



PERMANENT MISSION OF FINLAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
866 UN PLAZA, SUITE 222, NEW YORK, NY 10017 - TEL. 1-212-355-2100 - FAX 1-212-759-6156

United Nations  
Security Council  
Ministerial Open Debate on Women and Peace and Security

Statement by  
H.E. Ms. Anne Holmlund  
Minister of Interior of Finland

New York, 26 October 2010

(Check against delivery)

Mr. President,  
Mr. Secretary-General,  
Excellencies,

Ten years ago this Council recognized that conflicts have a differing impact on the lives of women and men, and that both women and men have a valuable contribution to offer in advancing peace. In short, the Council recognized gender-equality, and the promotion and protection of women's rights, as a central issue to its mandate of maintaining international peace and security. We congratulate the Council, the United Nations, Regional Organisations and all Member States for the work done during this decade and thank you, Mr. President, for convening this Anniversary meeting.

Despite substantial efforts, there is no place for complacency. We hope that the next decade will be one of more strategic and systematic action, improved accountability, and measurable progress. The recommendations and the comprehensive set of indicators in the Secretary General's report on Women, Peace and Security provide a tool for accountability. The seven-point Action Plan presented in the Secretary General's report on Participation of Women in Peacebuilding is a very good framework for systematic action. We encourage the Council and the UN as a whole to put them in full use, and stand ready to do our part.

Mr. President,

Finland aligns itself with the statement of the European Union to be delivered later today. In addition, I wish to offer some insights into what Finland has done and learnt during the past decade, and commit ourselves to future action with regard to:

- Participation of women at all stages and all levels of peace processes, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery;
- National Action Plans; and
- Work against impunity, including due attention to victims.

Mr. President,

Finland believes that conflict prevention, mediation, and peaceful settlement of disputes should occupy a more central place in the peace and security agenda of the United Nations. Equal and effective participation of women at all stages and at all levels of peace processes is an integral part of our policies. For example, Finland supports the African Union in strengthening its mediation capacities. We recently carried out a very successful training in the participation of women in preventive diplomacy and mediation.

As we mentioned in this chamber a few weeks ago speaking on peacebuilding, even if outside actors can't dictate the composition of the negotiating delegations, there is a lot that can be done. Peace mediators and their supporting teams can always ensure that sufficient gender-expertise is provided to the parties, and organise parallel consultations with women's groups if they do not have a seat at the table. These measures should help us change the currently dismal record of women's participation in peace processes.

Participation of both women and men in peacekeeping, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction is crucial for the sustainability of their ultimate objective: peace. Let me be clear: full and equal participation is important for the delivery of the mandates that this Council has provided. Recent study from Afghanistan showed that women's participation in Provincial Reconstruction Teams benefitted their operational effectiveness. This is why one of the goals of Finland's National Action Plan has been to increase the numbers of women in both military and civilian positions in peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations.

It can be done. Before initiating our Plan in (September) 2007, women formed 19% of our seconded experts deployed in civilian positions of peace operations. Through consistent efforts we have increased the proportion to a high of 34% last August. We also believe that understanding of gender-aspects is important for all members of peace operations and we have therefore supported the work of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in developing gender training for all UN peacekeepers.

Increasing the amount of women also in the highest positions can wait no longer. The United Nations and regional organisations have a responsibility to set examples and promote gender-equality, while Member States have a responsibility to provide and support female candidates. Accordingly, Finland commits to increasingly nominating female candidates.

Mr. President,

National Action Plans on implementation of Resolution 1325 have proved to be the primary tool in strategic and systematic implementation. Finland's National Action Plan was jointly drafted by five Ministries and civil society partners, who are also actively engaged in its implementation and follow-up. As we look forward to the Council giving its support to the comprehensive set of indicators today, we commit to including the indicators in our own National Action Plan when revised next year.

Including the civil society in implementation of 1325 is vital. For its own part, Finland actively seeks advice and forms partnerships with NGOs in implementing its National Action Plan. For example in our National Anniversary Seminar, held in Helsinki last Friday, our President, Foreign Minister and myself were honoured to hear from Special Representative Margot Wallström and also from representatives of the civil society. Many ideas for improved concrete action and new best practices emerged from this exchange, including a proposal to include medical professionals in our crisis management teams in order to better respond to victims of sexual and gender based violence.

Finland also gives financial support to several NGOs working in the area of Women, Peace and Security. As an example of this is Femmes Africa Solidarité, which among other invaluable activities supports drafting of National Action Plans, including a Regional Action Plan for the Great Lakes Region in Africa.

We are willing to share our lessons learnt and experiences with other countries engaged in the preparation and implementation of their own National Action Plans. At the moment Finland cooperates with Kenya in drafting its National Action Plan through a twinning-project. Should the experiences from this programme be successful, we remain open to consider twinning with another partner country in the future.

Mr. President,

Finally, a few words on the centrality of the work against impunity and due attention to the victims of human rights violations and serious crimes.

Justice for victims is essential in restoring the confidence of the people in their government and in promoting sustainable peace. There should never be amnesties for the most serious crimes, including sexual and gender based violence, which can constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. Finland is fully supportive of the efforts of the International Criminal Court and the ad-hoc tribunals in this regard.

As an additional tool, I wish to highlight the potential of the Justice Rapid Response mechanism, a multilateral stand-by facility to deploy rapidly criminal justice and related professionals, trained for international investigations and at the service of States and international institutions. While still within its first year of operations, the Justice Rapid Response mechanism has already successfully completed three deployments and trained over 80 experts, thus proving its value. We are convinced that participation in the Justice Rapid Response mechanism is yet another example of concrete action to achieve the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

Justice is not only prosecutions. It includes the reform and strengthening of security sector and the rule of law structures and very importantly, addressing the needs and right to reparations for victims. Amongst other things Finland continues to provide financial contributions to the ICC's Trust Fund for Victims and to the UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Mr. President,

In closing let me repeat our hope that the next decade will be one of **strategic and systematic action, accountability, and measurable progress**. We look to this Council and to you, Mr. Secretary-General, for continued leadership, and to the newly established UN WOMEN and the whole of the UN system for enhanced action. You have our full support.

I thank you Mr. President.