

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security
October 28 2011, Security Council Chamber

Statement by H.E. Ms. U. Joy Ogwu, President of the Security Council and Representative of Nigeria

I would like to convey the appreciation of my delegation to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for taking time out of his busy schedule to attend this meeting to brief the Council on the important issue of women and peace and security. His report (S/2011/598*) and his comments here today provide the appropriate foundation on which to anchor our debate. I would also like to thank Ambassador Lazarus Kapambwe, President of the Economic and Social Council, Ms. Michelle Bachelet, Executive-Director of UN-Women, and Ms. Orzala Ashraf Nemat, of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, for their very instructive briefings.

Although Ms. Bachelet aptly highlighted the modest progress made by Member States and the United Nations in advancing the agenda of resolution 1325 (2000), we must heed her warning that we are very far from sufficiently and systematically integrating women into the process of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. We believe that this is an auspicious moment in the history of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The draft presidential statement that is to be adopted today could not have come at a better time, coming as it does in the aftermath of the recognition by the Nobel Committee of the role and participation of the three eminent women in conflict resolution and peace processes in their respective communities. While congratulating President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Ms. Leymah Gbowee and Ms. Tawakkul Karman for their groundbreaking achievement, we share the hope of the Nobel Committee that this recognition of the important place of women in the peace process, which the draft presidential statement echoes loudly, is a watershed moment and paradigm shift in the global effort to implement resolution 1325 (2000).

We note with satisfaction that the draft presidential statement accords with the theme of this open debate, namely, “The role and participation of women in conflict prevention and mediation”. Through the draft presidential statement, the Council recognizes that women can, and do, play crucial roles in the prevention of conflict. Nevertheless, it also notes that more needs to be done to create the enabling conditions for the participation of women in all stages of the peace process.

Such efforts at creating the right conditions for ensuring women’s full participation should include increasing the participation and representation of women in preventive diplomacy initiatives. It should also include strengthening the capacities of the relevant Government institutions and women’s organizations involved with conflict and post-conflict issues, the adequate representation of women in the negotiation and implementation of peace agreements, support for local women’s peace initiatives, the promotion and protection of the human rights of women, higher levels of representation in decision-making roles, and ensuring proper coherence and coordination among the United Nations entities responsible for implementing the women, peace and security agenda in the entire United Nations system.

On the subject of United Nations coherence and effectiveness in particular, we recognize the important and central role of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), working in close partnership and collaboration with the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and for Children and Armed Conflict, respectively.

The gaps and challenges hindering the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) are indeed substantial. National, regional and international actors must rededicate themselves to addressing them. We believe that developing and implementing national action plans constitutes a viable strategy for fulfilling the obligations under resolution 1325 (2000).

As a signatory to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Dakar Declaration, Nigeria has committed itself to accelerating the national and regional implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The Declaration calls for a regional action plan within ECOWAS to support national action plans. ECOWAS will coordinate and collaborate with the United Nations Office in West Africa and with UN-Women in this process.

Nigeria is also committed to fulfilling its obligations under the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights on the rights of women in Africa. As Ms. Bachelet has often said, the obstacles to women's political participation, which I believe have a direct bearing on their capacity to play an active role in preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention, are indeed enormous. Violence, poverty, lack of access to education and health care, and limited economic opportunities all combine to undermine the role of women and girls in conflict prevention, peace negotiations and peacebuilding. It is therefore necessary that we develop and take measures to address these inherent obstacles. Promoting women's equality and empowerment is, in our view, one of the best ways to address the root causes of conflict and therefore prevent such conflict. I envisage a presidential statement along those lines in the near future.

We recognize the relevance and relationship between the Council's preventive diplomacy initiatives and its women, peace and security agenda. As women are usually some of the first and worst hit in any conflict, preventing conflicts from breaking out serves to ensure the peace and security of women and girls. Even as we all remain true to the provisions of resolution 1325 (2000), which focuses on armed conflict and post-conflict situations, it has become imperative to devote equal attention to conflict prevention strategies, including the use of preventive diplomacy.

It is gratifying to know that the Council has the opportunity every year to review the progress made in implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

We look forward to the inclusion in next year's report of the Secretary-General of, among other things, specific actions and achievements as well as the challenges faced in the implementation of the presidential statement that we will be adopting later today. We also look forward to the high-level review to be held in 2015 on the progress made in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), confident that this and future presidential statements and initiatives of the Council will play pivotal roles in national, regional and global strategies on the women, peace and security agenda.