

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security, November 30th 2012, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Masood Khan, Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations.

Pakistan joins other Council Members in thanking India for convening this important open debate on Women, Peace and Security. The Presidential Statement on this subject is an expression of collective support by all Council members to this common cause as well as their strong commitment to addressing challenges to women's engagement at all levels. We would like to place on record our appreciation for the excellent work done by the United Kingdom and Guatemala for developing the Presidential Statement.

Pakistan attaches highest importance to the participation of women in all walks of life and has taken concrete steps to that end. Our national vision for women's empowerment is guided by the words of our founding father, the Quaid-e-Azam, who said that:

“No nation could ever be worthy of its existence that could not take its women along with the men and no struggle could ever succeed without women participating side by side with men”.

In the recent past, Pakistan's Parliament has passed a number of laws to eliminate discrimination against women and to promote and protect their rights.

We are thankful to the Secretary General for his insights on the subject as well as for the efforts made by the United Nations, under his leadership, in mainstreaming a gender perspective both within and outside the Organization. We also thank USG Herve Ladsous for his useful briefing on how the UN is carrying out the women, peace and security agenda in Peacekeeping Operations.

As one of the biggest troop contributors, Pakistan supports efforts to mainstream a gender perspective in peacekeeping operations. Appointment of gender advisors in the field has served a useful purpose. This practice must be strengthened. Conscious of the importance of gender sensitization of peacekeeping troops, Pakistan has incorporated two UN Standard Gender Training Modules. We are proud of our women peacekeepers who have served in different capacities such as police officers, doctors and nurses in peacekeeping operations in Asia, Africa and the Balkans. Shahzadi Gulfam, a Pakistani woman police officer, received the 2011 International Female Police Peacekeeper Award in recognition of her outstanding performance in Timor Leste. We are proud of her meritorious services.

Pakistan is also grateful to Madam Bachelet for an insightful presentation. We commend the valuable role UN Women plays in promoting the wider goal of gender equality in general and Women Peace and Security in particular. Pakistan will continue to play its part in strengthening UN Women.

Human Rights instruments, particularly the Geneva Conventions, proscribe torture, violence, rape and other forms of sexual violence and ill treatment of women during conflicts. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court characterizes these acts in the context of armed conflict as crimes against humanity. Despite such progress in the normative framework, women's suffering in conflict situations continues. There is growing awareness of their plight and there is increased focus on their protection. Still women and girls continue to be the primary victims in conflict situations and suffer disproportionately. To start with, they are vulnerable to violence and exploitation. What's worse, they are purposefully targeted and are largely excluded from the peace and reconstruction processes.

UNSC Resolution 1325 made an important contribution to the normative framework for the protection of women and girls in armed conflict. It elevates women from being hapless victims of conflict situations to equal stakeholders in prevention and resolution of conflicts, as well as in post-conflict reconstruction.

Women are true agents of change. Their involvement in different stages of conflict resolution, peacekeeping and peace-building activities produce positive results that are needed for peaceful and democratic societies.

To enable the Security Council and the UN system to do more to advance the protection of women in conflict situations and to enhance their participation in post-conflict processes, we propose the following measures:

- The UN must develop a comprehensive strategy for conflict prevention and resolution, with special emphasis on the protection of women and girls in situations of armed conflict.
- The Security Council should continue to strengthen provisions in its resolutions on full compliance with international humanitarian law; ending impunity, and accountability for the perpetrators of crimes against women, including in transitional justice mechanisms. The morally unacceptable scourge of gender-based violence persists because a culture of impunity plagues the situations of armed conflict.
- The Council must continue to include gender perspectives in its resolutions relating to peacekeeping operations as well as in the appointment of well trained gender and women protection advisors.
- The United Nations and its agencies should develop ways to address the special needs of women and girls affected by armed conflict, especially in regard to health and psychological care.
- Concerned States and the UN system must work to ensure fullest participation by women, including all actors of civil society in peace processes as well as in post-conflict peace-building activities. Interaction with local women groups to get first-hand knowledge of their concerns in conflict situations is always useful.
- The UN system and concerned states must cooperate to build the wherewithal of “gender justice” in post-conflict situations, incorporating gender perspectives across the broad spectrum of reconstruction efforts.
- Required technical assistance, on request, must be provided to concerned states for reforming and rebuilding judicial, legislative and electoral sectors as well as economic, social and political empowerment of women, within a culturally sensitive framework.
- The Council must demand from all parties to armed conflicts full respect for and compliance with international humanitarian law and other relevant instruments on the protection of women.

Today’s debate underlines the important role of women’s civil society organizations in prevention and resolution of armed conflict, as well as follow up peace-building processes. Concerned States and relevant UN entities should therefore make use of the talent and experience of women leaders from civil society to promote their active engagement and participation in a variety of appropriate roles to ensure the full and effective implementation of UNSC resolution 1325.

Thank you.