

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security
November 30th 2012, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Ms. Lucas Permanent Mission of Luxembourg to the United Nations.

I would like to thank you warmly, Sir, for having rescheduled the open debate originally scheduled by the Guatemalan presidency, and for giving us this opportunity to take stock of progress made and the challenges remaining in the advancement of women in the framework of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions. I would like to particularly welcome the focus in today's debate on the important role that women's civil society organizations play in the prevention of conflicts and their commitment to peacebuilding.

I also thank today's speakers for their enlightening briefings. While I fully align myself with the statement made by observer of the European Union, I would like to underline a few aspects that are of particular importance to us. The latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2012/732) shows the headway we have made over the past two years. Let me mention the progress made in implementing the seven-point action plan on women's participation in peacebuilding, as well as the adoption of a strategic results framework on women and peace and security on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000).

There is a self-evident interconnection. There can be no prevention of conflict without the participation of women, and no participation without effective protection of the rights and the physical and moral integrity of women. It is therefore necessary to make progress simultaneously on all these issues. It is also encouraging that a growing number of regional cooperation mechanisms and national action plans have been launched.

However, the overall result remains mixed. We can only share the Secretary-General's disappointment at the weak representation of women in peace talks, at the structural problems that limit women's participation in political life, and at the resurgence of violence against women. The figures concerning women's participation in politics in the broadest sense — of which conflict prevention and peacebuilding are but an extension — speak for themselves. Among the delegations involved in 14 peace processes in 2011, only four benefited from women's participation. During the same year, out of the nine peace accords that were signed, only two contained specific provisions on women and peace and security. The situation regarding political representation is no more encouraging. Women still represent only 20 per cent of members of Parliament, and only slightly more at the ministerial level. This is hardly sufficient.

The regions most affected by conflicts are, alas, often also the regions in which the social and political situation of women is the least advantageous. For this reason, we must lay stress not only on women's training for political participation, but also on improving material conditions so that women can participate in elections, as well as on protecting women during electoral processes, including before and after the elections.

In this context, since 2010 Luxembourg has supported an important programme set up by the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Through this programme, which is being implemented in close consultation with national authorities and women's civil society organizations, we are proud of having contributed to the significant increase of women's political representation in Timor-Leste following the parliamentary elections of July 2012. The mobilization of women has also been strengthened in Haiti through the organization of some 350 training workshops at the community level. In November 2011, we supported a regional workshop in Goma, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which allowed for an exchange of experiences among women's organizations in the Great Lakes region in the field of peace, security and the prevention of elections-related violence. This year, we are supporting the participation of women in political life in the Republic of South Sudan through training and other capacity-building measures, which also benefit women's civil society organizations. Before the end of the year, again with the support of Luxembourg, a regional workshop will be held in Liberia in order to consolidate the achievements of the United Nations Mission in Liberia, to promote the role of women in peacebuilding in West Africa, and to strengthen women's regional peace and security networks.

“The future of men is women”, wrote Louis Aragon. I leave the poet's assertion to listeners' interpretation. In any case, the conviction that women have a specific role to play in the future of a world liberated from the scourge of war is gaining ground. It is up to us to seize this chance by continuing to support women and women's civil society organizations in their actions for peace. The Security Council can count on Luxembourg to contribute to this collective endeavour.