

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

Statement by Zarrouk Boumiza Permanent Mission of Tunisia to the United Nations.

At the outset, I would like to commend the Security Council presidency for its initiative to hold this important public debate on women and peace and security, and to thank the Secretary-General for his excellent report (S/2012/732).

Tunisia's interest in the issue is based on its renewed commitment to promoting the rights of women and on its conviction that peace, development and democracy will not be achieved without women acting as active partners in the processes of preventing, mediating and resolving conflict.

It must be recognized that there is much greater awareness today of the multifaceted discrimination faced by women in conflict and that significant efforts have been made with a view to remedying that situation. As women are among the primary victims of armed conflict, together with children and the elderly, it is important to assign them prominent roles in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and even more importantly in the prevention process, to which it is never too late to devote particular attention. Significant headway has already been achieved to that end, such as the appointment of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the deployment of women protection advisers within peacekeeping operations.

Debates such as today's have also enabled us to develop a more coherent and coordinated approach to the protection of women in armed conflict, and contributed in particular to a more systematic integration of the gender perspective in peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions and in the transition from a reactive to a preventive culture, as manifested by the inclusion of the protection of civilians in the mandates of 8 peacekeeping missions. Other steps have been taken to improve the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) at the regional level, such as the drafting by the League of Arab States of a regional strategy on women, peace and security.

For its part, Tunisia has begun to establish an action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The plan encourages, inter alia, the training of women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding with a view to deploying qualified personnel in United Nations operations on the ground, and in particular to improving predeployment training by placing particular emphasis on special measures with a view to protecting women from all forms of violence.

We are compelled to acknowledge that, despite the progress achieved, much remains to be done to achieve all the goals set out in resolution 1325 (2000). It is critical that the Council remain seized of the issue and take further dynamic steps to enhance the protection of women in armed conflict.

In that respect, we believe that national ownership of the relevant Security Council resolutions remains the best way to achieve their effective implementation. My delegation is also convinced that all national actors, including civil society, should be able to contribute actively to promoting the peace process, since a State can lay the foundations of a lasting peace only with the inclusion and support of all of its citizens.

As indicated in the latest report of the Secretary-General, we also believe that civil society represents a key partner in post-conflict situations and that women's organizations in particular can contribute significantly to enhancing early warning mechanisms allowing us to preempt the escalation of violence against women and to support awareness-raising initiatives to that end. Women's organizations can also play an essential role in developing women's capacities and enabling them to participate actively in conflict prevention, mediation and resolution processes. That is why it is important to further mobilize technical support for such efforts.

In the same vein, we believe that men also play a crucial role in the promotion of gender equality. The initiatives of civil society organizations that are either led by men or that focus on raising men's awareness on gender equality deserve particular attention, since the struggle of women to enjoy all their rights can succeed only with the full involvement and engagement of men.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that my country remains at the disposal of the United Nations for any undertaking geared towards the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and of other international instruments aimed at

strengthening women's full and broad participation in the decision-making process and in establishing a culture of respect for women's rights.