

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

*Statement by H.E. Mr. Briens, Representative of France*

I would first of all like to welcome the holding of this debate and to thank the Secretary-General, Ms. Michelle Bachelet, Ambassador Lazarus Kapambwe and Ms. Orzala Ashraf Nemat for their briefings and their participation in this meeting. I should also like to associate myself with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union.

It seems to us more important than ever that the Security Council address the issue of women's role and participation in conflict prevention and mediation. The Arab Spring has served to forcefully remind us of that. Women have been significant actors in the transitions that have occurred in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. In Syria and Yemen women are today continuing to fight with exceptional courage to defend their freedom, to ensure that the most fundamental human rights are respected and to make their calls for democracy heard. In this connection, I wish to welcome this year's awarding of the Noble Peace Prize to three exceptional women who are doing outstanding work in the service of peace and human rights.

Women must continue to be represented and actively consulted in the ongoing reform processes. They must have a place at the side of their male counterparts in order to successfully carry out the transition to democracy and establish regimes that are fairer and more respectful of the freedoms of their peoples. This is about the success of the ongoing political transitions and, consequently, about the stability of the countries themselves and, in turn, about the security of the region.

The effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, is a priority for France, which actively worked for its adoption, just as we have worked to strengthen awareness of this issue at the European Union, especially during our 2008 presidency of the Union. Last year, France adopted a national plan of action on the implementation of the resolution. In particular, it aims at prioritizing, at the international level, the protection of women against all forms of violence and promoting respect for their basic rights, as well as their equal participation in decision-making processes in the context of peacebuilding, reconstruction and development.

France has undertaken commitments in the context of its plan of action to strengthen women's direct participation in reconstruction efforts and the decision making process, namely, by focusing priority on access to leadership positions. In particular, France is implementing several cooperation programmes, in partnership with UN-Women, aimed at strengthening women's participation in the decision-making process, improving their access to, and participation in, the justice sector. We are doing that by relying on civil society organizations and, in particular, women's groups, which I would like here to commend. Those programmes are being carried out in Africa and the Arab world, as well as in Afghanistan. Moreover, France is developing programmes intended to bolster the participation of women in peacekeeping operations. Our plan of action also includes initiatives to improve awareness of the need for respect for the rights of women in the

context of training programmes, which is another important element in the implementation of the resolution on women, peace and security.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his recent report (S/2011/598\*). We agree with the bulk of its analyses. We would also like to commend the work done by UN-Women under the leadership of Ms. Bachelet. The strategic framework and follow-up indicators referred to in the report are useful tools, both for Member States and for the United Nations, in following up the implementation of the resolution on women and peace and security. Not only do they make it possible to assess results, but also to identify shortcomings in women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution. They also make it possible to refocus the efforts of the international community to ensure better protection for women in armed conflict.

We have seen progress in this regard in the past 10 years. To complement the resolution, the Council has put in place a framework that makes possible a more comprehensive approach to the protection of women and their participation in the resolution of conflicts. At the same time, the United Nations Secretariat and its agencies, funds and programmes, as well as other bodies of the Organization, now undertake more coordinated efforts. Ms. Bachelet's role has undoubtedly made a contribution in that regard. I also wish to commend the work and coordinating efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, as well as his Special Representative on Children and Armed conflict for her respective contributions.

Allow me to conclude by referring to the matter of justice, which is a major issue in the implementation of the resolution on women and peace and security. How can women express themselves and participate in public life if they must live alongside their former torturers, or live in fear and under oppression? How can they have access to justice if the road to justice entails humiliation, threats and reprisals? Access to justice and combating impunity are essential elements in ensuring women's full participation. In particular, there is a duty on the part of the international community to make use of all the instruments available to it — establishing commissions of inquiry, making referrals to the International Criminal Court and putting in place targeted sanctions, in the case of serious violations and systematic assaults on the rights of women. Only then will the efforts of the international community take on genuine credibility when it comes to protecting women and promoting their participation in conflict resolution.