

**Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace, and Security- 19 June 2008
Extract Verbatim Transcript/ English S/PV.5916 (Resumption 1)**

MEXICO

Ms. Rovirosa (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico welcomes the convening of this important open debate on women and peace and security because it gives us the opportunity to present our views on the matter.

Gender equality, progress towards the empowerment of women and the promotion of international peace and security are essential elements of my country's foreign policy. Mexico recognizes that the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) constitutes a milestone in gender mainstreaming in connection with peace and security.

Nonetheless, we are concerned by the limited progress that has been made in this area. We continue to witness recurring cases of widespread and systematic sexual violence in situations of armed conflict. The international community cannot remain inactive given this alarming situation. Such abominable acts of sexual violence constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity when they are committed as part of a generalized and systematic campaign against a civilian population, as stated by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

For that reason, Mexico joins with the Council in demanding the immediate and complete cessation of all acts of sexual violence. We cannot tolerate such abuses, whereby women and children continue to be the principal victims of deliberate attacks by armed groups and armies.

However, if that appeal is to be morally effective, it is necessary to put an end to incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by United Nations personnel, in particular peacekeepers. Mexico believes that, although the United Nations has made progress in developing standards of conduct for peacekeeping personnel and in the strategy to protect and support victims of exploitation and sexual abuse committed by United Nations personnel, greater efforts must be made to ensure that we have an effective international response mechanism that can undertake timely action to deal with cases of gender violence in conflict and post-conflict situations. Mexico reiterates that we must continue to develop and implement mandatory training programmes on gender issues for United Nations personnel involved in peacekeeping operations and in the provision of humanitarian assistance.

Mexico reiterates its unequivocal rejection of the use of sexual violence as a strategy of war and joins the Council's call on all States to bring the perpetrators of such acts to justice. Likewise, we agree that effective measures must be taken to prevent and respond to acts of widespread or systematic sexual violence in order to contribute to international peace and security.

We hope that the report that has been requested of the Secretary-General through the draft resolution before the Council will clearly identify practical proposals regarding strategies to minimize the vulnerability of women and girls to this type of violence. It is essential that our political will to eliminate sexual violence in situations of armed conflict be reflected in concrete outcomes. We cannot allow more time to pass. We have a moral obligation to act now, in a decisive manner.

Mexico is a staunch promoter of international humanitarian law. My country believes that the use of sexual violence, because of its very serious humanitarian consequences, together with the use of weapons that are excessively injurious or have indiscriminate effects, such as antipersonnel mines and cluster munitions, should be excluded entirely from all military doctrines.