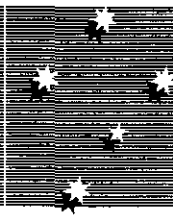


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UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

26 October 2006

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

Statement by H.E. Mr Robert Hill Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations

(Check against delivery)

Mr President, Australia recognises the critical role women play in peace and security. We are a strong supporter of, and advocate for, SCR 1325 and have been ever since its inception. We demonstrate this commitment in both our domestic actions and through our support of countries in our region in their efforts to understand and implement SCR 1325.

For example, we have an ongoing program of training on implementation of the resolution for personnel from within the Australian Defence Forces and military personnel from other countries in the Asia Pacific region.

This year, we have also supported a Pacific Islands Forum Regional Workshop on Gender, Conflict, Peace and Security – the first of its kind in the Pacific. It was attended by policy makers, representatives from military and law enforcement agencies, and women's NGOs from all 16 Pacific Islands Forum countries. The workshop outcomes are now guiding follow-up work on gender, peace and security. We stand ready to assist wherever appropriate with these activities.

Also in the Asia Pacific, we are supporting two NGO projects that aim to enhance advocacy and action towards full implementation of SCR 1325. They focus on strengthening regional information sharing; increasing awareness of women's role in national, regional and international peace-building efforts; and training key policy makers in the region and NGOs on the implementation of SCR 1325. They will also develop a

regional network of women whose names can be put forward by their respective governments for nomination for UN Peacekeeping Missions positions.

Mr President, domestically Australia is also taking steps to back our support for SCR 1325 with concrete action. We actively engage women in our peacebuilding efforts -- women military, police and civilian personnel play a key role in our assistance to UN peacekeeping missions and bilateral and regional endeavours such as the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands.

More broadly, gender equality has been clearly articulated as an overarching principle in the new White Paper on Australia's aid program. A new Gender Policy is being developed to underpin this commitment and practical guidelines have been developed to address policy issues and operational strategies for promoting the role of women, including in peace-building.

Mr President,

Advances have been made in understanding and operationalising the links between gender, development, human rights, peace, security and justice. SCR 1325 reaffirms the role of women in preventing and resolving conflicts and encourages making women central to negotiating peace agreements, peacekeeping operations and reconstructing societies stricken by war. It makes a **gender perspective** and **gender equality** relevant to **all** Security Council actions.

We stress, however, that the concerns of women must be addressed, not just in the early stages of peace processes, but also in post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction and broader development efforts. Gender equality is fundamental to not just achieving peace but also longer-term development and the prevention of conflict.

Australia strongly supports SCR 1325. We will continue to find tangible ways through our aid program, through our involvement in peacekeeping missions, including regional missions, and domestically, to implement SCR 1325.

In closing Mr President, I would like to congratulate our regional neighbour, Fiji -- for setting an example in the region by including key elements of SCR1325 in their national women's plan of action. We are confident Fiji will also make a valuable contribution on these issues through their membership of the Peacebuilding Commission, which is tasked with integrating a gender perspective into all of its work.