

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security
Tuesday, 26th October 2010, Security Council Chamber (GA-TSC-01)

Statement by H.E. Mr. Osman, Permanent Representative of Sudan to the United Nations

I would like at the outset to congratulate you once again, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council this month, as well as your initiative to convene this open debate on women and peace and security to mark the tenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000).

That resolution led to the adoption of the 2008-2009 System-wide Action Plan for implementation across the United Nations system and to the identification of standard indicators to measure progress and the time frame needed to apply the indicators at the regional and international levels. Here we recall the prior report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2010/173), which set out strategies and principles to guide the forging of a strong framework for addressing gender equality and the status of women, especially in situations of armed conflict.

On this occasion, we note the need to move forward with the full implementation of the resolution over the next decade by adopting comprehensive and robust regional action plans in this field. These must include capacity-building for developing countries that have been afflicted by conflict, especially since the item “Women and peace and security” has been one of the most active on the Council’s agenda over the past 10 years, as evidenced by the subsequent adoption of three other resolutions — resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009) — and presidential statements and statements to the press on the same topic. All of this has been accompanied by a substantial body of periodic reports of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security.

When considering the status of women, we are able to say proudly that the Sudan has deep-rooted pioneering experience in this field, as Sudanese women have always been genuine partners in the political and decision-making structures of our country since their participation in the election of the first Sudanese parliament in 1954 on the eve of our declaration of independence. These gains for women developed further when women were elected as members of the Sudanese parliament in 1964, following independence. Moreover, my country has applied the concept of equal pay for equal work for men and women since 1967. It was therefore only natural that the gains of Sudanese women in terms of political participation continued to develop, reaching the level of 25 per cent representation in the federal parliament as well as in provincial councils, in accordance with the laws governing the elections that were held in my country last April. This means that a quarter of the seats in Sudan’s federal and provincial legislatures are held by women, which was mentioned by Ms. Michelle Bachelet, Under-Secretary-General for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, in her statement at the opening of this debate. It is worth mentioning as just one example that in the judiciary alone 79 judgeships are held by Sudanese women, many of whom have presided as judges of the Supreme Court. Sudanese women have also held high-ranking diplomatic positions, including ambassadorships, and have been commanders in the armed forces, the police and the security forces.

As for combating the phenomenon of violence against women, the Government of the Sudan has adopted a national strategy that was prepared by all relevant official and public actors. The strategy has been implemented at the central and provincial levels. The fruits of the strategy include the establishment of social police units which deal with women’s issues and combat all forms of discrimination and violence against women, including sexual violence.

Many specialized centres have also been founded at the central and provincial levels in order to coordinate women’s efforts in the fields of peace and development and to offer women-oriented guidance and consultations on bolstering the concept of gender equality and dealing with the status of women in areas afflicted by war, be it in the southern parts of the country or in Darfur. It is worth noting here that disarmament, demobilization, resettlement and reintegration programmes have given special priority to the situation of women, in close coordination with relevant United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

Today, we would like to commend the existing cooperation with UNIFEM and its active role in translating the aforementioned action plan into tangible reality. We look forward to seeing UNIFEM, through the new gender

Entity at the United Nations, play a larger role in terms of building national capacity and supporting efforts aimed at the advancement of women and improvement of their status, especially in post-conflict areas.

We would also like to recall aspects relating to the status of women within the framework of attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. Building the capacity of developing countries and enabling them to achieve the Goals would be the most efficient way to improve the status of women, bearing in mind the Beijing Platform for Action and especially in the light of the close link between the Platform for Action and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and their impact on factors relating to progress in improving the status of women.

The Government of the Sudan has been celebrating the tenth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security since 10 June. In Khartoum, our capital, we held an expanded workshop and an open day to celebrate the anniversary, in coordination with the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) and the Sudan country offices of United Nations agencies, at the forefront of which was UNIFEM.

It is also worth noting that preparatory work for the open day included workshops attended by women in several parts of the Sudan, including Khartoum and Juba, the capital of the southern province, the Warab province in the south and the provinces of East and Central Equatoria, as well as the three provinces of Darfur. We would also note that, in coordination with UNMIS and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), 88 women members of provincial councils have been trained on mainstreaming a gender perspective on all levels, and female police units in the south and in Darfur have been trained in capacity-building.

The situation of women in armed conflict has always been part of dealing comprehensively with the root causes of conflict. Therefore, we endorse the report's reference to a work plan covering the underlying causes of conflict, such as poverty, socio-economic and gender inequalities, endemic underdevelopment, weak or non-existent institutions and the absence of effective governance. This approach is based on the fact that war is war. Wherever war breaks out, its negative impact affects the vulnerable parts of society: women and children. Accordingly, we affirm that a comprehensive and sustainable political settlement of conflicts is the mother of all solutions for all issues pertaining to the situation of women in armed conflict.

We also affirm that the Security Council's effectiveness in implementing and following up on resolution 1325 (2000), including the specific measures undertaken to that effect, must be based on accurate information. I repeat: all these actions and measures must be based on accurate information contained in the Secretary-General's periodic reports on the issue, not on information cited in the reports of certain non-governmental organizations and media organizations.

We also affirm the need for the Council to rely on the country reports submitted by Member States on their implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). We urge the United Nations and its missions to organize workshops and consultative round tables with those involved in countries affected by conflict in order to exchange experiences regarding the overall situation of women in armed conflict.