

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security
October 28 2011, Security Council Chamber

Statement by H.E. Mr. Diallo, Representative of Senegal

I would like to convey my delegation's sincere congratulations for the convening of this important debate on women, peace and security, which represents, Madam President, the crowning moment of your remarkable presidency of the Council for the month of October. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his statement, as well as Mr. Lazarous Kapambwe, President of the Economic and Social Council, Ms. Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director of UN-Women, and Ms. Orzala Ashraf Nemat, representative of civil society, for their important contributions.

My delegation has a special interest in the topic, because resolution 1325 (2000) represented an enormous step forward in the protection of women and highlighted the importance of their role in all aspects of United Nations peacekeeping. Nonetheless, while it has remained far from being a cure-all, resolution 1325 (2000) has contributed, along with resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009), to improving the normative framework for preventing gender-based violence and for protecting women against that scourge.

It should, however, be pointed out that, despite those praiseworthy efforts, persistent shortcomings have exposed thousands of women and girls to various types of barbaric abuse and atrocities. In fact, rape continues to be used as a weapon of war in certain conflict areas, and the ongoing existence of sexual and gender-based violence, even at the end of a conflict, represents an almost permanent threat to the security and health of that vulnerable group of the population. That is why the international community must firmly commit to vigorously combating impunity in order to guarantee the effective prevention of all forms of violence against women.

While welcoming the zero tolerance policy on sexual violence of the Secretary-General, we must, in addition, insist on the need to bolster the role of women in conflict-prevention and resolution. Nevertheless, the poor results in that area have undoubtedly been due to the continuing low participation of women in the drafting of implementation strategies. I consider it crucial, therefore, to foster women's participation by reserving a key role for them in conflict-prevention policies, as well as policies on peacekeeping, peacebuilding and social and economic recovery. In that context, there must be a special focus on women's empowerment, which will require significant investment in education, training and maternal health.

In view of our considerable awareness of that dynamic process, my country has allocated a significant part of its budget to education and health, and on 14 May 2010, it adopted a law to establish full parity in all partially or fully elected bodies. In that manner, Senegal intends to ensure the effective participation of women in decision-making processes. To follow up on that law, a national gender-parity monitoring body was set up and will be officially inaugurated on 16 November.

Senegal has already adopted its national action plan to implement resolution 1325 (2000). Furthermore, it has sought to make a positive contribution to drafting the action plan of the

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Dakar Declaration by focusing on the four following areas: first, effective participation of women in the peace process; secondly, protection of women and girls; thirdly, prevention of gender-based violence through preventive diplomacy and early warning systems, and fourthly, reconstruction and victim assistance.

It is certain that those significant national and regional level initiatives are welcome. However, they will achieve the desired success only if linked with an international dynamic inspired by the Security Council and based on coordinated efforts on the part of UN-Women and all of the other relevant bodies. There is also a need to improve women's involvement in peacekeeping operations by following up on the laudable efforts already carried out in that domain.

The effective prevention of sexual violence also requires stringent measures to vigorously combat the root causes of conflict exacerbation. Since there is an established link between what is known as low-level conflicts and wide-scale violence against women, I would like to launch an appeal for coordinated and focused action against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. In that regard, my delegation cherishes the hope that the diplomatic conference of 2012 will enable the adoption of a robust arms trade treaty.

Allow me to conclude by expressing my country's conviction that the efforts to be undertaken by 2015 will enable the Security Council to take stock at that time of the positive implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).