

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

Statement by H.E. Mrs. Viotti, Representative of Brazil

I thank the Secretary-General for his remarks and for his report (S/2011/598*). I also warmly welcome to the Council Ambassador Lazarous Kapambwe, President of the Economic and Social Council, and Ms. Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director of UN-Women, and thank them for their briefings. Let me also thank the representative of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security for her intervention.

The women and peace and security agenda has been a catalyst for greater civil society engagement with the Council. This has enriched our work, giving us access to new perspectives and information. In all societies, there are real obstacles to women's political participation. Even in countries that have championed women's rights for decades, insidious barriers to true equality persist. Today we gather to consider how to advance further towards women's full engagement in conflict resolution and mediation.

The issue of women's participation in peace talks and other conflict-related negotiations certainly contains more than an element of justice. It is also an issue of effectiveness, which has a direct impact on the success of conflict resolution and mediation efforts. Women can bring to the table unique perspectives on issues such as impunity, accountability, and justice. If these perspectives are addressed in negotiations, the chance of achieving a sustainable peace will be much greater.

Brazil is encouraged by the progress made in taking forward the indicators on women and peace and security. We underline the importance of their close adherence to the letter of the relevant Security Council resolutions. Indicators, however, are not an end in themselves. They help us to gain a better understanding of the situations and to assess progress made towards our goals. In that context, we welcome and support the strategic framework that the Secretary-General has presented to guide the United Nations implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

Last month, during the general debate and at an event on women's political participation, President Dilma Rousseff made it clear that the empowerment of women is high on Brazil's agenda. We have enacted advanced legislation on the protection of women, established specialized police stations for women's issues, and put women at the centre of our Bolsa Familia cash transfer programme. These are valuable experiences that we are ready to share with other countries, including those emerging from conflict.

Brazil is deeply engaged in cooperation activities with a number of countries emerging from conflict. In Brazil, the participation of women in the decision-making processes that deal with those issues has been steadily increasing, in keeping with the broad trend observed in Brazilian politics more generally, both in the executive and legislative branches. Today, nearly a third of the ministers in President Dilma's Cabinet are women, including many of those charged with core Government responsibilities. Women have also moved to the forefront of Brazilian diplomacy, occupying more and higher-level postings in our foreign service.

I would like to conclude by stressing a crucial point. The Council's support to empowering women in conflict and post-conflict situations is very important. However, it cannot stand on its own. The effective and sustainable political participation of women depends on social inclusion and economic opportunity. The work of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and UN-Women in this regard requires our full support if we are to achieve the goals of the women and peace and security agenda.