenges related to the chain of justice and the status of women and the gender relations within the communities as was stated in the conclusions of the international meeting on how to address sexual violence in the DRC, held in Stockholm 25-26 May this year.

Nordic countries contribute to the ICC's Trust Fund for Victims and support the work of the UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict as well as its member entities. We also support a large number of local and international organisations engaged in rehabilitation for survivors of sexual violence. Furthermore, we support the UN's Peacebuilding Commission and Fund, as well as other relevant UN-entities. We look forward to learning in more detail about the new approaches to reparations in the context of peacebuilding.

Finally, Madam President,

The Nordic countries promote women's participation at all stages in conflict prevention, in peace negotiations and in peacebuilding processes. This is not only because we view gender equality as an end in itself, but because women's empowerment and inclusion leads to sustainable peace, security and economic development. Sexual violence committed during conflict poses serious threats against peace and stability, but is seldom treated as a "hard" security issue. It is our view that sexual violence should always be addressed in peace- and cease-fire agreements, and that no amnesties should be granted for such abuses. If not addressed, the violence is likely to continue after the conflict has ended, and the foundation for building peace will be fragile.

The Nordic countries support the efforts of UN Women and the Department for Political Affairs in developing guidance for mediators on addressing sexual violence in peace negotiations. We also welcome and support their Joint Strategy on Gender and Mediation. We believe it will be an effective tool in strengthening women's participation in peace processes and in providing expertise and guidance to the parties and the mediators. Leaving sexual violence unaddressed undermines the very purpose of a peace agreement: peace and security, for all.

I thank you Madam President.