

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security
November 30th 2012, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri, Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations.

I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

At the outset, I would like to thank the Deputy Secretary General for his presence and remarks at this important Open Debate under the Agenda Item of Women and Peace and Security. The fact that more than 50 countries have expressed their interest to speak in today's debate reflects the importance and resonance of this issue.

I would also like to thank the Under Secretary General and Executive Director of UN Women Madame Michelle Bachelet and DPKO USG Herve Ladsous for their detailed briefing. I also thank Ms. Bineta Diop, President of Femmes Africa Solidarite, for sharing their insights and other Council Members for their contribution to this debate.

Resolution 1325 highlighted the impact of armed conflict on women and the need for effective institutional arrangements to guarantee their protection and full participation in peace processes. India has consistently held that greater participation of women in areas of conflict resolution, peace negotiations, peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction is the sine qua non for lasting peace and security.

India welcomes the report of the Secretary General and its call for enhanced participation, representation and involvement of women in prevention and resolution of armed conflict and in peacebuilding, as well as a stronger commitment to address challenges to such engagement of women at all levels.

In the same vein, let me add here that the three pillars of lasting peace, namely, economic recovery, social cohesion and political legitimacy, cannot be achieved without the active engagement of women.

It is more than a decade now since resolution 1325 was adopted. Results remain mixed with important gaps remaining in fully realizing its provisions. India attaches high importance to ensuring concrete action in this area. The Secretary General's report has identified areas where further specific actions can be taken.

India firmly believes that the national governments have the primary responsibility for taking requisite action in developing national strategies and implementing them in pursuance of resolution 1325.

The UN needs to support and supplement, as appropriate, the efforts of the national government in this regard. We also believe that civil society, including women organizations, is a valued partner in such efforts.

India believes that there are clearly no 'off-the shelf' remedies or 'manuals' that can be applied to armed conflict and post-conflict situations. Approach to each conflict situation will need to take into the account the specificities of that situation.

As the concerned country moves from the armed conflict phase to the conflict resolution and post-conflict phase, there is a need to assist it, as required, in the key task of strengthening government institutions and integrating the gender perspective in government policies in areas such as security, justice, governance, public administration, economic recovery, basic services, etc.

Capacity building is thus essential for ensuring better governance and stabilization of post-conflict situations. The UN should focus its efforts in this area.

We, therefore, support UN efforts to deploy greater number of women protection advisors and gender advisors in its Missions. It is necessary to ensure adequate geographical representation and experience relevant for deployment areas in selection of such advisors.

UN field missions and country teams must have greater coherence and coordination to ensure optimal utilization of available gender expertise. There is also the need to allocate additional resources for UN missions to fully implement their mandates.

Equally pertinent is the role played by civil society in internalizing the provisions of resolution 1325 while addressing issues in various conflict zones. This should, in particular, encourage local communities to step forward and assume their rightful role in conflict resolution.

Their feedback and inputs on specific needs and requirements of women may be appropriately used in developing and implementing appropriate intervention strategies.

The promotion and protection of the human rights of women and girls in armed conflict continue to pose a pressing challenge. There should be zero tolerance for gender-based violence. All cases of gender-based violence must be promptly investigated and their perpetrators prosecuted.

We agree with those who call for increased deployment of female military and police personnel in United Nations peacekeeping operations, and for appropriate training to enable them to effectively discharge their responsibilities.

India is the largest troop contributing country in UN history. India was the first country to deploy a full female peacekeeping unit of 100 personnel in Liberia in 2007. We have offered to contribute more such units. We are very proud of the exemplary record of our peacekeepers, both men and women in the protection of women, children, and the weak in conflict situations.

In conclusion, let me reaffirm India's commitment to positively contribute to UN efforts in the area of women and peace and security. We also see the civil society and local communities as valued partners in this endeavour.

Thank you.