



IRELAND

Statement

by

**H.E. Mr. Paul Kavanagh
Permanent Representative**

Debate on “Women, Peace and Security”

United Nations Security Council

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Madam Secretary,

I am grateful to the Council for the opportunity to address it on the subject of Women, Peace and Security. My Government commends the United States delegation on the Security Council, under the able leadership of Ambassador Khalilzad, for the work it has invested in this important issue. We welcome you, Madam Secretary, back to United Nations Headquarters. Ireland aligns itself with the statement made earlier today by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Slovenia on behalf of the European Union.

Eight years on from the adoption of Resolution 1325 by this Council, it is indeed time to assess progress towards achieving its major goals. The Resolution, adopted in the year 2000, has helped to promote the equal participation and full involvement of women in efforts to advance peace and security. It has also sought to protect women and girls from, and indeed to prevent gender based violence.

However, it remains a challenge to ensure that the United Nations, both institutionally and through its individual member States, fully implements Resolution 1325. In October last, the Council regretted that acts such as QUOTE gender based violence, particularly rape, and other forms of sexual abuse... remain pervasive, and in some situations have become systematic, and have reached appalling levels of atrocity UNQUOTE.

The horror has been highlighted by the media and indeed in frequent reports provided to this Council by Under-Secretary-General Holmes and others. Such a grave situation requires an urgent and effective response from the international community, in the first instance from the Security Council.

Madam Secretary,

The Irish Government for their part are actively engaged in promoting the role of women in conflict resolution and post-conflict recovery. The recent establishment of a major Conflict Resolution dimension within our Department of Foreign Affairs has opened further avenues for Ireland to support implementation of Resolution 1325 in

conflict and post-conflict settings. Reflecting this commitment to strengthen the role of women in peace and security, earlier this year the Irish Government formally agreed that Resolution 1325 would be one of three cross-cutting themes which guide the work of a new designated Conflict Resolution Unit. Specifically, women's participation in the Northern Ireland peace process, together with the presence of a strong research and activist base, will permit tangible lessons to be drawn and shared internationally in helping advance and implement the 1325 agenda.

The Beijing Platform for Action highlights the impact of violence against women in situations of armed conflict. In this context, as Chair of the Human Security Network (HSN) for the period through May 2009, Ireland will focus on the theme of Gender Based Violence. The Human Security Network is a cross-regional group of countries comprised of Austria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, Norway, Switzerland, Slovenia and Thailand, with South Africa as an observer.

The Beijing Platform for Action also underlines that peace is inextricably linked to equality between women and men. The promotion of gender equality and elimination of gender based violence is a prominent feature of Ireland's aid policy and activities overseas, and of our National Women's Strategy at home.

In 2004, in response to reports of high levels of gender based violence, particularly rape and sexual violence, being perpetrated in the conflict in Darfur, Ireland established a national Joint Consortium on Gender Based Violence. Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has lent her valuable support as a patron. This unique body marks the first time in Ireland that human rights, development and humanitarian agencies have cooperated with government agencies, including those in uniform, to confront collectively the issue of gender based violence. More generally, training on gender equality and protection from gender based violence is provided to Irish peacekeepers at the Irish Defence Forces UN Training School.

Ireland acknowledges and supports the leading role of the United Nations in ending violence against women, including through the new multi-year programme launched recently by the Secretary-General. We strongly support the Gender Equality work of

UNDP, including the Eight-Point Agenda for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality in Crisis Prevention and Recovery.

Madam Secretary,

I would like to turn now to the very useful Concept Paper drawn up by the US President of the Council in preparation for today's debate. It correctly identifies three priority areas for consideration: understanding the problem; prevention and protection; and consequences for the perpetrators.

As far as understanding the problem is concerned, Ireland encourages the Security Council to recognise that sexual and other forms of gender based violence in conflict situations has direct and significant relevance to the maintenance of international peace and security. Accordingly, the Council should ensure systematic monitoring and analysis of such violence and, where appropriate, take steps, measures and action to address it. We also encourage the Council to request the Secretary-General systematically to include comprehensive information on acts of gender-based violence, including sexual violence, against women and girls in all reports on conflict situations. Moreover, Ireland encourages the Council to request the Secretary-General to reflect on ways to improve the level and quality of such reporting, using benchmarks, indicators and monitoring mechanisms.

On prevention and protection, Ireland would encourage the Council to request the Secretary-General to report to it on a heightened engagement of the United Nations in stopping gender-based violence in conflict situations. Such a report could draw on UN action already underway and on activities of non-governmental organisations and women's groups at the local, national and international levels. Ireland supports the call for the appointment of an independent expert to lead this study. We would also encourage the Council to ensure that women at the local level can actively participate in the design, implementation and evaluation of strategies and programmes to meet their security interests, needs and concerns.

Ireland believes that there ought to be consequences for perpetrators. Accountability by state and non-state actors should be ensured, including through effective prosecution and punishment. Security sector reform and capacity-building for police and the judicial sector are also called for in this connection. The inclusion of sexual violence offences in the statutes of the ad hoc international criminal tribunals, and the considered jurisprudence of those tribunals, has, over a short space of time, progressively developed the law in this area in many important respects. Rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilisation and other forms of sexual violence are now included within the definitions of war crimes and crimes against humanity found within the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The Council can, of course, refer a situation for investigation by the Prosecutor of the Court – an institution which Ireland fully supports.

There should be wider application of best practices for effective prevention and prosecution of sexual crimes committed in situations of armed conflict. Council mandates for conflict situations should provide that local commanders and their superiors in the military chain of command of armed parties to conflict can be held accountable. All too often, military commanders and other superiors fail to take necessary and reasonable steps within their control either to prevent sexual violence against civilians or to punish the perpetrators of such crimes. Military commanders and other superiors should be held accountable for such serious acts of omission on their part. Impunity can also be reduced by ensuring that women are involved to the greatest extent possible in peace negotiations and in any associated amnesty provisions.

In conclusion, Madam Secretary, Ireland welcomes the intended adoption later today of a new Security Council resolution, which we are pleased to co-sponsor, on this important issue. We believe that the resolution should help to empower women to fully participate in the prevention, management and resolution of conflict. It must be effectively implemented to ensure that countless women and girls in conflict situations receive more adequate and effective protection from sexual violence.

Adoption of today's resolution will recognise that the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war is a threat to sustainable international peace and security.

And under the law, principal responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security rests here, in this Chamber.

Ireland hopes therefore that the Security Council will act on its own analysis and promote with all necessary vigour wider respect for, and implementation of, its resolutions so as to halt and eliminate sexual violence against women and girls in situations of conflict.

Thank you, Madam Secretary