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**OPEN DEBATE
ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY**

Statement to the Security Council, 28 October 2002

By Sir Jeremy Greenstock KCMG,

United Kingdom Permanent Representative

Mr President,

The representative of Denmark will speak later on behalf of the European Union and my delegation endorses what she will say. I would like to make a few additional observations in my national capacity.

I begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his excellent report pursuant to resolution 1325 which we passed two years ago. The report sets out the problems very well, and is very clear in its recommendations. We can support them all.

The Secretary-General's report is concise and well focused, and correctly emphasises what needs to be done to implement the provisions of SCR1325 and ultimately ensure that all stages of conflict management are more effective. Before I turn to it in detail I should like to make a couple of general points. First, it is important to remember that women are not solely victims of war. They also make tremendous contributions to conflict resolution, conflict management and peace building. They can of course be combatants themselves. Whilst the Secretary-General's report is right to place emphasis on women's in need of protection during conflict, we should also see them as potential participants, particularly in peace processes. For example, in our own national experience, women's groups in Northern Ireland play an ongoing important role in the peace process. Second, and following on from that, NGOs in civil society are important players in promoting peace and reconstruction and in protecting women's rights. We are pleased to see that the Secretary-General's report emphasises regular grass roots contacts. Such contacts need to be flexible: in some circumstances women in areas of armed conflict are not organised in a formal way.

The report draws out many important points. Five examples. We strongly support the recognition that promoting gender equality is not just women's responsibility. We agree that reconstruction efforts have to be based on human rights principles and non-discrimination. We support an increase in the number of programmes to meet the needs of child soldiers, specifically girl soldiers. And we support the objective of a fifty-fifty gender balance in all areas of peace operations by 2015. We believe that the creation of a database of gender specialists would be a helpful development.

But our focus in the Council now needs to be on the implementation of 1325, to which the Secretary-General's report is a very useful contribution. The Council's work is of course part of a wider strategy. Gender mainstreaming has an essential part to play in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Conflict management – and that is the context of our debate today - is crucial to the implementation of the Goals.

Let us look at the facts. In a conflict area women make an important but often unrecognised contribution as peace educators, both in their household and in the

wider community. Refugee and displaced women often display remarkable endurance and resourcefulness and can contribute positively to post-conflict reconstruction and peacekeeping operations. They need to be involved more fully in decisions that affect them and their community. They perform generally better than men in the control and management of economic (eg credit) and natural resources (eg land, water). This is fundamental to the success of a society in the post-conflict phase. The UN system needs to move quickly to enable women to contribute effectively to the reconstruction/rehabilitation process.

The monitoring of human rights should be included in the mandates of peacekeeping operations, few of which make any specific reference to women and girls. Personnel on peacekeeping operations should be trained on the gender perspective before deployment – an aspect on which the UK is working with DPKO. Respect for women, and an absence of impunity for those who do not, must be ubiquitous in the UN system.

One element that is not brought out in the report is the need to place the UN's work on women, peace and security within the broader humanitarian framework. The Security Council has in the past delivered key messages on the protection of civilians in armed conflict and on children affected by armed conflict. It is essential to construct working links between all of these areas. We would like to see the UN system operating in cross-cutting ways that integrates this work into programmes on the ground. We will return to these same themes next month when the Council discusses the Secretary-General's report on the protection of civilians.

One last point. It is essential for gender mainstreaming within the UN system to be undertaken by the operators and agencies concerned, drawing on the support of the expert gender bodies. Progress on gender will not be made unless all parts of the UN system assume responsibility for leading in their own areas on matters relating to gender.

Mr President, work has already begun on a Presidential Statement to follow-up the Secretary-General's report. This must take gender mainstreaming forward, not content itself with recycling analysis, however good. The Council has to implement 1325 and the Secretary-General's recommendations in its regular work, until we know that a gender perspective is properly integrated with all our relevant work. For that purpose, and to introduce a touch of accountability into our procedures, I wonder whether we should not, each year as we apportion jobs amongst Members of the Council, ask one delegation to oversee the implementation of our agreed decisions on gender mainstreaming, working with the appropriate parts of the Secretariat to achieve that. Whenever women are disadvantaged in conflict, we owe them some results.