

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

*Statement by Mr. Elbahi Permanent Mission of Sudan to the United Nations.*

I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this open debate on women and peace and security. It is one of the most important items of the Security Council's agenda.

Mindful of the need to strengthen the role of women in society, in 2007 my Government adopted a national strategy for the empowerment of women, which focused on six main pillars: health, the environment, education, economic development, women's active participation in decision-making, conflict settlement and peacemaking, and the protection of their rights. In order to implement the pillars of that policy, the State drew up a detailed action plan as part of its five-year plan for 2007-2011.

In addition, a number of administrative units have been established to review the position of women and improve the gender balance within the various Government sectors and ministries at the national and provincial levels. Those units continue to form focal points and to guide plans and strategies for the empowerment of women and to promote their participation in society.

My Government has also set up a number of economic projects for women, such as funds to promote women's employment in the unofficial sector and their socioeconomic development, as well as smaller women's projects financed by mandatory alms and earning graduates. Microcredit initiatives have also been established to finance small family businesses and farms. Those projects focus on the economic self-sufficiency of women in rural areas, in particular in Darfur, Southern Kordofan and the Blue Nile.

My country has made great strides in empowering and advancing women and in strengthening their participation in society. For example, national legislation has provided for equal pay for equal work since the 1970s. A law enacted in 2003 stipulates that men and women receive pensions at the same age. We have also enacted a law in 2008 on increasing women's participation in Parliament by up to 25 per cent. Women have been able to stand as candidates and to vote since the 1950s and 1960s. In the most recent elections, the list of presidential candidates included a woman.

Now, 66 per cent of Government officials are women; 28 per cent serve in Parliament. Their participation in the private sector is 54 per cent. They contribute 87 per cent of the gross domestic product. In the judicial sector, women account for 80 per cent of the judges. There are 50 female diplomats, including ambassadors and heads of diplomatic missions. Women also participate in the armed forces, the police and security forces, and have reached the rank of Major-General. They also play an active and successful part in the private and business sectors.

My country adopted the rural development plan for women, which is an integrated project focusing on the States of the Sudan, in particular Darfur state. The plan covers issues and concerns of rural women and funds microprojects to alleviate poverty, to promote training and to further raise awareness of women's health and nutrition, human rights and peacebuilding. Thirty per cent of the national budget has been earmarked for microprojects.

My Government has also established a number of specialized units at the national and provincial levels to coordinate women's activities in the areas of peace and development and to provide guidance to women on gender equality. In that connection, we note that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes give particular priority to the status of women in close coordination with the relevant United Nations agencies, including UN-Women. That is with a view to implementing the plan of action called for in resolution 1325 (2000).

Along with our policies of empowerment, my Government developed a strategy to combat gender-based violence in 2005. We established a unit within the Ministry of Justice to combat violence against women and girls, as well as a specialized police unit within the Ministry of the Interior. We have had a national strategy in place since 2008 to combat female circumcision.

After the outbreak of rebellion in Darfur, the Criminal Act of 1991 was amended to include clauses on crimes against humanity and war crimes and to revise article 149, on rape and adultery. The Consultative Council for Human Rights devoted special attention to publicity in order to raise awareness of issues related to violence against women in the state

of Darfur, in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund and the human rights division of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur. That publicity included announcements of medical registration so that victims of rape could be suitably compensated. In that connection, we note that the latest cooperation agreement signed with the Government of South Sudan will have a positive effect on women's lives and advancement in both countries.

The situation of women in armed conflict is inextricably linked to the root causes of conflict. That is why we call for measures to address such root causes as poverty, lack of development and problems of climate change.

In our view, measures taken by the Security Council should be based on the country reports presented by States and the accurate information contained in the periodic reports of the Secretary-General. They should not be based on reports from non-governmental organizations or the mass media.

In concluding, we hope that the deliberations of the Council on this important matter will lead to the development of an integrated approach to addressing the issue of women and peace and security. After all, women constitute half of society, if not, in a certain way, all of it.