

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

Statement by Mr. McLay Permanent Mission of New Zealand to the United Nations.

New Zealand appreciates the opportunity to mark the twelfth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) and thanks both last month's President, Guatemala, and now India for organizing this very important debate.

It is appropriate that this particular debate should focus on the role of women's civil society organizations. Resolution 1325 (2000) was neither created in a vacuum, nor did it result from the foresight of Member States. Rather, it was women's civil society organizations that were particularly instrumental in the initial passage of resolution 1325 (2000), as the culmination of many years of active campaigning, and they continue to play a key role in ensuring the inclusion of gender perspectives in all United Nations debates on peace and security issues.

We particularly note the important role played by women's organizations in our own region. They were vital components of peace processes in Bougainville in Papua New Guinea and in the Solomon Islands. And we anticipate that Papua New Guinea will speak on that in some detail shortly. As Luxembourg highlighted in its statement to the Council, that was also the case in Timor-Leste. Again in our own region, in September of this year, we were very pleased to see the launch of the first Pacific Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, on which occasion Prime Minister Puna of the Cook Islands underscored the contribution that Pacific women's civil society organizations had made to the development of that Plan. We repeat that sentiment in this forum today. Indeed, we emphasize the need to mainstream gender perspectives across all issues in the peace and security agenda.

We also welcome the Secretary-General's report on women and peace and security (S/2012/732) and draw attention to several points. First, in planning for the transition phase in peacekeeping missions, we must ensure that we do not lose gender expertise and the United Nations-led advances for women, peace and security. It is critically important that the full women, peace and security agenda be considered as part of the planning for drawdown and handover, as has just been highlighted by the representative of Sweden in her statement.

Secondly, we must continue to push for an enhanced role for women in political-level peace discussions, both as mediators — again as highlighted by the representative of Sweden — and as principal political actors. That can be best achieved through the increased political representation of women in both elected and appointed posts, a point that was highlighted by Croatia among others.

We are pleased at the growing acknowledgement of the need to address the negative impact of armed violence on women and the need to integrate gender perspectives into disarmament policy and practice, particularly with regard to small arms and light weapons. For most of us, those arms are indeed the real weapons of mass destruction, killing over half a million people each and every year.

In that regard, we particularly commend the leadership of Trinidad and Tobago in bringing to the United Nations the issues of women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, and we are very pleased that this year's First Committee draft resolution (A/C.1/67/L.35/Rev.1) was adopted by consensus. We hope we can make further progress, drawing on the positive outcomes from this year's United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. New Zealand particularly highlights the importance of further research and analysis to improve our understanding of the role that women can and must play in that area.

At a time when many national action plans are up for review, New Zealand is very pleased to acknowledge that, as we continue to develop our own plan, we are learning much from the experience of many others. Overall, however, we must all continue to push ahead with the women, peace and security agenda through ongoing and enhanced collaboration among Member States, international, regional and subregional organizations and civil society. New Zealand will certainly play its part in that important endeavour.