

**Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security, November 30th 2012,
Security Council Chamber**

Statement by Mrs. DiCarlo, Permanent Mission of the United States to the United Nations.

I thank Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson, Executive Director Bachelet and Under-Secretary-General Ladsous for their briefings and their commitment to the women, peace and security agenda. I thank Ms. Diop for her remarks today, and especially for carrying the message of the women of Goma and Bukavu. We agree with her; we must not let them down.

As we mark the twelfth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), we can point to real progress. United Nations mediation, peacekeeping and peacebuilding increasingly tap the expertise and address the concerns of women. Peace processes include greater outreach to women. More countries are developing their own national action plans on women, peace and security, yet our work is very far from complete. We must continue to increase our collective efforts to address the challenges women face in conflict and post-conflict situations, and civil society groups can play a crucial role in peace and security initiatives.

The participation of women in peace and political processes is central to long-term peace and stability. We see that more than half of all peace agreements fail within five years. While the reasons for failure are complex and unique to each conflict, there is one common thread, historically: a lack of women's participation.

Of the hundreds of peace agreements signed in the past 20 years, a sampling of those treaties shows that less than 8 per cent of negotiators were women. Research suggests that women who participate in peace talks often raise issues like human rights, citizen security, justice, employment and health care — issues that are key to long-term recovery and stability but which are often ignored. Civil society can be instrumental in increasing the participation of women in these processes. Just this month in Afghanistan, for example, over two hundred representatives from Afghan civil society, political parties, Government, provincial councils, the religious community and the High Peace Council gathered for the national conference for strengthening the role of women in the peace process. They discussed increased participation of women in reconciliation efforts, greater protection for Afghan women and the importance of compliance with resolution 1325 (2000) by the Afghan Government. The delegates are currently drafting an action plan to drive genuine progress for Afghan women.

The United Nations has made important strides in advancing women's roles in security, governance and civic life. We support the Secretary-General's recommendation that greater attention should be devoted to women's empowerment and rights when establishing or renewing mission mandates. And we commend him for placing more women in leadership positions and increasing the number of gender advisers in the field. Their support to local civil society groups has been critical, and it is clear that the United Nations can have a significant impact when it partners with civil society. UN-Women's Fund for Gender Equality typifies that approach by partnering with regional, national and local women's organizations as well as with Government institutions to get more women engaged economically and politically.

It is encouraging, moreover, to see that more women parliamentarians are elected to office during transitional periods where there is United Nations assistance. Libya's landmark elections on 7 July had record levels of women's participation, with over six hundred women candidates

running for the national congress. And yet United Nations budgets remain well below the agreed 15 per cent recommendation in the Secretary-General's action plan to ensure women's participation in post-conflict recovery. If that continues, recent progress could stagnate. We must find ways to accelerate progress on that front.

UN-Women's focus on women's leadership and political participation has produced concrete results, and we look forward to the forthcoming report of the Secretary-General on implementation of General Assembly resolution 66/130, on women and political participation. We are also grateful for the work on women's political participation by the Human Rights Council Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and Practice.

The United States remains deeply concerned about violence targeted at women and girls, especially sexual violence. Not only is it horrific for the victims, but it tears apart the fabric of societies. As Secretary Clinton has said, these acts are not cultural but criminal. In the peace and security context, they are not simply women's issues, but, rather, fundamental problems that must be addressed for societies to reconcile, rebuild and find peace.

We applaud the efforts made by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to prevent violence against women in armed conflict by working to devise innovative procedures such as random patrols in areas commonly used by women and girls for gathering firewood or water.

Beyond sharing best practices and lessons learned, we need to do more to standardize mission-wide strategies and policies, improve redeployment training for peacekeepers, address victims' needs and hold perpetrators accountable. That is why United Nations campaigns such as Stop Rape Now are so important.

The work of resolution 1325 (2000) is a national responsibility. Less than year ago, President Obama issued the first-ever United States national action plan on women, peace and security. Based on wide-ranging consultations with American civil society and with other Governments, our action plan lays out how the United States will help empower half the world's population as equal partners in preventing conflict and building peace. Partnering with civil society groups is a key component of this strategy.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that the international community has made progress in including women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, tackling the scourge of sexual violence in conflict and making national commitments to act. But much more needs to be done so that the world fully sees women as actors, not victims, and as leaders, not followers.