

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security – 29 October 2008
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PANAMA

Mr. Suescum (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the delegation of China for convening this important debate. My thanks go also to Ms. Rachel Mayanja, Ms. Inés Alberdi, Ms. Sarah Taylor and Mr. Alain Le Roy for their detailed presentations on the progress made and the challenges facing us in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security.

Over the past eight years, the Security Council has closely followed the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/622) clearly indicates that the overall peace and security architecture of the United Nations has been more sensitive to women's needs in situations of armed conflict and post-conflict societies. However, a noticeable gap remains between policies and their implementation, and we need to do more to mainstream gender perspectives in conflict prevention and resolution as well as in peacebuilding. Full participation and involvement by women in all peacebuilding efforts and in the promotion of peace and security increase the likelihood of success and sustainability in these processes and of post-conflict stability.

That obliges the international community and, in particular, the Security Council to focus their efforts on including women in peace processes to the greatest extent possible. To that end, a number of creative ways to involve women in peace processes have been identified over the past few years, and we must make a careful effort to document and promote such models so that they can be reproduced and adapted to each specific situation.

In our view, it is critical to include women in negotiations and in the preparation of the strategies and objectives of mediators. That will facilitate the analysis of men's and women's differing needs, interests and links to power in a particular conflict situation, of the inequalities between them and of their roles in society.

We are not suggesting the imposition of a quota for women in such processes; we want to promote the greatest possible impact of their participation on outcomes and their implementation.

It is also essential to enhance women's participation and the consideration of women's needs in peacebuilding and peacekeeping operations across the board. In many cases, for example, we ignore the gender dimension in the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. That means that women and girl fighters prefer to remain armed, absent protection and absent incentives to do otherwise.

To achieve all of those objectives, professionals involved in mediation and peacebuilding should have the tools they need to mainstream the gender perspective in their work. Reports of the United Nations and of various early warning mechanisms would benefit from the identification and analysis of empirical data disaggregated by gender and other key factors. Sources for such indicators are limited and in some cases non-existent. For that reason, as mandates are carried out, Security Council members and, in particular, donor countries should provide the technical and financial resources required for the preparation and exchange of such information.

It is indispensable to understand that gender equality is not the same as strict equality between men and women; rather, women and men must have the same opportunities to exercise their

rights and meet their responsibilities. If we understand and support that principle, women will be able to better play their role as essential agents in the promotion of peace and development.