



AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

E-mail australia@un.int

150 East 42nd Street, New York NY 10017-5612 Ph 212 - 351 6600 Fax 212 - 351 6610 www.AustraliaUN.org

UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

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Resolution 1325: “Women, Peace and Security”

Statement by H.E. Mr John Dauth LVO Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations

(Check against delivery)

On the third anniversary of the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325 – a landmark document for women’s human rights – we are proud to reaffirm Australia’s commitment to the resolution.

Resolution 1325 was the first resolution addressing gender issues to be passed by the Security Council. Since then, significant progress has been made to increase legal protection for women and girls in armed conflict situations – and during peacetime - through international mechanisms including the inclusion of gender-related and sexual crimes within the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court.

However, more needs to be done. Despite international efforts, violence against women in situations of armed conflict continues. Women and girls remain overwhelmingly the main victims of armed conflict.

During times of conflict, women and girls are also especially vulnerable to sexual crimes such as systematic rape, forced pregnancy and sterilisation, sexual slavery and abuse. People trafficking - a crime usually involving women and girls - is one of the fastest growing crimes in the world today, and often occurs as a direct result of conflict. Eradicating violence, and the effects of violence, against women in conflict and post conflict situations requires determined and continuous efforts from the international community.

Women continue to be significantly under-represented in peace-building, peacekeeping and post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction despite Resolution 1325’s acknowledgement of their important role in these areas.

Mr Chairman

Australia's experiences in the Pacific region have convinced us of the need to make concerted efforts to ensure that women participate fully in peace-building processes. We actively support such participation, and urge the UN and all member states do so as well. Let me give some examples to illustrate what we have been doing:

- Australia's Peace, Conflict and Development policy, launched in June 2002, provides a framework for strengthening the effectiveness of development assistance. The policy addresses the impact of conflict on women and children and promotes the role of women as peace-builders.
- Through our aid program, Australia supports a wide range of activities in the Solomon Islands, Bougainville, East Timor and elsewhere that address the social dimensions of conflict. These activities have been designed to strengthen the ability of women, community leaders and other community groups to address violence and conflict in their communities. Specific examples of Australia's aid activities are outlined in the attachment to this statement.
- Australia led the four-nation Peace Monitoring Group on Bougainville, which was careful to engage women in, and to encourage their support for, the peace process. This work is being continued by its civilian successor, the Bougainville Transition Team.
- In addition, Australia is proud to have a senior Australian policewoman as the current UN Police Commissioner in East Timor. Police Commissioner Peisley is the only woman holding such a position in a DPKO operation.
- We have made a concerted effort to include women peacekeepers in our peacekeeping contributions around the world.

Mr Chairman

Australia remains committed to the sustainable implementation of Resolution 1325. We commend the significant first steps that have been taken toward this objective, including through the appointment of a Gender Adviser in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the development of gender action plans in the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. We note also that DPKO is developing a field guide to gender mainstreaming and has issued a gender and peacekeeping training manual. In all this, Mr Guehenno deserves commendation for his leadership.

But, as I have said, much more needs to be done to continue and accelerate the implementation of Resolution 1325. Without further concrete action, Resolution 1325 will only remain a set of aspirational standards. It is in this context that we wish to ask the following questions of the UN Secretariat:

- What are the main hurdles in achieving the implementation of Resolution 1325 in current peacekeeping operations?

- Has the UN Secretariat put into place any institutional mechanisms to monitor progress made in implementation of Resolution 1325?
- What efforts are being made to ensure that the recommendations in Resolution 1325 are mainstreamed into the work programs of all UN agencies that have a role in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Mr Chairman, the responsibility of implementing Resolution 1325 rests not only with the UN Secretariat. Member states and, in particular, Security Council members also have important responsibilities, not least in ensuring that mandates take full account of gender perspectives. We all now need to focus on practical steps to give effect to Resolution 1325. Australia stands ready to do its part.

Thank you.

Australian aid activities supporting women's participation in peace processes

Some examples of Australian aid activities being implemented in conflict-affected environments include:

Solomon Islands - Community Peace and Restoration Fund

In Solomon Islands, Australia's aid program is providing support to the National Peace Council and funding the Community Peace and Restoration Fund (March 2000 to December 2004).

Women are active participants and hold leadership positions within the National Peace Council, an indigenous organisation that plays a critical role in peace, restoration of law and order, and nation building. The National Unity Summit held in Honiara 2- 5 July 2003 highlighted the role and contributions of women to peace building and national unity.

The Community Peace and Restoration Fund has specifically targeted its support to ensure that women's organisations, particularly those focused on peace and reconciliation, have access to assistance and development opportunities. The Community Peace and Restoration Fund is delivering a critical peace dividend direct to communities, with over 95 women's projects, reaching some of the most isolated communities supported by the Fund since November 2000. This support has included the development of local women's resource centres in provincial areas, skills development and training workshops, women's savings and income generation projects.

East Timor - Community Empowerment & Strengthening Human Rights Project

In East Timor Australia's aid program has funded the Community Empowerment & Strengthening Human Rights Project which has developed training programs and materials in civic education, human rights, and reconciliation. AusAID has also worked with East Timorese non-government organisations to help strengthen community group capacity in human rights, reconciliation, women's rights and empowerment, and civic education and has been engaged in advocacy work and campaigns at a national level, including violence against women, economic rights of women and the International Human Rights Tribunal.

Papua New Guinea – Bougainville peace process

Australia has provided strong support for the Bougainville peace process in Papua New Guinea, where Bougainvillean women have been instrumental in sustaining momentum for conflict resolution. The Australian aid program has supported Bougainvillean women's efforts in conflict resolution and participation in the peace process.

An example of this support has been funding for the Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency (LNWDA). Through LNWDA, Australian funding has supported initiatives such as the Bougainvillean Women's Forum in May 2003, which brought women from across Bougainville together to discuss important issues ranging from weapons disposal to post-conflict law and order problems. The meeting developed

strategies to tackle these issues including the distribution of information regarding women's rights to encourage women's participation in community life, leadership and decision-making; and community workshops to address violence in Bougainville communities, particularly domestic violence.

Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, activities funded under Australia's Community Resettlement Program are supporting women's participation in the peace-building process; contributing to women's economic and social empowerment through, for example, support for the Sri Lankan Women's Development Federation and other community-based organisations to enhance health and increase family income; and assisting in community resettlement and rehabilitation following the signing of a ceasefire agreement in February 2002.

Iraq

Australia is working closely with United Nations agencies in Iraq, including UNICEF, to provide development assistance targeted at the most vulnerable groups in the community, including women and children.

Middle East

Many of the activities that the Australian Government funds through multilateral agencies and non-government organisations in the Palestinian territories have a specific focus on assisting women and children affected by the current violence as a result of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Of particular note is a current project operating in Gaza, which provides counselling and medical services to the victims of domestic violence and is conducting an extensive campaign to increase awareness of this issue in the community.