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**STATEMENT
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**AT THE 4208TH MEETING
OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL
ON WOMEN AND PEACE AND SECURITY**

**New York
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**PERMANENT MISSION OF UKRAINE TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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Mr. President,

I would like warmly to welcome you as you preside over the Security Council's meeting today.

I would like also to thank you and the delegation of Namibia for organising this open meeting, which gives us an excellent opportunity to listen to a broad exchange of views, concerns and proposals aimed at finding effective ways and means to protect women and to ensure their full participation in efforts to maintain peace and security.

The question before us today is of a complex nature and its consideration cannot be exhausted by the Security Council. It should be borne in mind that a number of organs within the UN system have already addressed or continue addressing, within the framework of their respective mandates, various aspects of that issue and worked out specific policies and practical recommendations in this respect. By providing its own perspective on the question of women's protection and women's role in the maintenance of peace and security, the Security Council can usefully complement those efforts.

My delegation heartily applauds the efforts and dedication of all women who are serving with the UN peace - keeping and humanitarian missions under very difficult, and quite frequently dangerous, circumstances in conflict and post-conflict areas.

We would also like to point out an important contribution of non-UN bodies and humanitarian agencies, as well as non-governmental organisations in protecting women in armed conflicts and in providing to them humanitarian assistance and other necessary relief.

Mr. President,

International resolve to safeguard women's rights in conflict situations has substantially strengthened in recent years, in response to the increased targeting of women and other civilians that became a shameful instrument of contemporary warfare.

As has already been mentioned, in the legal field, the international community has further developed - in addition to the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and the two Additional Protocols of 1977 - the body of law dealing with crimes against civilian population with special emphasis on protection of women. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court incorporates gender-based persecution within its jurisdiction and lists rape, enforced prostitution and other forms of sexual violence as war crimes and crimes against humanity. The *ad hoc* Tribunals on Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia both explicitly incorporate rape as a crime against humanity within their jurisdictions. The Statute of the Rwanda Tribunal also expressly includes rape, enforced prostitution and any form of indecent assault as a violation of Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and as a breach of Additional Protocol II. Both Tribunals have now issued indictments charging sexual violence as genocide. The rules of procedure and evidence of the Tribunals recognise the need for particular evidentiary exclusions in cases of rape and sexual assault.

Apart from that, the Security Council adopted several resolutions on the protection of children and civilians in armed conflict, wherein it urged all parties to take special measures to protect women and girls from rape and other forms of gender-based violence.

In spite of all international efforts, women continue to be the most vulnerable victims of armed conflicts. With the rapid proliferation of intrastate wars and other hostilities, civilians more and more often represent the overwhelming majority of the victims of war, with women and girls targeted for the most brutal forms of attack, including rape, sexual mutilation, sexually humiliating treatment, forcible impregnation. Sexual violence brought with it the risk of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. The rise of inter-state and inter-ethnic hostilities in the 1990's and created by them a large number of refugees became a catalyst for a major explosion in the spread of the virus, and it yet to show up statistically. In addition to that, women also experience the trauma of losing relatives and friends in times of armed conflict, and of having to take responsibility for the care of surviving family members. They also constitute the majority of refugees and displaced person.

My country is greatly concerned about this situation and strongly condemns the targeting of women in situations of armed conflict. In this context, I would like to stress that the Security Council should give special consideration to the particular needs of women affected by armed conflict when considering action aimed at promoting peace and security.

It is important that Secretary-General's reports to the Council dealing with specific conflict situations and developments in the field also incorporate gender perspective in addressing various aspects of conflict analysis and conflict resolution. I share the view expressed by previous speakers that the Security Council should also request the Secretary-General to ensure that personnel involved in United Nations peace-keeping and peace-building operations have appropriate training on the protection, rights and particular needs of women. Security Council resolutions setting up or extending peacekeeping operation should provide for a clear mandate to address protection of women and girl affected by conflict, against all sexual violence, abduction, forced prostitution, trafficking and threats imposed by military, paramilitary and other groups.

We believe that the Security Council has a special responsibility to support women's participation in peace processes by ensuring respective gender balance in UN peace-keeping missions. The Security Council has already recognised, through the Statement of its President on the occasion of International Women's Day, the important role of women in conflict resolution, peace-keeping and peace-building and underscored the importance of promoting an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes while addressing armed or other conflicts.

The presence of women in UN missions can foster confidence and trust among the local population, a critical element in any peace-keeping mission. In performing their tasks, women are perceived to be compassionate, unwilling to opt for force over reconciliation, willing to listen and learn, and are widely seen as contributors to an environment of stability and morality that fosters the progress of peace.

At the same time, women are still under-represented in decision-making with regard to conflict. Their initiatives and visions for peace and security are rarely heard during peace negotiations. In this regard, I would like to stress that women should not be viewed primarily as the victim of armed conflict, and the international community should use the potential of women as agents of preventive diplomacy, peace-keeping and peace-building. The peace-building initiatives of women in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Northern Ireland and Cambodia, Rwanda, Mozambique and Guatemala can serve as useful examples of how precious can be their contribution to peace.

Mr. President,

Being an active participant of the United Nations peace-keeping and peace-making efforts, Ukraine has also contributed its women civilian police to the United Nations peace-keeping missions. We reiterate our readiness to continue working constructively with other Members States in order to ensure protection of women in armed conflicts and women's participation in peace process. We are confident that further development of peace-keeping and peace-building teams with women and men as equal partners would improve the efficiency of peace-keeping and peace maintenance throughout the world.

The delegation of Ukraine looks forward to a positive outcome of this important initiative on the Women and Peace and Security. We hope that many useful ideas put forward by delegations at this meeting would be incorporated in the respective Security Council draft resolution.

I thank you.