

**Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security, November 30<sup>th</sup> 2012,  
Security Council Chamber**

*Statement by Mr. Crowley, Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations.*

My delegation thanks all of the briefers for the insightful statements they delivered here today. We also thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this important debate.

South Africa is fully committed to pursuing an integrated, gender-oriented approach in the areas of conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, in recognition of the powerful role of women as agents of change.

The report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2012/732) shows that Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) has provided for the establishment of an enabling framework for the creation of opportunities and spaces for women to be at the centre of processes affecting their safety, security and development, in equal partnership with men. However, the report highlights the fact that 12 years after the adoption of the resolution, despite some positive gains, its implementation remains slow and uneven in many cases.

My delegation notes that much work still needs to be done to strengthen the role of women in preventive diplomacy, formal peace processes and mediation. We therefore remain fully committed to working, in cooperation with the United Nations system and Member States, towards the removal of barriers impeding the full and effective implementation of the resolution.

In that regard, we welcome the role played by UN-Women to integrate a gender perspective under the women, peace and security agenda, in keeping with the broader United Nations system-wide mandate.

We note with concern the continuing underrepresentation of women in formal peace processes. We therefore call for a more regular review of the status of implementation within the United Nations system and in Member States of the proposals made by the Secretary-General on the inclusion of women in conflict prevention and mediation, the nomination of women to lead negotiation processes, and an increase in the number of female police and troop personnel in United Nations missions.

Equally, we urge the Secretary-General to give specific attention to the appointment of women to senior positions, including chief mediators and heads of political, peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions. We maintain that greater effort needs to be expended towards the deployment of greater numbers of female military and police personnel to United Nations peacekeeping operations.

South Africa is pleased to note the valuable contribution that gender advisers in post-conflict settings continue to make through the provision of training to and awareness-raising of peacekeepers and assisting in the capacity-building activities of national Governments and of civil society.

However, we remain concerned at the slow deployment of women protection advisers to peacekeeping missions. This presents a serious protection gap, and every effort must be made to ensure that the progress made in the protection and promotion of the rights and empowerment of women and girls is not lost.

We are supportive of the efforts undertaken by the Council to ensure that more systematic attention is given in all its work to the implementation of commitments in the area of women, peace and security. The integration of appropriate gender perspectives into the mandates of the relevant peacekeeping missions and in other thematic areas related to peace and security would positively advance efforts in that regard.

We welcome the focus of this open debate on giving prominence to the role of women's civil society organizations in contributing to the prevention and resolution of armed conflict and to peacebuilding. From our own perspective, South Africa continues to contribute to the popularization of resolution 1325 (2000) through such structures as the Southern African Development Community, the African Union and the Pan-African Women's Organization.

We remain conscious of the fact that women and children are the most vulnerable members of society. They suffer disproportionately from conflict and State incapacity. Their experience of conflict, violence and repression, and their particular needs in such contexts usually differ from those of men. Unfortunately, women tend to be sidelined from formal conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes. We must therefore create the space for women to assume positions of leadership and decision-making in peacemaking and peacebuilding processes. Better still, we need to focus more on preventing conflicts from breaking out in the first place.

Post-conflict recovery and reconstruction programmes often overlook women's security needs, which ultimately compromises the inclusiveness and sustainability of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts. Access to justice for women in post-conflict States through deliberate policies of inclusion is essential to building fair, equitable and equal societies. Women suffer disproportionately from poverty, and the risks they face are heightened in armed conflict and post-conflict situations. The United Nations system and the international community must therefore provide sufficient assistance to countries emerging from conflict to build their national capacity in terms of justice and security institutions, especially in the police, prosecutorial, judicial and corrections sectors and to ensure that women are well represented in all of those structures.

Finally, much work needs to be done to narrow the substantive implementation deficits that remain. The burden of responsibility rests on the membership of the Council to ensure measurable progress on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in the broader context of the women, peace and security agenda and the laudable objectives that it aspires to achieve.