

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security
28th of October, 2011, Security Council Chamber

Statement by H.E. Sir Mark Lyall Grant, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom

"Thank you Madam President for holding this open important debate on Women, Peace and Security. I would like to thank Michelle Bachelet, Lazarous Kampabwe and Orzala Ashraf Nemet for their briefings this morning.

I would also particularly like to thank the Secretary-General for the personal interest that he has shown in this very important agenda.

Though we support the comprehensive PRST that will be adopted in this debate. I regret that because of the opposition of some, we were unable to unreservedly welcome the Secretary-General's report. The United Kingdom does whole-heartedly welcome that report.

Women have a central role in building stability in countries at risk from conflict. Despite our collective efforts, they remain under-represented in peace processes, in work to detect early signs of conflict and in mediation between warring parties. Some progress has been made, but it is not until the participation of women is included throughout the conflict cycle that a durable and sustainable peace can be assured. This Council, of course, may not be the best body, with five distinguished female Permanent Representatives and Deputy Permanent Representatives, leaving the Council at the end of this year, there may be only two female PRs and DPRs next year around this table, both from the United States.

I have three points to make in today's debate: first, support for the role of UN Women and Special Representatives of the Secretary General (SRSG) on Sexual Violence in Conflict; second, the need to do more on conflict prevention and early warning; and finally, the work that the United Kingdom has taken forward through our National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

Madam President

Since taking up her position as Under Secretary General and Executive Director of UN Women, Michelle Bachelet has passionately and effectively promoted the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Supported by Special Representatives Radhika Coomaraswamy and Margot Wallstrom, UN Women plays a vital role coordinating wider international efforts to implement the full suite of UN resolutions on Women Peace and Security. We commend, in particular, the efforts to improve systematic reporting of progress through the development of indicators and a strategic framework, including the Strategic Framework of UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict. In July, the United Kingdom pledged \$16 million over a 2 year period to UN Women to support this important work.

Madam President

We have a responsibility to use all the means available to the UN to prevent conflict or relapse into conflict. UN member states must be prepared to invest early to support countries emerging from conflict and react rapidly should a crisis arise. And we must continue to encourage the development and deployment – at the invitation of governments - of UN mediation specialists and Special Envoys. The United Kingdom welcomes the Secretary-General's call to increase the number of senior female

mediators.

Madam President, a word on National Action Plans:

The United Kingdom believes that National Action Plans provide an important opportunity for member states to make their own commitments to reduce the impact of conflict on women and girls and to promote their inclusion in conflict resolution. Over the past year, the United Kingdom has supported efforts globally to implement Resolution 1325. In Afghanistan, the UK has funded a full range of measures undertaken by the Criminal Justice Task Force to minimise gender-related barriers to working in a high profile law enforcement environment. And we supported the Government of Nepal's efforts to develop its own National Action Plan to generate, among many other things, work to provide support for women and girls who have been the victims of sexual violence. We encourage more countries to develop National Action Plans in order to strengthen the implementation of Resolution 1325 and associated resolutions.

The Arab Spring has shown that the threats to security and to women and girls in particular are changing constantly. In our work on Women, Peace and Security we must be flexible enough to respond to new threats and challenges as they emerge. There are sweeping and positive social and economic trends at work. This Council needs to show that we are responsive to these trends. On this, as on other issues, we should demonstrate that we are on the right side of history. In particular, we must ensure that new governing structures that emerge in the aftermath of conflict do not undermine women's roles and participation in society, and that the same opportunities are available to men and women.

The United Kingdom believes that women's inclusion in political settlements and peace processes, the protection of women and girls in situations of armed violence, and women's access to security and justice, are essential building blocks for more peaceful and stable societies. In a year when the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to three impressive women, we share the hope of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, that we can together realise the great potential for democracy and peace that women represent.

Thank you."