



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

SECURITY COUNCIL

OPEN DEBATE

WOMEN AND PEACE AND SECURITY

STATEMENT

BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Mr. President,

At the outset, I wish to express my delegation's gratitude and satisfaction to you and to the Government of Namibia for organizing today's open debate on Women and Peace and Security. You have, in addition, chosen October 24, United Nations Day, for this debate, thereby underscoring the commitment of the Security Council to pay special attention to the role of women in preventive diplomacy, armed conflict, peacekeeping and peace-building.

Mr. President,

The United Nations' engagement in peace operations has evolved from peacekeeping, in its traditional sense, towards multidimensional peace support operations. Despite this, the gender considerations in peace processes have, however, not been adequately addressed. A full understanding of the impact of armed conflict on women and girls is necessary in order to effectively promote and maintain international peace and security. Women and children constitute a disproportionate number of civilians affected by armed conflict. An estimated 80 % of all internally displaced persons and refugees are women and children. During armed conflict, women and girls are threatened by rape, sexual exploitation, trafficking and sexual humiliation. Every setting presents risks, whether at home, while fleeing or in camps for displaced persons. Sexual violence has a devastating effect on the life of women and children, ranging from sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS to humiliation and trauma.

Humanitarian assistance in armed conflict should therefore include psychosocial and reproductive health services, and relief workers have to be trained to respond to needs of victims of sexual violence. My delegation would welcome the establishment of systems for reporting on sexual violence, abuse, exploitation and trafficking of women and girls within military and civilian populations, to be followed by enforcement and monitoring mechanisms for

peacekeeping personnel. It is in our view also necessary to establish disciplinary and oversight mechanisms in all peace support missions.

Peacekeeping personnel must meet the highest standards of conduct. Training in international human rights and humanitarian law, including gender training and instruction on their responsibility towards civilian communities should be an integral part of the preparatory process. We all know that violations against women and children have also been committed by UN-personnel. These offences must be investigated and the offenders punished.

The authorization or perpetration of sexual violence during armed conflict constitutes a violation of international law. If these violations happen on a large scale or as a matter of policy, they constitute a crime against humanity. Historic precedents have been set by the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda. These tribunals have for the first time in history punished sexual violence in a civil war and have elaborated rape as an act of genocide. My delegation is very gratified at the fact the the Statute of the International Criminal Court will have the potential to protect and promote the human rights of women and girls. The statute also adresses trauma counselling, rehabilitation and compensation to the victims of war crimes and calls for gender and child-sensitive court procedures.

Mr. President,

Although the contribution of women in peace-building, peacemaking and conflict resolution is being increasingly recognized, the role of women in preventive diplomacy has so far been very limited . The Secretary-General's strategic plan of action (A/49/587) calls for an increase in the participation of women at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes. The Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action stress the need for an increased participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels in Strategic Objective E.1. The 23rd

Special Session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" encourages, inter alia, the involvement of women in decision-making at all levels and the achievement of gender balance in the appointment of women and men, with full respect for the principle of equitable geographical distribution, including as special envoys and special representatives and the pursuit of good offices on behalf of the Secretary-General, in matters relating to peacekeeping, peace-building, and in operational activities, including resident coordinators. The female Ambassadors to the United Nations have started to address this problem in 1996 by establishing and updating a list of female candidates and we intend to continue our efforts to considerably enhance the role of women in preventive diplomacy. In this context, my delegation welcomes the Windhoek Declaration issued on the 10th Anniversary of the United Nations Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG) which proposes that an Advisory Board should be set up within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to ensure that a comprehensive data base as well as existing lists of female candidates be given due consideration. My delegation is furthermore of the opinion that gender issues need to be mainstreamed into the actions that will result from this debate and also in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Brahimi report.

Mr. President,

Every attempt towards democratization and peace-building must be based on fundamental values including the principles of gender equality. Women must therefore be participants in all peace processes and at any stage of these processes. Today's debate is a concrete step towards realizing this goal.

I thank you, Mr. President.