

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

Statement by H.E. Mrs. Kazragienė, Representative of Lithuania

Allow me at the outset to welcome the Nigerian presidency of the Security Council this month and to express my delegation's appreciation for its having convened today's debate. We align ourselves with the statement delivered by observer of the European Union.

Lithuania is firmly convinced that national, regional and international activities related to peace and security should take gender issues into account by protecting women and promoting their participation as beneficiaries, practitioners and decision-makers. Resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security provide us with a useful framework in this regard. We support the prompt and full implementation of these resolutions.

Resolution 1325 (2000) is relevant to the implementation of Lithuania's foreign, security and development cooperation policy objectives, as well as our participation in international peacebuilding and peacekeeping missions. Lithuania was one of 38 Member States that contributed to the Secretary-General's report on women and peace and security (S/2011/598*).

The Lithuanian National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2010-2014 raised, for the first time, gender issues in the national defence system and included measures for training gender experts who will now prepare Lithuanian personnel in this area for deployment to missions and operations. As announced by Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė during the General Assembly general debate in September (see A/66/PV.16), Lithuania drew up its first national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in 2011. We seek through the national action plan to facilitate outreach to our society concerning the aims of the resolution, to promote and protect women's rights, to encourage them to participate in international military and civil operations and missions, to involve more institutions and non-governmental organizations, and to streamline activities at all levels.

With respect to national action plans, we note with interest the references in the Secretary-General's report to the practices in some countries of providing for the production of shadow reports of civil society organizations as part of their monitoring mechanisms. Following the adoption of its national action plan, Lithuania intends to apply for membership in the Group of Friends of resolution 1325 (2000).

Last June, women leaders from all parts of the world — Special Representative of the Secretary-General Wallström among them — met in Vilnius at a conference entitled "Women Enhancing Democracy: Best Practices" under the Lithuanian presidency of the Community of Democracies, and shared their experiences and best practices in enhancing the role of women. The Working Group on Gender Equality and Women's Rights, co-chaired by the United States of America and Lithuania, discussed, among other priority issues, women and peace and security. The conference showed that, in many parts of the world, the involvement of women is still low. Indeed, women could and should play a bigger role in human rights and security monitoring and establish early warning systems to generate information about specific threats, peace talks, donor conferences, elections and decision-making.

Lithuania attaches particular importance to conflict prevention. We support the first General Assembly resolution on strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes (resolution

65/283), which, inter alia, advocates the enhanced role of women in peace mediation. We welcome the joint strategy on gender and mediation launched by the Department of Political Affairs and UN-Women, and look forward to its further implementation.

Successive chairmanships of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), including that of Lithuania, have sought to include gender issues within the scope of OSCE activities related to peace and security. Ministerial Council Decision 14/05 builds in part on resolution 1325 (2000) and calls for engaging women in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. In October, the OSCE held a major conference in Sarajevo entitled “UNSCR 1325: Moving Beyond Theory to Maximize Security in the OSCE”. This year, the Lithuanian OSCE Chairman-in-Office appointed his Special Representative on Gender Issues, Ms. Wendy Patten, to coordinate implementation of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality.

The improvement of the status of women, in particular in countries with identified patterns of conflict-related sexual violence, starts with addressing the very basic issues involved in enabling women to live a more decent life. The experience of Lithuania and other partner countries in Afghanistan, where Lithuania is leading a provincial reconstruction team, shows that women’s empowerment and full participation at all levels of economic, political and social life are key not only to peace and security but also to poverty reduction, economic recovery and sustainable development. To cite but two examples, one project aims at consulting local medics and patients on midwifery and other women’s health-related questions at the provincial hospital. Another important development project for local women and their organizations was dedicated to strengthening the capacity of the provincial administration and local non-governmental organizations to prepare and implement their own projects.

Finally, Lithuania calls on the Security Council to use its authority to ensure that all resolutions, including those on mission mandates and their renewal, integrate and advance the women and peace and security agenda.