



Australia  
Federated States of Micronesia  
Fiji  
Kiribati  
Nauru  
New Zealand  
Palau

Papua New Guinea  
Republic of Marshall Islands  
Samoa  
Solomon Islands  
Tonga  
Tuvalu  
Vanuatu



New Zealand  
Chairman of Pacific Islands Forum

## **Pacific Islands Forum Group**

Pacific Islands Forum  
United Nations Member States

### **UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL**

#### **“WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY”**

#### **STATEMENT BY HON KALIOPATE TAVOLA, MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND EXTERNAL TRADE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE FIJI ISLANDS**

#### **ON BEHALF OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM GROUP**

**WEDNESDAY 29 OCTOBER 2003**

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

NEW ZEALAND MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
ONE UNITED NATIONS PLAZA 25TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NY 10017-3515 USA  
TELEPHONE (212) 826 1960 FACSIMILE (212) 758 0827

Mr President,

I am honored to address the Security Council on behalf of the members of the Pacific Islands Forum on the subject of women, peace and security.

In doing so, I speak on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum countries that are members of the United Nations, namely Australia, Kiribati, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and my own country, Fiji.

Mr President

The Pacific Islands Forum is pleased that the issue of women, peace and security is once again on the Security Council's agenda and we are pleased to again intervene as a group on this important item underlining its significance to our members. The debate in the Security Council three years ago, leading to Resolution 1325 was a milestone. The resolution signaled that if we are committed to conflict prevention and resolution, we have to be serious about gender perspectives of conflict – both the impact of conflict on women and the contributions of women to prevention, resolution and peace building processes.

Mr President, our own experience in the Pacific has certainly highlighted for us the importance of implementing the principles and framework encapsulated in Resolution 1325. UNIFEM's recent work on women, peace and security in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Fiji and Vanuatu has highlighted the breadth of the impact of conflict on women and the critical role played by women in promoting peace in our region. On this latter point, our experience has been that the contributions and leadership of women both in traditional and contemporary settings are critical to ensuring meaningful and sustainable peace. In Papua New Guinea, women played a pivotal role in the very early and fragile stages of the Bougainville peace process and continue to play an active role in its ongoing consolidation. In Solomon Islands women through the ecumenical church movement also played a significant role in brokering peace in their country and remain centrally engaged.

Mr President

Turning to the work of this organization, Resolution 1325 encapsulated the concept that gender perspectives must be mainstreamed into the work of the United Nations – that they must be at the core of the organization's work. Today's debate is an important opportunity to examine where we have got to in this commitment.

There has certainly been some good news. One particular highlight over the past year was the agreement to establish a gender adviser post in the Best Practices Unit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. This is an

excellent outcome, which we very much hope will assist the explicit integration of gender perspectives into all aspects of the UN's Peacekeeping Operations. We would like to take this opportunity to welcome the appointment of an Interim Gender Adviser in DPKO and hope the permanent position of Senior Gender Adviser will be filled shortly. We will look forward to early feedback as the position develops.

We are pleased also that UNIFEM's gender conflict situation analysis project is now underway. We are particularly pleased that UNIFEM is incorporating a Pacific perspective in this work by undertaking one of its four pilot studies in Solomon Islands.

Elsewhere the launch of the Department of Disarmament Affairs' gender action plan is to be congratulated and we would like to encourage other departments to follow that successful example. We welcome also UNIFEM's work to build a comprehensive website portal which will pull together the diverse material available on women, peace and security for use in work around the globe.

Mr President,

While the initiatives I have just mentioned are a good start, we are still some distance from where we need to be. In terms of future work, we would like to emphasise the following four areas:

First, while there has been a lot of positive work done in improving the attention paid to these issues in the Security Council, we would like to see the Security Council pay special attention to ensuring that its mandates focus expressly on gender perspectives and that the necessary resources are made available to ensure that these mandates are fulfilled. Only 15% of resolutions submitted to the Security Council in the last year had any references to gender. We hope that in future all Security Council resolutions will do so. In considering its mandates, we particularly hope that the Council will pay special attention to the importance of ensuring that women are involved in all aspects of decision-making processes with respect to conflict, including the formal negotiations. As I stated earlier, our own experience is that the contribution of women is fundamental to the resolution of conflict. Unfortunately however, all too often those with the most information and the most extensive networks are not allowed a seat at the negotiating table.

Secondly, we would encourage the Security Council to include gender advisers or specialists in its missions as a matter of course. We also hope that the reports from these missions, which until now have been silent on gender issues, will in future include specific feedback on the gender issues covered in the mission.

Thirdly, we would stress that the pressure to mainstream a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations must be maintained. We remain strongly of the view that gender sensitivity, and the inclusion of women, are critical elements of successful peacekeeping operations. We particularly hope that more work can be done on gender perspectives training for UN peacekeepers and would like to highlight the importance of the compulsory gender training module for all personnel about to deploy. For our region's part, I am happy to report that a number of our members stress the importance of deploying women to peacekeeping operations. With respect to my own country Fiji, there is a strong emphasis on the deployment of women in overseas peace and security operations, and we have had women serving in Cambodia and Croatia and presently in Kosovo and Solomon Islands.

Fourthly and finally, with respect to leadership and representation, we would repeat our call for the Secretary-General to appoint more women as special representatives, especially in matters relating to peacekeeping, peace building and preventive diplomacy. As ever, the UN needs to realise its own goals and lead by example.

Thank you very much Mr President