

New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations



Te Māngai o Aotearoa

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United Nations Security Council

Women and Peace and Security

**Statement by
H.E. Ms Rosemary Banks
Permanent Representative of New Zealand**

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Mr President,

Before beginning I must commend you on the Presidential Statement that will be adopted at the conclusion of this debate. We particularly welcome the request to include in relevant reporting of the Secretary-General greater disaggregated data on the impact of armed conflicts on women and girls.

May I also welcome the recent appointment of Ms Ellen Loj as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia, which makes her the only woman among more than 20 SRSG's across the UN's political and peacekeeping missions.

New Zealand recognises the important role women play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, and in peace-building. We support the need to effectively mainstream gender perspectives and human rights into all these processes. New Zealand is therefore supportive of Security Council resolution 1325. Our commitment to the resolution is reflected in our national, regional and international approach to peacebuilding, conflict prevention and conflict resolution.

We welcome the advances that have been made in these areas by the United Nations system and by Member States. We appreciate the Secretary-General's 2007 report on women, peace and security and have noted with interest the many positive examples of the progressive work happening in this field. We are pleased to note the work done to restructure the UN's implementation of 1325 under the 2008-2009 United Nations System Wide Action Plan and the increased focus on accountability, monitoring and reporting.

In addition we look forward to the outcome of work undertaken by the Peacebuilding Commission which has been tasked to integrate a gender perspective into its work. We hope that this work might assist states in better understanding and operationalising the relationship between gender, development, peace and security.

It is important that women are included in, and are able to contribute to, all stages of the peace process. In this regard, I am pleased to note that the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Rt Hon Helen Clark, recently accepted the position of honorary co-chair of the International Women's Commission for a Just and Sustainable Palestinian-Israeli Peace.

Mr President,

New Zealand is taking a number of concrete steps to reinforce its support for SCR 1325.

First, New Zealand is committed to encouraging women to undertake assignments on peace keeping missions. Women from the New Zealand Defence

Forces, New Zealand Police and our wider society are an integral part of New Zealand's regional, United Nations and other international peacekeeping efforts. This includes women working in high risk areas such as Afghanistan and on operational missions such as in Timor-Leste. Up to 30 percent of all our police peacekeeping deployments are female – among the highest rate in the world. New Zealand recognises that diversity assists peacekeeping missions in reaching out to a wider sector of the community - a fundamental element for effective peace building.

Second, this year, New Zealand was proud to withdraw its final reservation to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which focused on women in the armed forces.

Third, the New Zealand Defence Forces have recently approved a Diversity Strategy called "Valuing Diversity: Leadership in Action". This strategy recognises the value of the full integration of women, the positive effect this has on morale, and the sense of belonging to a wider team where all members can make meaningful contributions. This approach also recognises the benefits of having more women at senior levels of the Defence Force in New Zealand. We have worked hard to ensure the integration of women at all levels and trades of the New Zealand Defence Force, including combat. We are increasing the number of women in higher ranks and we are becoming more effective in retaining women in the Defence Force throughout their careers.

Mr President,

New Zealand's response to 1325 is proactive. We appreciate that even in peacetime it is important to ensure the security of women. New Zealand is currently involved in the Pacific Prevention of Domestic Violence Programme, a joint initiative of New Zealand's development cooperation agency NZAID, New Zealand Police, and the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police organisation. New Zealand Police members deliver advice, training and operational support on domestic violence to police forces and communities across the Pacific. This initiative focuses on: regional co-ordination and benchmarking, police capability, relationship building, strengthening government policy and legislation, a whole of government approach to domestic violence, and influencing social change

Mr President, in closing, I would like to assure you that New Zealand, through its development cooperation programmes, peacekeeping efforts and domestic policies, will continue to seek ways to enhance and strengthen the implementation of SCR 1325.