

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

Statement by H.E. Ms. Boiko, Representative of Ukraine

I would like to begin by commending you, Madam President, for convening this debate. It allows Member States to reaffirm their commitment to implementing Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), to assess progress, exchange views and develop new approaches to such an important issue. Our appreciation also goes to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, to Ms. Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director of UN-Women, to the President of the Economic and Social Council and to the representative of the NGO Working Group for their thoughtful insights into today's topic. While Ukraine aligns itself with the statement by the delegation of the European Union, I will make few brief points in my national capacity.

The eleventh anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) is an opportunity to strengthen the global agenda on women and peace and security. We welcome the latest report of the Secretary-General on this issue (S/2011/598*) and take positive note of its recommendations. My country remains fully committed to the implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008) and 1888 (2009).

Ukraine considers that ensuring gender equality, gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women is not only an important objective, but is also an essential part of the pursuit of democracy and development. This year's awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to three distinguished and inspirational women is an acknowledgement of the crucial role of women as defenders of human rights and contributors to political settlements, conflict resolution, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. In recognition of the essential contribution of women towards achieving those objectives, Ukraine co-sponsored a draft resolution on women and political participation.

Despite all international efforts, women and girls continue to be the most vulnerable victims of armed conflicts, targeted with sexual violence, sexual exploitation and other forms of gender-based violence. Eliminating impunity is critical for preventing gender based crimes. In 2010 Ukraine became a co-sponsor of Council resolution 1960 (2010), which concerned sexual violence in armed conflict. We remain ready to undertake further steps, in particular as a member of UN-Women.

Ukraine recognizes the instrumental role that a stronger United Nations gender architecture could play in advancing women's rights. It is a great responsibility for my country to be represented on the Executive Board of UN-Women. Ukraine's activity in this entity is focused on implementing policies and practices that seek to reduce gender inequality in all its manifestations in every sphere of life, including decision-making and leadership, the elimination of violence against women and girls, and trafficking in women and girls.

We welcome the Council's efforts to pay special attention to the concrete needs of women and girls affected by armed conflicts in such spheres as health, education, legal support, and water and sanitation.

The focus of today's debate on the participation and role of women in conflict prevention and mediation could not be more timely. Ukraine has always stressed the need for the widest possible use of the potential of women in the spheres of preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. We believe that there is still much to be done to redress the current under-representation of women in decision making with regard to conflict resolution so as to make their voice heard loud and clear in peace negotiations.

In that context, we welcome the adoption of the first-ever resolution on "Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes and conflict prevention and resolution" (General Assembly resolution 65/283). In that document, all Member States resolved to promote the equal, full and effective participation of women at all levels of the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution, as well as to provide adequate gender expertise for all mediators and their teams.

My delegation prides itself on the long record of participation of Ukrainian women, as civilian police and military observers, in United Nations peacekeeping efforts. Currently, they are deployed in five United Nations peacekeeping operations — in Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, South Sudan and Timor-Leste. Their dedicated service to peace is one of the concrete ways in which Ukraine contributes to advancing the agenda of today's meeting on the ground.

The importance of women's participation in peacebuilding can hardly be overestimated. The issue is one of the priorities of Ukraine as a member of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and one of its current Vice-Chairs. We see a great deal of merit in strengthening collaboration between the PBC and UN-Women in this field. From that perspective, Ukraine was one of the initiators of the first-ever joint high-level meeting of those bodies aimed at promoting advocacy for women's participation in peacebuilding, in line with the Secretary-General's thematic report.

In conclusion, Ukraine calls on Member States to renew their commitments under resolution 1325 (2000) and to launch new strategies to address gender equality issues in peace and security processes. Ukraine is resolved to do its share.