

EU Presidency Statement - United Nations Security Council: Women and Peace and Security

Summary: 5 October 2009, New York - Statement on behalf of the European Union by H.E. Mr. Anders LidÈn, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Sweden, on Women and peace and security, United Nations Security Council

Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Montenegro, Serbia as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

Mr. President,

I would like to begin by commending the Vietnamese presidency on the initiative to convene this thematic debate on "Women and peace and security". The debate presents yet another important opportunity to promote the effective, coherent and systematic implementation of resolution 1325. The European Union welcomes the important steps taken today by the Security Council through Resolution 1889 (2009) on "Women and peace and security" that sets the agenda for our work during next year.

The adoption by the Security Council of resolutions 1325, 1820 and 1888, bear testimony to the progress made, during the last decade, in the area of "Women and peace and security". These resolutions have brought a much needed and welcomed visibility to the question of "women's empowerment", which constitutes a priority for the European Union. The issues at stake concern basic human interests and human rights.

While all the resolutions on "Women and peace and security" are equally important, resolution 1325 serves as an umbrella resolution in addressing women's empowerment, their role as peace builders and their vulnerable position as victims of war. The European Union welcomes the report by the Secretary-General on the implementation of 1325 and we support its recommendations.

We furthermore resonate the expressed concern by the Secretary-General at the lack of implementation of resolution 1325.

Why, after almost ten years, is there still a need for us to reaffirm our commitments? Why don't we see trends of decreasing sexual violence? It is disappointing that we still must be asked to strengthen our efforts, to fully implement resolution 1325. Clearly, status quo is unacceptable.

Women must be empowered, accountability must be established and commitments must be transformed into actions.

Mr. President,

The empowerment of women is important for the realisation of the human rights of women, as well as for economic and political development. The empowerment of women is equally important to durable peace, security, early recovery and reconciliation. If marginalisation of women and impunity continue, whole peace processes can be undermined.

Women's empowerment and their enjoyment of human rights must be integrated parts of post-conflict needs assessments. Needless to say this is of equal importance to carrying out humanitarian needs assessments in situations of complex humanitarian emergencies.

We urgently need to focus more on capacity to implement effective institutional reforms for gender equality. The immediate aftermath of conflict provides an opportunity to address women's issues and use women's potential. More resources must be accompanied by increased donor coordination to ensure finance efficiency as well as coherent and predictable international support.

Women's equal participation in decision-making at all levels is key to better advance human rights, to address specific needs and concerns of women and to make use of all human resources. The European Union supports the idea that the Security Council should vigorously pursue a strategy to ensure an increase in women's participation in all peace processes. We therefore support the idea of a UN-strategy to set concrete and specific targets for women's participation in such processes. By this time next year, we expect there to be at least one female Chief or Lead Peace mediator, several female SRSGs and a full time gender advisor in the Secretariat for political affairs.

A better gender balance in international operations would signal to parties in conflict that women have an important role to play. If the international and national leadership is not interested in progress on gender equality issues, we will not be able to move beyond the rhetorical stage.

Mr. President,

In accordance with resolution 1889 the European Union underlines the need for improving and strengthening the way in which the Security Council receives, analyses and takes action on information related to resolution 1325.

The European Union welcomes the decision by the General Assembly to establish a United Nations' composite gender entity. We hope this entity will bring about the much needed improvements to the work on gender equality of the United Nations including in the area of international peace and security. We expect a proposal from the Secretary-

General on the details of this gender entity, as well as an early appointment of the new Under-Secretary-General. We must not lose momentum on this matter.

The European Union stands fully committed to the implementation of resolutions 1325, 1820 and 1888. However, there must be a coherent strategy for the whole area of protection of women and women's rights. Women's participation is needed in all processes, at all levels. We need an all embracing approach on how to bring the system together.

Mr. President,

For the process of implementing resolution 1325, it is important to develop adequate tools of accountability, including National Action Plans. In line with the 2008 "EU Comprehensive Approach to implement Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820", the EU is committed to stepping up efforts in the implementation of 1325, and to translating these efforts into real impact on the ground. Our ambition is to be well prepared for October 2010, when the international community will celebrate the 10th anniversary of resolution 1325, in a ministerial review conference. At the same time, the European Union is interested in continuing discussions with partner countries and partner regional organisations - in particular the African Union - on "Women and peace and security" and on co-operation and improved effectiveness for 1325. We encourage all Member States to adopt accountability instruments including National Action Plans swiftly.

Thank You.