

# **NEW ZEALAND MISSION to the UNITED NATIONS**

## **Te Māngai o Aotearoa**

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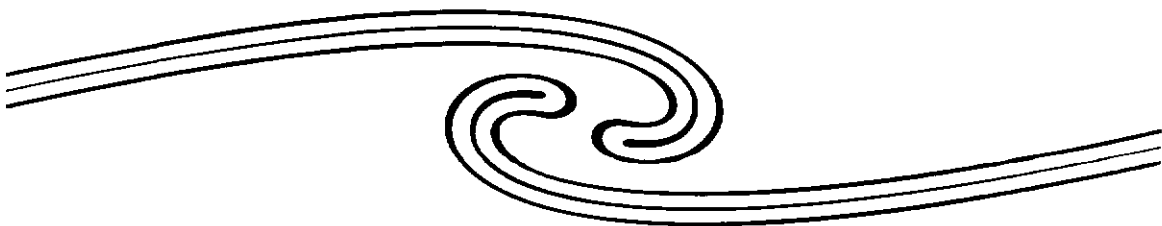
### **UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN DEBATE**

#### **"WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY"**

**STATEMENT BY NEW ZEALAND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
MR DON MACKAY**

**MONDAY 28 OCTOBER 2002**

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**



Mr President,

New Zealand is pleased that the issue of women, peace and security is once again on the agenda of the Security Council. The debate in the Security Council two years ago, leading to Resolution 1325, was a milestone. We now welcome the Secretary-General's comprehensive study, mandated by that resolution, and look forward to working towards the full implementation of the constructive recommendations contained in this study. In recognition of the importance of this study, New Zealand contributed NZ\$100,000 to assist with its development.

This study highlights the particular impact of armed conflict, and its aftermath, on women and girls as victims of violence including sexual violence; as refugees and internally displaced persons; as care-givers trying to provide for their families; and as the victims of an often intensified discrimination and marginalisation during times of conflict. The study has rightly acknowledged the need for on the ground information about the particular situation of women during armed conflicts in order for the relevant agencies involved to be able to effectively deliver assistance.

Importantly, Mr President, this study promotes the need to eliminate impunity for crimes committed during periods of armed conflict. We welcome the study's acknowledgement of the significant advances in the international legal framework in which gender based crimes, such as rape, enforced prostitution, trafficking and enslavement, have now been recognised as war crimes, crimes against humanity and components of the crime of genocide. New Zealand is a strong supporter of the establishment of the International Criminal Court and urges states to ensure that gender balance, as well as appropriate expertise on the human rights of women and violence against women, is reflected in the appointment of investigators, prosecutors and judges to the International Criminal Court.

New Zealand fully endorses the need to involve women in the negotiation of peace agreements, at all levels. We are already aware of the constructive role that women have frequently played in the development of informal peace processes, often creating a groundswell towards peace. In the Pacific region, we have commended the helpful role that women played, at a grass roots level, in the resolution of the secessionist crisis in Bougainville. The role of the Leitana Women's Group, for example, received recognition from the Secretary-General for its part in the promotion of peace in Bougainville. Similarly, women's groups were actively involved in promoting peace in the Solomon Islands. Obviously, in the interests of sustainable peace, there is much to be gained from involving women in such a key decision making process, including in the formal negotiations, and we encourage the Security Council and states to take this into account.

The need for gender sensitivity, and the inclusion of women, are critical elements of successful peacekeeping operations. New Zealand has long recognised the importance of involving women in our defence forces. This year, New Zealand celebrated twenty-five years of the integration of women into the New Zealand Defence Forces, following the disbandment of separate women's services. This has ensured that a number of New Zealand women have participated actively in international peacekeeping operations, for example in the Sinai, Cambodia, Bosnia, Timor Leste and Bougainville. In both Bosnia and Timor Leste, women served as troop commanders. Women have comprised between 8-10 % of each New Zealand Battalion group deployed in Timor Leste and make up a significant proportion of the Air Force personnel deployed there. These women are deployed in diverse roles, including crews, logistics and administration. All members of the New Zealand Defence Forces are expected to adhere to a strict code of conduct, which recognises the importance of gender equality and sensitivity to gender perspectives.

New Zealand has also focussed on the role of women in the UN system, particularly in the area of peacekeeping, in our Third Committee resolution on the status of women in the UN system, run jointly with Canada and Australia. In this resolution, we have called for the Secretary-General to appoint more women as special representatives, especially in matters relating to peacekeeping, peace building, and preventive diplomacy, and we are pleased that the Secretary-General's study also emphasises this point.

Mr President, we welcome the highlighting of the importance of humanitarian operations, including refugee agencies, attending to the specific needs and priorities of women and girls, affected by armed conflicts and displacement.

In rebuilding societies, it is imperative that women are involved at every level and that the interests of women are taken into account at this critical stage of development. We have welcomed, for example, the growing participation of women in Afghanistan political, economic and social life, particularly the inclusion of women in the Afghan Interim Administration and the establishment of the Afghanistan Ministry of Women's Affairs, and hope that Afghanistan will continue to promote and protect the human rights of women in the on-going process of reconstruction. Similarly, in Timor Leste, the inclusion of women in the new Constituent Assembly and the recognition of the economic contribution of women are positive developments. As clearly identified in the Secretary-General's report, we urge states and UN agencies to ensure that gender perspectives are incorporated into rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes.

Thank you, Mr President, for the opportunity to comment on this important study.

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