

**OPEN DEBATE OF THE
SECURITY COUNCIL:
WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY**

STATEMENT

BY

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Mr. President,

We thank you for the continued commitment of your Government to the issue under consideration today and are happy to follow your guidance in our brief address to the Council today. Resolution 1325 is a landmark decision that can guide the international community a long way toward improving women's situation and working toward peace and security. The need to fully involve women in all efforts of maintenance and promotion of peace and security was recognized by the international community in the Beijing Program of Action and Security Council resolution 1325 provided the necessary momentum for implementation in this respect. The Secretary-General's first report in response to 1325 in 2002 again place strong emphasis on the need for women to be actively involved in all decision-making processes relating to armed conflict, at all levels. There is ample evidence that effective peacemaking, peace-keeping, and peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction as well as the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance, greatly benefit from the active participation of women. Shifting the perception of women as victims to women as participants is therefore at the core of change in the field of women, peace and security. However, and in spite of important advances, women continue to be both disproportionately affected by armed conflicts and disproportionately uninvolved in decisions related to them. In the area of participation, clearly a key element, progress is still very slow. We continue to believe that the United Nations itself can and should lead by example in order to galvanize this process and believe that the posts of Special Envoys and Special Representatives as well as other senior operational positions are of crucial importance in this respect.

Mr. President

Resolution 1325 has been widely disseminated and known in a large constituency, as the Secretary-General's report before us illustrates. Nevertheless, we are certainly still far behind the goals we had set for ourselves in that resolution. Our annual debate on resolution 1325 must be an exercise of stock-taking and of identifying the areas where action is most urgently needed. The practical work on implementation must be carried out throughout the year, on a consistent and regular basis. It seems therefore important to establish mechanisms of mainstreaming the concerns contained in resolution 1325 into the daily work of the Council. The proposal made by the European Union to

designate a focal point for monitoring implementation seems to us a very valuable contribution in this respect.

Mr. President

In the area of gender-based violence, very significant progress has been made through the work of international judiciaries. The ad hoc tribunals created by the Security Council have made historic contributions to the international jurisprudence and increased the awareness around the globe that sexual violence will not go unpunished. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and its supplemental documents criminalize gender-based and sexual violence committed as war crimes and crimes against humanity. Applying the relevant provisions of the Rome Statute in individual cases before the Court is instrumental not only in providing redress to victims but also in advancing the law at international level. Perhaps even more importantly, the entry into force of the Rome Statute and the commencement of operations of the ICC are providing the legal and political incentive in States to include definitions of these crimes in domestic legislation and apply them in domestic courts. In spite of all these important developments, there is still the risk the gender-based and sexual violence is neglect in proceedings before Courts, not least because they often involve considerable difficulties and sensitivities. It is therefore important to repeat the message time and again that sexual violence will not go unpunished. We must also enhance the understanding that this sort of violence is one of the most commonly used and sadly most effective ways of terrorizing entire communities and populations.

Mr. President

In order to prevent gender-based violence in armed conflict, the vigorous promotion and protection of human rights, specifically the human rights of women and girls must hold center stage. Various forms of violations of the human rights of women and gender-based violence are but a premonition of what women have to suffer in armed conflict. Report after report has made clear that the effect of armed conflict on women is particularly grave where a culture of violence and discrimination against women and girls exist prior to armed conflict. This year again, the Secretary-General's report points

to the link between daily forms of discrimination and violence against women and the exacerbated situation women are plunged into during armed conflict. The gender-based early warning indicators in conflict prevention: gender-specific migration, rising violence against women, media scapegoating of women or the silencing of women leaders through intimidation may indeed alert us to horrors to come in armed conflict. But such indicators also give away deep-seated forms of discrimination against women and girls, indeed they are indicators of the level of oppression and discrimination women face every day. To effectively prevent or fight the excesses of gender-based violence in armed conflict, gender-based discrimination and violence must also be addressed at a much earlier stage. Disrespect for long accepted standards in peacetime allows for the rule of law to deteriorate all the more rapidly and completely in crisis and conflict situations.

Mr. President

In conclusion, I wish to emphasize that United Nations action in this area can only be effective if we keep our own house in order. Gender-based violence in UN operations, in particular in peacekeeping operations where the population concerned is likely to be particularly vulnerable, must never be condoned. We welcome therefore all efforts in the area of training as well as the UNSG bulletin on the protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.

I thank you, Mr. President.