

Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Resolution 1888
Wednesday, 30 September, 2009

Statement by H.E Mr. Zhang Yesui, Representative of China to the United Nations

First, I would like to thank you, Madam President, for presiding over today's meeting in person and the Secretary-General for the statement that he has just made.

China condemns all acts of violence against women in conflict situations, including sexual violence. We call on all parties to conflicts to abide by international humanitarian law and international human rights law. We call on Governments to investigate and punish the perpetrators of such crimes against women. We also call on all countries to adopt measures for their early accession to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

In view of the above, the Chinese delegation voted in favour of resolution 1820 (2008) in April last year and of resolution 1888 (2009) that we have just adopted. Here, we would like to express our appreciation for the efforts of Ambassador Rice and the flexible approach and constructive attitude of the United States Mission during the consultations.

With regard to improving the protection of women in armed conflict, I would like to underscore the following three points.

First, Governments bear primary responsibility for protecting women and combating crimes of sexual violence. The international community should provide effective assistance in that regard. While the primary responsibility for implementing resolutions 1820 (2008) and 1888 (2009) lies with Governments, both conflict-affected countries and those in post-conflict situations are often faced with many difficulties. Therefore, the international and donor communities should provide generous assistance to help their capacity-building efforts. At the same time, I would like to stress that the provision of external support and assistance should comply with the principles of the United Nations Charter and should respect the wishes of the country concerned while not undermining its sovereignty.

Secondly, women's participation in the different stages of a peace process should be strengthened and attention should be paid to their status and their role. The rights and interests of women must be respected and protected throughout the entire peace process and their special needs and concerns heeded. They should be given greater participation and more decision-making power. In recent years, the Secretariat has taken many positive steps to increase the number of senior women officials and female heads of United Nations special missions. We hope that those efforts will continue in the future.

Thirdly, efforts should be made to encourage and support the participation of civil society in the protection of women. Many colleagues in non-governmental organizations work on the ground under difficult conditions to promote the protection of women's rights and interests. Their work should be acknowledged. China supports them in their continuing constructive role to protect women in situations of armed conflict. We encourage them to continue their engagement with other United Nations agencies, especially those directly involved in women's issues, as well as to put forward reasonable proposals in that regard.

The Chinese Government has always paid great attention to improving the status of women and protecting their rights and interests. We would like to work together with the international community in our common effort to reduce acts of sexual violence in the world and to achieve the goals in the area of women and peace and security.