

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security
October 28 2011, Security Council Chamber

Statement by H.E. Mr. Laajava, Representative of Finland

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Finland. Let me start by thanking the Nigerian presidency for having organized this debate and the Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General Bachelet and the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Kapambwe, for their valuable remarks. I wish to convey special thanks for the insights of Orzala Ashraf Nemat on behalf of civil society.

Fully recognizing the contribution of women and increasing their effective participation before, during and after conflict is a priority for the Nordic Governments, and we thank you, Madam President, for the choice of the theme of this year's debate.

Last year, we celebrated the tenth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000). The emphasis was on commitments for action and systematic follow-up. We thank the Secretary-General for his excellent report (S/2011/598*), which includes concrete data based on the indicators the Council agreed to last year and a very good strategic framework to guide the United Nations in the way ahead.

Exactly a week ago, the Security Council resolution on Yemen (resolution 2014 (2011)) called upon all concerned parties to improve women's participation in conflict resolution and encouraged them to facilitate the equal and full participation of women at decision-making levels. Yesterday's resolution on Libya (resolution 2016 (2011)) emphasized the importance of the full and equal participation of women and the respect for the human rights of all. We welcome these very strong calls.

During this eventful year, women have taken to the streets and squares across North Africa and the Middle East and demanded change, equality, freedom and justice alongside men. We call on the Security Council to ensure that women's voices are heard and reflected in planning, actions and results. Provisions on women's full participation and on the protection and promotion of women's human rights should be included in all relevant country-specific resolutions, and they should be systematically followed up when the special envoys and Special Representatives of the Secretary-General report back to the Council.

The conflict-prevention and mitigation efforts of women through civil society and governmental channels deserve our increased financial, political and technical support. Civil society participation serves a double aim: it fosters inclusive dialogue and development. It also builds the capacity of women to engage in more formal processes. Increasing the number of women in Government structures, for example in the security and justice sectors, makes such institutions more democratic, gender-responsive and accountable. This contributes to conflict prevention.

Women must be fully involved from the very beginning of peace processes so as to enhance the quality and sustainability of peace agreements. Mediation and negotiation teams should

have specialized gender expertise and carry out inclusive consultations. Further efforts are urgently needed to nominate and appoint more women mediators and to address the obstacles women face. Increasing the number of women in international organizations and in national diplomatic services is one tool for enlarging the pool of qualified women. At the same time, guidance and expertise is needed for mediators to integrate a gender perspective in ceasefire and in peace agreements. The Nordic countries welcome the work of UN-Women and fully support its joint strategy with the Department of Political Affairs on gender and mediation as an effective tool.

In post-conflict planning and budgeting, there should be targeted actions and sector-specific gender experts for all relevant areas, such as security sector reform and economic recovery. The Secretary-General's seven-point action plan on peacebuilding (see S/2010/466) provides detailed recommendations on that. We welcome the work done so far. However, much remains to be done, and we encourage the United Nations to implement all of the recommendations without delay. As donors, we commit to do our part both by supporting women's participation in post-conflict donor conferences and by directing funding for initiatives that contribute to gender equality.

A year ago we made commitments to advance the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). I would like to report briefly on three areas in which the Nordic countries have concretely implemented their commitments.

The first area is national action plans. All Nordic countries have established national action plans based on a holistic view of peace, security, development and human rights. Several line ministries, governmental agencies and civil society organizations work together to ensure timely and effective implementation and promotion of resolution 1325 (2000). The Nordic national action plans are results-oriented, and their implementation is guided by a set of indicators to measure real progress.

The Nordic countries have engaged in twinning and cooperation with partner countries, including Afghanistan, Kenya, Liberia, Nepal and the Philippines. We provide technical and financial support for the development of their new structures. But we also learn from them and hope that in this way our activities will be more responsive to the needs and priorities of countries with recent experience of conflict or fragility. Together we foster political will for women's rights in every part of the world.

The Nordic countries have greatly benefited from the advice and partnership of civil society. We support the work of local and regional non-governmental organizations from Afghanistan to the Great Lakes region and from Nepal to the Sudan.

Secondly, we are pleased to report a clear increase in the number of women among the military, police and civilian peacekeepers deployed. We also committed to train our personnel on gender equality and human rights. The mixed police teams deployed in Haiti, Liberia and Afghanistan have all received training on resolution 1325 (2000). Some have been specifically trained to address sexual and gender-based violence. We have developed a human rights manual for all crisis management personnel and supported gender-sensitive security sector reform in Palestine and the Balkans.

Thirdly, we have increased our efforts to fight impunity, with due attention to the rights of victims. Justice, including meaningful reparations for victims, is essential in restoring the confidence of the people in their Government. There should never be amnesty for the most serious crimes, including sexual violence, which can constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity.

We remain staunch supporters of the International Criminal Court and have been at the forefront of the work linking its complementarity principle with development activities that strengthen rule of law at the national level. We have also led the discussions around the review of the Court's strategy for victims, and we support its Trust Fund for Victims.

I thank you, Madam President, for this opportunity to share some of the Nordic countries' views and recommendations. We stand ready to continue to work with the Council and with the United Nations towards full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).