

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

Statement by Ambassador Miroslava Beham, Senior Gender Adviser, on behalf of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Thank you, Mr. President, for allowing the OSCE to participate in this important debate. I would also like to thank the briefers for their thought-provoking presentations.

As the representative of the world's largest regional security organization I would like at the outset to devote a few remarks to the role regional organizations can and should play with respect to the implementation of the commitments resulting from the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

While it is obvious that States have the primary responsibility for ensuring that the Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security are translated into action, regional organizations working on the maintenance of international peace and security such as the OSCE, also have a recognized role. Both the recent Presidential Statement on cooperation with regional organizations, passed in August of this year by the Council, and several of the Women, Peace and Security resolutions refer to the crucial contribution of regional organizations in affirming the participation of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution mechanisms and peace-building.

There is a good window of opportunity now to give women peace and security issues a boost on the regional level as the UN is currently leading a process of strengthening the role of regional organizations under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, dealing with conflict prevention, in particular early warning and early action. The OSCE Secretary General in his recent round of consultations with senior UN interlocutors, including the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and Deputy SG Eliasson, found strong support for the OSCE to play a central role in this process. The OSCE welcomes in this regard the adoption of today's resolution, which clearly recognizes the efforts of regional organizations in implementing Women, Peace and Security commitments, including the development of action plans and implementation frameworks.

Mr. President,

The OSCE participating States have acknowledged the importance of the Women, Peace and Security agenda by passing a number of Ministerial Council Decisions, among others one explicitly dedicated to increasing Women's Participation in Conflict Prevention, Crisis Management and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation and another dealing with the Elements of the Conflict Cycle to include 1325 commitments. As a result, the OSCE has taken a number of initiatives both at the Secretariat level as well as at the level of its Field Operations to implement these MC Decisions, particularly in conflict affected contexts in the OSCE region.

Let me begin with our activities related to the theme of today's debate; women, rule of law and transitional justice in conflict-affected contexts. OSCE Field Operations, Institutions and the Secretariat are implementing a variety of activities related to war crimes justice, trial monitoring, criminal justice reform, judicial independence and administrative justice and we undertake every effort to mainstream the participation of women into these activities as well as integrate gender into our substantive approaches.

To take just one example: the OSCE promotes gender balance in its work with judicial personnel because we believe that diversity has a positive impact on women's access to justice and the perceived legitimacy of the judiciary. From a substantive perspective our Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina supports the integration of a gender perspective into war crimes trial monitoring by providing specific training for civil society on how to monitor conflict-related sexual violence cases and understand the specific challenges that witnesses and victims face in these processes. Trial monitors are then better prepared to gather data on how these cases progress through the judicial system and to advocate for policy improvements based on the data. This is one step in ensuring that justice and accountability is equally pursued for all violations and crimes, regardless of their nature or the sex of the victim.

Also, through a number of Women's Resource Centers networks, supported by the OSCE in Central Asia and the Caucasus, our organization helps to increase women's access to legal aid. – But the judiciary is of course not

the only actor involved in the rule of law and the OSCE also works with participating States to increase the number of women in the police and to make law enforcement activities gender sensitive as a part of comprehensive Security Sector Reforms facilitated by our organization in many countries.

Within the politico-military dimension the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation promotes the inclusion of women in the military, including in combat positions, making sure that civilian oversight and the human rights in the armed forces are guaranteed for both men and women.

Mr. President,

As I said, the OSCE is the world's largest regional security organization and it plays an important role throughout the region also in mediation, dialogue facilitation, good offices and quiet diplomacy. The organization has increased its efforts to ensuring that these processes are inclusive. We are pleased to announce that next week in Istanbul, on 24 October, the OSCE will launch a Guidance Note on Gender-Responsive Mediation. The purpose of the guidance note is to increase women's participation in mediation, dialogues and quiet diplomacy initiatives, but also to strengthen the capacity of mediators to understand how the substantive concerns of both men and women can be included in these processes and what the benefits of inclusivity for the sustainability of conflict resolution and reconciliation are. We are grateful to UN DPA and the Mediation Support Unit for an inspiring co-operation in the preparation of this Guidance Note.

Allow me at this point, Mr. President, to refer to one more issue that we believe is important also in the framework of today's debate. The OSCE is a leader in a key peace and security issue that is not discussed enough from a "Women, Peace and Security" perspective: integrating a gender perspective in combating violent extremism and radicalization that leads to terrorism. This is an issue of serious concern to OSCE participating States. Both national authorities and international and regional organizations increasingly recognize that a better understanding of the dynamics of this issue is central to formulating and implementing effective strategies that will increase stability and security. The OSCE will undertake a new initiative in 2014 in partnership with the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum that aims to promote gender-sensitive strategies, policies and measures to counter violent extremism and radicalization that leads to terrorism, with an emphasis on empowering women to contribute to these efforts in different roles and capacities.

Mr. President,

I would like to conclude by drawing attention to the good cooperation between OSCE Field Operations and UN Women offices on Women, Peace and Security issues. For example, next month we will be co-hosting a conference in Almaty for OSCE participating States to discuss with expert representatives and Civil Society Organizations progress in drafting and implementing National Action Plans or other strategies on Security Council Resolution 1325. The results of this conference will be merged with the outcome of an OSCE study on good practices and lessons learned by OSCE participating States undertaken with the Peace Research Institute in Oslo - PRIO. We hope that events and research such as these will provide us with further insight on how to put into practice the important goals in the women, peace and security resolutions and that UN Member States can benefit from knowledge generated by the OSCE.

Thank you very much.