

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

Statement by H.E. Mr. Seger, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations

We thank you, Sir, for having convened this debate. The participation of a number of ministers shows the importance that Member States and the Security Council attach to the topic of women and peace and security. We also welcome the presence of Under-Secretary-General Michelle Bachelet.

Switzerland associates itself with the joint statement of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, delivered by the representative of Canada, and the joint statement of the Human Security Network, delivered by the representative of Costa Rica.

When entering the building this morning, participants passed by our exhibit “No Women — No Peace” in the entrance hall. You saw the curtain with the portraits of the 1,000 women nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005, looking down at the rickety peace table on the opposite side of the hall. I hope that, 10 years from now, these women will not be looking at that table, but sitting around it, as active and respected negotiating partners in all peace processes.

You are perhaps surprised, Sir, that I am wearing a scarf today. As chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, I travelled to Bujumbura a few weeks ago, and I had the opportunity to meet with women’s organizations there. During the elections, they had decided to wear a white shawl like this in public to show their desire for peace. That initiative had a significant impact in successfully limiting the violence during the election phase. Today, I would like to carry the voices of these women into this Chamber, commending them for their courage and determination. In fact, I had promised them that I would wear this scarf at my first appearance before the Security Council, and I am going to keep that promise. As the Council can see, the word “amahoro” is still here, which means, if I am not mistaken, “peace” in Kirundi.

But civil society is not the only one with the capacity and responsibility to create peace. It is also up to the Security Council, as the parent of resolution 1325 (2000). The Council must use of all the instruments at its disposal.

We welcome the establishment, in that regard, of a set of global indicators, which the Council will endorse today. This represents important progress in ensuring follow-up to resolution 1325 (2000). However, the application of these indicators calls for political leadership by the Council. Switzerland therefore supports the idea of a “1325 lead country” and the creation of a single comprehensive framework to support the implementation of the resolution. UN Women could contribute to this goal by creating a 1325 office within its institution.

We hope that Margot Wallström, who was appointed under resolution 1888 (2009), will play a significant role as an interlocutor for conversations between the United Nations system and the Security Council. We also hope that she will provide the Council with detailed information on instances of sexual violence. The recent events in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remind us of the urgent need to put an end to the cruel practice of using rape as a method of warfare.

Resolution 1820 (2008) affirmed the Council’s intention to consider targeted sanctions against parties to armed conflict who commit rape. In addition, we have international criminal justice instruments at our disposal, in particular the International Criminal Court, to ensure that such crimes do not go unpunished. However, it should be kept in mind that States bear the primary responsibility to prevent such crimes and to bring perpetrators to justice.

The representative of Liechtenstein just mentioned the monthly action points of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, which we support together with them. In addition, we are offering the Council a handbook, prepared by PeaceWomen, highlighting the various obligations that derive from the resolution, with many best practice examples as guidance. Here is the handbook, it is available, and I urge participants to use it.

As Member States, we are also called upon to systematically apply a gender perspective in our political

processes. Switzerland adopted a national action plan early on, which has proved to be a useful instrument. Our second and revised national action plan will come into force within the next few days.

When participants leave the building today, I encourage them to take another look at the exhibit in the entrance hall. Walking on the red carpet, they will see which countries have adopted national action plans to date. And they will notice that there is still plenty of space for many more.