

Statement by Ms. Joyce Kafanabo, Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania to the United Nations in the Security Council at the open debate on Women, Peace and Security

Thursday 28 October 2004

Mr. President,

My delegation is pleased to participate in this open debate to mark the fourth anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Allow me at the outset to thank the presenters for sharing with us information as well as their views and experiences on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325. This landmark resolution has provided a mechanism for the protection of the rights of women in conflict situations, as well as ensuring that their participation is assured at all stages and levels of peace processes.

Mr. President,

As we celebrate the fourth year since the adoption of this resolution, we need to ensure the sustainability of the achievements registered so far and put more efforts in addressing the challenges we have encountered or are expecting to encounter as we advance the implementation on Security Council Resolution 1325.

In this regard, we welcome the report of the Secretary General, S/2004/814, on women peace and security. The report has insightful information and provides recommendations that should be taken seriously by all Member States. We also welcome UNIFEM's report, "Getting it right, Doing it Right: Gender and disarmament, demobilization and Reintegration", which has included case studies from the field; these have provided more insights into the situation at hand.

Mr. President,

We note with concern that although significant achievements have been recorded in the implementation of Resolution 1325, there are still major gaps and challenges in all areas, in particular, in relation to women's participation in conflict prevention and peace processes; the integration of gender perspectives in peace agreements; attention to the contributions and needs of women in humanitarian and reconstruction processes; representation of women in decision-making positions; the continued use of sexual violence against women and children as weapons of war, and the widespread acts of violation of human rights. The failure to provide adequate protection to women during conflict as well as peacekeeping situations is a matter of serious concern and merits our concerted efforts to address the situation.

We thus urge the close cooperation of United Nations Systems and other regional organizations and, in the case of Africa, the collaboration with the Africa Union and its new organs is necessary. Collaboration with regional organisations will however require capacity building of the organizations, both in terms of technical, human and financial resources.

Mr. President,

Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 will also require creating awareness to the conflicting factions and all players involved in peace processes to enable them understand the contents and thus build consensus on implementation requirements. Here, we need also to build the capacity of the local communities, including women groups, in articulating the resolution so that they become advocates within their areas. A challenge we have before us is how to achieve the effective participation of women in all levels and stages of peace processes. We urge that the role of women in these processes should be built in the peace agreements from the very beginning and that Member States should put more efforts in increasing the numbers of women participation in their police and the army as well as civilian women in decision-making positions. In this regard, we applaud the Secretary General's efforts in increasing the number of women and in mainstreaming gender in peacekeeping operations and request continued efforts in this regard.

Mr. President,

We would like to echo UNIFEM's observation that without women's equal participation and full involvement in peace building, neither justice nor development will be possible in a war-torn society's transition to peace.

In recognition of women's participation, the Great Lakes peace process has provided women with space to discuss their contributions, first, through national meetings where a large number of national stakeholders were involved, and later at a regional meeting. The just-concluded regional meeting at Kigali in Rwanda has produced a declaration which will be read to the Head of States when they have their meeting in Tanzania in November. In this endeavor, we wish to commend UNIFEM's role in facilitating the meetings.

Mr. President,

When we discuss about women, peace and security, we cannot leave out the impact of HIV and AIDS on women in conflict situations and in peacekeeping processes. The disease is claiming a large part of the productive sector of our population. This will have adverse effects on the growth and stability of African economies and society.

HIV and AIDS have impacted conflict situations and peacekeeping. It has been documented that HIV infection rates are higher in African armies than in the rest of society. Women are therefore vulnerable to be infected through acts of sexual and gender violence perpetuated against them both by the enemy armies, the national armies, and some of the unethical peacekeepers.

HIV and AIDS may also affect peacekeeping efforts as armies may not be able to deploy whole contingents to peacekeeping missions, thus depriving women of the required protection. The peacekeepers are also prone to spreading AIDS, both in areas where they are deployed and when they return to their home countries. They are also

apt to be infected by local populations.

In all of these situations, women bear the brunt of the consequences. It is thus necessary to ensure that peacekeeping efforts also take into consideration the war against HIV and AIDS.

Finally, let me reaffirm the commitment of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania in the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325.

I thank you.