

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

*Statement by H.E. Mr. Kamau, Representative of Kenya*

I thank you, Madam President, for giving me the floor. Kenya welcomes the leadership shown by Nigeria in holding this debate on women and peace and security during its presidency of the Security Council. Kenya also appreciates your role, Madam, as President of the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. It is indeed a clear demonstration of your dedication to issues of fundamental importance to women and the international community at large.

There is no doubt that matters of women and peace and security begin with women themselves. It is women who have the strongest and most sustained voices in championing women, peace in their societies and security in their lives. Last month, Kenya, and indeed the entire world, lost a great champion of the cause of women. Ms. Wangari Maathai, a Nobel peace laureate, passed on. We will miss her and her courage. It is with consolation that Kenya welcomed the news that 2011 Nobel Peace Award had gone to three distinguished women — Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Leymah Gbowee, both of Liberia; and Tawakkul Karman of Yemen — for their non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women's right to full participation in peacebuilding work.

Last year, we commemorated 10 years since the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1325 (2000). That resolution, together with other international instruments, constitutes the basis for cooperation among all actors engaged in this field and contributes to the wider agenda of gender equality and empowerment of women. The issue that we are addressing today — women and peace and security — deserves the international community's utmost attention and unequivocal support. In this regard, I wish to reiterate Kenya's commitment to the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), together with the follow-up resolutions.

Prevention is undoubtedly the cornerstone of any strategy to address the challenges that society faces. We note with satisfaction the various actions that have been undertaken by Member States, the United Nations system, civil society and other actors in implementing resolution 1325 (2000). We believe that countries must systematically integrate and mainstream women specific issues in their action plans in order to tackle the growing problem of sexual and gender-based violence during conflict and even in peacetime. In this regard, it is important that more support be extended to countries in order to buttress preventive measures and support their institutions to combat these vices.

Sexual abuse is indeed one of the most pervasive crimes of our time. It is imperative, therefore, that the international community support national systems and institutions — such as the police, prosecution and the judiciary — to combat this despicable crime. My delegation wishes to underscore the importance of education and communication as tools to prevent and combat violence generally. It is in this connection that my delegation urges UN-Women to continue prioritizing education and public communication within its mandate.

My delegation believes that women's participation enhances social harmony and inclusivity and reduces the chances of conflict. Women, therefore, should participate as full partners in

governance institutions. The new Kenya Constitution has entrenched women's participation in all aspects of Kenya's governance structures and social life in general. Furthermore, the national policy on gender and development has set up an ambitious agenda aimed at integrating women into the mainstream of decisionmaking processes through regulatory and institutional reform.

These efforts have begun to bear fruit. Kenya's next Parliament will have 48 and 16 seats reserved for women in the National Assembly and the Senate, respectively, in addition to those who will be competitively elected in the various constituencies. Furthermore, in all cases where special interests are represented in the legislature, the seats will be divided equally between men and women. Currently, women serve as members of constitutional commissions, such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Commission on the Implementation of the Constitution and the Public Service Commission, to name just a few. Additionally, the top two positions of any public body cannot be held by people of the same gender, thus giving an equal chance to women to either lead or eventually ascend to the top leadership positions of all public institutions.

As I have intimated before, Kenya condemns all forms of violence against women, including sexual violence, and has consistently urged compliance with humanitarian and human rights law during times of conflict. Issues of peace and security cannot be dealt with in isolation from other themes. Women must have access to resources, entrepreneurial skills, including job creation, and land, housing and property. It behooves us, therefore, to emphasize a multi-pronged approach to eliminating violence against women.

The Security Council has an important role to play in dealing with peace and security matters internationally. States, however, bear the primary responsibility to protect their citizens from violence. It is in this regard that my delegation calls for more concerted efforts by the international community and the United Nations system to support national efforts to prevent and address the myriad issues surrounding conflicts. Indeed, countries in conflict and those recently emerging from conflict have unique challenges that, if not comprehensively addressed, will lead to either a continuation or a relapse into conflict.

Finally, Kenya expresses its gratitude to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2011/598\*) on this agenda item, which, inter alia, showcases the key sectors where tangible progress has been made by countries, and identifies gaps and challenges in implementation. Kenya is particularly grateful for the thematic indicators under which Member States reports were compiled. My delegation will seek to engage further with all Member States and stakeholders in order to see to it that the indicators achieve the widest possible acceptance.

In conclusion, I wish to once again reiterate Kenya's commitment to implementing resolution 1325 (2000). In so doing, we must ensure greater coherence and coordination in addressing women's issues in conflict and post-conflict situations in a holistic manner. I emphasize once again that the establishment of UN-Women accords us a very strong platform for addressing issues affecting women in general, and the acceleration of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in particular. It is Kenya's expectation that UN-Women will rise to the challenge expeditiously.