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**Security Council Open Debate on
Women, Peace and Security**

Statement by
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Mr. President,
Madam Deputy Secretary-General,
Excellencies, Distinguished Members of the Council,

I am honoured to have the opportunity to speak at the Open Debate of the Security Council on women, peace and security. I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this discussion on women's participation in peace processes.

This discussion takes place as we mark the fifth anniversary of the Security Council's historic resolution 1325 and a month after the World Summit Outcome which reaffirmed world leaders' commitment to the full and effective implementation of this resolution. The resolution fundamentally changed the image of women from that of exclusively victims of war to that of active participants as peacemakers, peace-builders and negotiators. Women at the grassroots level in countries as diverse as Afghanistan, Bosnia, Burundi, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Sudan and Timor Leste have used this resolution to lobby for their voices to be heard in peacebuilding processes, in post-conflict elections, and in the rebuilding of their societies.

Since this resolution was adopted, a lot of progress has been made within the UN system itself, in terms of understanding how to incorporate gender concerns into all aspects of peace and security. Department-specific action plans on gender mainstreaming are being prepared; gender-sensitive guidelines and new tools in a variety of areas have been issued; staff is being trained. Despite this progress, gaps remain. Women's and girls' bodies have become battle grounds. A lot remains to be done in such critical areas as conflict prevention and early warning, capacity building for peacemaking and peacebuilding, protection of women and girls, combating gender based violence and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, to name a few.

As requested by the Security Council in its Presidential Statement S/PRST/2004/40, a system-wide action plan for implementing resolution 1325 has been developed, in cooperation with the Interagency Task Force on Women, Peace and Security. The plan, to which 37 UN entities contributed, is before you in the Secretary-General's report S/2005/636.

The objectives of the action plan, covering the period from 2005 to 2007, are to formulate concrete strategies, actions and programmes to advance the role of women; support efforts by Member States and civil society; and strengthen the commitment and accountability of the UN system at the highest levels.

The resolution and three subsequent Presidential Statements¹ constituted the conceptual framework of the plan. The Summit Outcome, and the reports of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and the Secretary-General's "In Larger Freedom" provided a broader political background, shifting the focus from state security to one encompassing human security.

The plan is structured along 12 areas of action identified in the resolution and the three statements. Each UN entity identified specific time-bound activities and strategies to be undertaken within its mandate. The responsibility for implementation of activities lies with each of those entities.

Mr. President,

Key to the implementation of resolution 1325 is accountability and commitment. As evidenced from an analysis conducted by my Office of resolutions adopted by the Security Council in the period July 2004 - July 2005, language on women or gender issues was included only in 14 per cent of 63 resolutions. The reporting to the Council on gender issues by the Secretary-General has drastically improved with 47 per cent of the reports making multiple references to gender concerns compared to 17.8 per cent in 2000-2003.

In order to enhance accountability, the report of the Secretary-General proposes, among others, the following measures:

- a more systematic oversight and monitoring of progress at the intergovernmental level;
- enhanced interagency coordination through the High Level Committee on Programme of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination;
- holding heads of entities directly accountable for implementation of resolution 1325 in their respective programmes and operations and developing internal accountability procedures; and
- increased interaction at all levels with civil society.

The success of the implementation of the plan depends on five factors: (i) effective support and accountability on the part of the Security Council; (ii) commitment at the highest levels of UN entities; (iii) full cooperation by Governments, parties to

¹ S/PRST/2001/31, S/PRST/2002/32 and S/PRST/2004/40

conflicts and women's organizations with UN entities; (iv) effective interagency coordination; and (v) sufficient resources to do the job.

The Peacebuilding Commission approved by the Summit has an opportunity to make an effective contribution to the implementation of resolution 1325. I am convinced that the Commission would greatly benefit from women's active participation in its deliberations, systematic gender mainstreaming in its work, and dialogue with women's groups and NGOs.

My recent mission to the Sudan reinforced my conviction of urgency for accelerating the full and effective implementation of resolution 1325. Women shoulder the thrust of the post-conflict problems and are primary victims of unspeakable sexual and gender-based violence. I call on the Council, to hold the parties to conflicts fully accountable for protecting women's human rights and on donors, to ensure that humanitarian and development assistance reaches women.

Gender equality is absolutely essential to the success of any peace process. We must use the untapped potential of women in maintaining peace and security. As the international community struggles with how to respond to global threats and challenges and the Secretary-General undertakes far-reaching steps in implementing the Summit Outcome, it is vital to make the principles of resolution 1325 and women's contributions an integral part of all our efforts.

I urge all of you to ensure that discussions on reform and on country-specific conflict situations include practical strategies to accelerate the implementation of resolution 1325. I call on all Member States to adopt strategies and action plans for implementing resolution 1325 and promoting women's participation. Without equal participation of women in all decision-making processes in the UN and within Member States, including this Council, the vision outlined in the UN Charter will elude us.

Thank you, Mr. President.
