



Open Debate on: Report of the Secretary-General on women,
peace and security

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Mr. President,

we greatly welcome this year's SC debate marking the fourth anniversary of SC RES 1325. We particularly welcome the fact that the focus is on gender-based violence and on strategies addressing this problem. Violence against women is an issue of utmost priority because of its human, political, social and economic dimensions. The phenomenon of gender-based violence can only be overcome by empowerment of women in all aspects of public and private life.

Unfortunately the list of countries in conflicts with a history of gender-based atrocities is long and includes countries from all continents, including Haiti, Afghanistan, Iraq, Myanmar, the former Yugoslavia, the DRC and others. The fact that women account for the vast majority of victims of conflicts and are still significantly underrepresented on all levels of decision-making indicates that we need tools and instruments that promote our common vision expressed in the thrust of SC RES 1325.

The continuing extreme violence against women and girls in the Darfur region is a case in point. In order to improve the situation, as well as the future perspective for women in Sudan, a gender dimension must be integrated into the peace talks. The ratification of CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women) – we have just celebrated the 25th anniversary of this very important convention – by the Government of Sudan would be another significant step in the right direction.

I would like to welcome the excellent proposals by the SG on the implementation of SC RES 1325 that aim to address the issue of women, peace and security in an active way. While fundamentally agreeing with all of them, I would like to focus on several action-oriented aspects.

A gender unit is the main guarantor for the effective integration of a gender perspective in a UN mission. The Minister of State of the German Foreign Office pointed out this requirement during last October's SC debate on 1325, at that time referring to the

UN mission in Afghanistan. However, a gender unit alone is not sufficient even if it is supplied with adequate resources, which is, unfortunately still quite often not the case. Given the scope of gender-based discrimination, including violence, we need to ensure that all substantive units of a PKO, starting with the UN assessment team, include specialists with gender expertise.

Therefore, more personnel with gender expertise have to be selected during the recruitment process. This requires that the UN continue to train its personnel, including on the SRSB level, and that member states invest more in gender training of potential peacekeeping staff. The German Government has made the latter a political priority in its endeavours.

We strongly believe in the need for accountability for war-time violence against women and in the necessity to end impunity. Time-bound goals concerning the implementation of SC RES 1325 will be very helpful in this regard. The ICC certainly has a key role to play with regard to the investigation and prosecution of gender-based crimes. However, its efforts must be supplemented by national legal mechanisms. I also would like to mention the very recent initiative for a conference on gender justice organised by UNIFEM and others. Let me express the hope that there will be a concrete follow-up on this key issue of gender justice.

We now start to understand that DDR programs, long neglected, also have to be targeted at women and girls, since in Africa, for instance, one-third of combatants, including their so-called supporters, are female. As far as the reintegration aspect is concerned, we have to respect that female ex-combatants do not wish to be reintegrated into structures in which their rights, including economic rights, are not guaranteed.

Let me re-emphasize that Germany, a friend of SC RES 1325, is deeply committed to the vision of this landmark resolution and undertakes various efforts to realize this vision. Germany is one of the few countries to have provided a detailed report on its national initiatives concerning the implementation of SC RES 1325. We stress the need to include women at all levels of peace negotiations and conflict resolution. The

promotion of the full participation of women in post-conflict and reconstruction processes is a political priority.

Having said this, I wish to stress the fact that more can be done by member states in supporting the UN system-wide implementation of SC RES 1325 in all its aspects: From our point of view, the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations, uniting member states and non-member states of the SC, should integrate a gender perspective into its work as a matter of priority.

Finally, I wish to emphasize the very important contribution of civil society and, especially, how greatly we welcome initiatives such as those by CAN, CHL, UK and the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security to organize roundtables with representatives from all SC MS, where strategies on the full implementation of SC RES 1325 are discussed in a remarkably open and constructive atmosphere.

Thank you.