

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Rule of Law and Transitional Justice in Conflict- Affected Situations, October 18th, 2013, Security Council Chamber

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

I will give a somewhat shortened version of the distributed statement. We thank the delegation of Azerbaijan for organizing today's very important debate and we welcome the

Security Council's unanimous adoption of resolution 2122 (2013). New Zealand also associates itself with the statement to be delivered shortly by the representative of the Marshall Islands who will speak on behalf of Pacific Islands Forum.

In 2013 we have seen a very real focus by the Security Council on the protection aspect of the women and peace and security agenda. The Council's high- profile debate in June (S/PV.6984) and resolution 2106 (2013) demonstrated solid progress in that regard. The Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, endorsed by 113 States, including my own, was a landmark.

Hard tools, such as sanctions regimes that target perpetrators of sexual violence and appropriately mandated and trained peacekeeping missions, are effective instruments for the protection agenda, but the participation dimension of the women and peace and security agenda still requires targeted action by the Council. Indeed, the Council's role in addressing women's political participation in the peace and security agenda remains a challenge. That makes today's debate on the role of women in transitional justice even more important.

In June, when the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Mary Robinson, made her first statement to the United Nations family in her new role, she spoke of women not as victims but as stakeholders. She questioned the sustainability of any peace that half the population has had no role in building and she called for women to be put at the core of peacebuilding. New Zealand agrees. If it is going to deliver lasting and sustainable peace, then, as the representative of Austria just emphasized, transitional justice must incorporate the entire population. Women's perspectives must be included in the design, implementation and monitoring of transitional justice processes.

Beyond simply being a just democratic principle, there are many tangible reasons for that. It builds trust in post-conflict justice institutions, and UN Women's research shows that women are more likely to report sexual and gender-based crimes to transitional justice institutions that involve women judges and officials. The Council should also make clear that there must be prominent roles for women, both as leaders and as active participants in the consultative processes that establish transitional arrangements.

New Zealand's experience, in its own region and beyond is that credible, informal and tradition-based justice systems have a demonstrated role in establishing accountability. In post-conflict societies, it is often informal justice mechanisms that are the most accessible for justice, mediation and conflict resolution. While some informal and traditional systems struggle to adequately address women's needs due to inherent gender biases, examples from Africa show the value of local efforts to transform such institutions in a manner that allows for the full participation for women.

United Nations field presences must fully engage with women in civil society and the community. New Zealand thus encourages a consistent practice of deploying gender advisers to peacekeeping missions, with their role continuing through any transitional arrangements to assist in post-conflict processes.

In addition to the existing Pacific Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, which New Zealand is continuing to implement along with its regional partners, we are proceeding with the development of a comprehensive national action plan of our own. Looking ahead, we welcome the concept of an independent global study to assist in the preparations of the high-level review of resolution 1325 (2000) in 2015, and we believe our Pacific Regional Action Plan could provide a good example of regional action.

Women and peace and security is the agenda item that will not go away, and with very good reason. As long as that remains the reality, New Zealand will continue to participate actively in the implementation of the women

and peace and security agenda.