



PERMANENT MISSION OF SOUTH AFRICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
333 EAST 38TH STREET 9TH FLOOR
NEW YORK, NY 10016
Tel: (212) 213-5583 Fax: (212) 692-2498
E-mail: pmun@southafrica-newyork.net

**STATEMENT
BY**

**HER EXCELLENCY MS. BATHABILE DLAMINI
DEPUTY MINISTER FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**SOUTH AFRICAN STATEMENT DURING
THE OPEN DEBATE OF THE UNITED NATIONS
SECURITY COUNCIL ON
"WOMEN AND PEACE AND SECURITY"**

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Mr. President,

Let me take this opportunity to thank you for organizing this important debate. We also thank the Secretary-General for his Report on the subject under consideration.

We appreciate the participation of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon via video link; Ms Michelle Bachelet, Under-Secretary-General for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; Mr Alain Le Roy, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; H.E. Mr. Hamidon Ali, President of the Economic and Social Council and Ms . Thelma Awori, Civil Society Advisory Group to the UN on Women, Peace and Security in this debate.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements to be delivered by the distinguished Representative of Namibia on behalf of SADC and H.E. Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to welcome the appointment of Ms. Bachelet. This move is a demonstration of the firm commitment by UN Member State and Secretary General in achieving the objectives and the goals of advancing equal participation and full involvement of women in the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. We would like to assure Ms Bachelet of our full cooperation and support in the fulfilment of her mandate. We appreciate the Security Council's invitation to the UN Women to regularly contribute to its work on Women Peace and Security. We are convinced that this new Entity will be very strategic in coordinating Women's efforts in peace-building and prevention of sexual violence in conflicts.

Mr. President,

It has been ten years since the Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 (2000), following the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979). Resolution 1325 reaffirms the implementation of the obligations of these instruments aimed at addressing the situation of women in armed conflict. The adoption of Resolution 1325 just at the dawn of the 21st Century and the new Millennium was a significant milestone in the recognition of the role that women played and continues to play in the maintenance of international peace and security. In South Africa, women played a critical role in the struggle for liberation, transition to democracy and post-conflict reconstruction and development.

As we commemorate the 10th year of Security Council Resolution 1325, South Africa believes that, whilst progress has been made in the implementation of the provisions of resolution 1325, a lot remains to be done in achieving the objectives of this resolution.

Today's meeting presents a perfect opportunity to review the impact of interventions and assess progress in order to identify gaps and consolidate new perspectives towards streamlining and accelerating the implementation of resolution 1325.

Mr. President,

In Africa, the AU and sub-regional organizations as well as Civil Society play a pivotal and strategic role in the prevention and resolution of conflict. Women are

always ready to play a role in conflict resolution initiatives such as: the promotion and protection of human rights; and the rule of law, both of which are vital to peace, security, stability and prosperity.

Consistent with these efforts, and in order to promote effective participation of women in peacekeeping, peacebuilding and security, the African Union in February 2009 declared 2010-2020 as the African Women's decade. It further committed its sub-regional organizations, including member states to use the frameworks of resolution 1325 and 1820 to integrate gender policies, programmes and activities on conflicts and peace, and create regional consultative platforms on peace for the sharing of knowledge and information and harmonisation of strategies.

The South African Women in Dialogue (SAWID) has initiated dialogue between South African women and women in conflict countries in particular Burundi on how best to mainstream gender in peace mission in Africa and beyond. The African Women Peace Table was established in 2007, another South African initiative where female soldiers and civil society define the peace agenda and discuss strategies for peacebuilding in the continent.

The South African and Burundi Women in Dialogue (SABWID) was the second intercontinental peace dialogue organised to promote peace among women in the Great Lakes Region, by developing and sharing strategies for mainstreaming women's issues and by discussing post-conflict developmental challenges. These Initiatives and the ones in West Africa in particular the Mano River Union activities further demonstrates the active role African Women play in conflict and post conflict.

Mr. President,

South Africa today stands as one of the top Troop Contributing Countries in the world with the largest women contingent deployed in peace support missions. Currently, 19% of the South African National Defence Force personnel deployed in peace support operations are female.

Mr. President,

It is a shame that sexual violence against women, particularly in armed conflicts still exists and has not yet fully been resolved. Sexual violence is one of the major tragedies in conflict and post-conflict situations where women and girls bear the brunt and often become casualties. Sexual violence constitutes a war crime and a crime against humanity when committed as part of a widespread and systematic attack on a civilian population by State and non-State actors. It was for this reason that when the International Criminal Court was created, South Africa recommended that sexual violence be among the crimes referred to this court which is a tool against impunity.

Mr. President,

It is for this very reason that South Africa condemns in the strongest terms possible the mass rapes committed in the eastern part of the DRC in the past two months. We call for the urgent identification of the perpetrators of these war crimes so that they be brought to justice. The days of impunity in Africa at the expense of women and children are over.

We are pleased that the UN system has become more coordinated in its efforts to address all forms of violence, especially sexual violence against women and girls in armed conflict. A better-coordinated UN system would ensure that adequate information collection and management systems would be in place in conflict situations to collect and feed data on sexual violence to the Secretary-General.

Mr. President,

My delegation believes that full participation of women in the prevention and resolution of conflict has become a critical element to adequately address such tragedies. Placing women in leadership positions, in senior levels, as decision-makers in peace consolidation processes, in public life and in transitional government could provide space for gender perspectives to resolving conflict and achieving stability.

Mr. President,

The Security Sector of conflict and post-conflict countries must be reformed to prevent and better implement resolution 1325. In order to build effective, non-discriminatory and representative security institutions, it is essential to provide personnel with effective and sustainable gender training and capacity building. Women's access to justice and participation in the legal system would also contribute meaningfully to a well-functioning and gender-sensitive security framework. We, therefore, encourage the international community to take collective actions in advancing these reforms including the provision of sustainable, flexible and predictable financial resources.

Mr. President, in conclusion, we support the set of indicators contained in the SG's report (S/2010/498) and trust that their application will go a long way in speeding implementation of 1325.

UN has come a long way and has played a critical role in defining the role of women particularly in conflict situations. Nonetheless a lot of support to these women is still required.

Mr. President, my delegation supports the draft presidential statement on Women, Peace and Security and looks forward to its adoption later today.

I thank you.