

Check against Delivery

Security Council Open Debate on the Implementation of Resolution 1325
(2000) on Women, Peace and Security

Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping
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Mr President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great honor to address the Council for the first time at this annual Open Debate to review progress on implementation of Resolution 1325.

It is no exaggeration to say that in the 8 years since its adoption, Resolution 1325 has changed the way we do business in peacekeeping. From our planning processes, to guidance development, training, staffing and operational priority-setting, we are ensuring that gender issues are accorded due priority. This Resolution has, moreover, galvanized women in post-conflict countries to demand greater accountability from us to respond to gender issues during post-conflict transitions. Whether in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), in Kosovo or Cote d'Ivoire, women have sought to establish regular channels of communication with the leadership of our missions. We have sought to standardize this practice of regular consultations between women's groups and mission leadership, through a recently-issued Checklist for senior managers, which underlines their personal responsibility for implementing Resolution 1325. Indeed, we as peacekeepers understand all too clearly that our efforts to avoid conflict relapses in fragile post-conflict countries, can only succeed if we ensure that all members of society have an equal stake in safeguarding the peace dividend.

The theme of this year's Open Debate: **Women's full involvement in efforts to maintain and promote peace and security**, serves as an important reminder of the core principle that underlines Resolution 1325, namely that women in post-conflict countries are not merely victims of war, but agents of change, with immense contributions to make to the decision-making agenda.

In the peacekeeping context, the clearest entry points to support women's participation in decision-making are through the political process, and through reform of security institutions. Our experiences over the last 8 years have highlighted some important lessons worth sharing with this forum.

Lessons learned from supporting women's access to elected office

In recent years, we have supported the participation of women in elections in a number of countries including Afghanistan, Burundi, Haiti, Liberia and Nepal. In most cases we have facilitated an unprecedented registration of female voters. We have also seen significant progress in the election of women to political office, particularly in situations where we have worked with political parties and national authorities to adopt constitutional quota guarantees for women, such as in Burundi, Afghanistan and Nepal.

Our experience through these processes has taught us that it is not enough to have women voting or being elected to office. The bigger challenge is ensuring that women in elected offices stay in these positions and that they help implement gender-sensitive policies.

In Timor-Leste for example, 4 women parliamentarians quit office within the first three months of their election to office in 2002. To create an enabling environment for women's political participation, we must therefore first invest in providing technical support to those who are unfamiliar with constitution making, and with the working of formal political procedures and legislative processes. This is as true today for the DRC, as it is for Nepal.

Second, we must support networking platforms and cross-party caucuses for women in political office, to enable them to strengthen their power base in advocating for gender-sensitive laws. In Timor for example, UNMIT and UNIFEM are supporting a cross-party representation of women to fight discriminatory practices against women in politics.

Third, we must provide training support to women politicians as well as their male counterparts, to ensure that they promote legislation on issues of direct concern to women. In the lead-up to elections in Burundi in 2005, our gender unit facilitated strategic planning sessions between some women running for electoral office, and peacekeeping personnel from rule of law and human rights components, in order to support them to set priorities for addressing real issues of concern to women at grassroots levels.

Fourth, our role as standard-setters requires that in all negotiations with national authorities, we must underline the importance of women's participation. In Darfur, UNAMID's continued appeals for women's participation in the peace process has defined a space for women to express their views and has encouraged rebel groups and the Government to have women among their negotiating teams.

Exercising our standard-setting role also requires that we have more women in senior positions both within DPKO and DFS and at the field level in peacekeeping missions. Over the last year, we have made some modest progress in this regard.

At the headquarters level, the appointment of Ms. Susan Malcorra to the post of Under-Secretary-General for Field Support has enabled us to maintain gender balance at the highest level of decision-making in peacekeeping. At the D2 level, three new women have been appointed in the last year: Ms Donna Maxfield as Chief of Staff, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu as Director of the Policy, Evaluation and Training Division, and Ms. Margaret Carey as Director of the Africa Division. Our first female Deputy Police Adviser, Ms. Anne-Marie Orlor has also recently been appointed to the Police Division.

At the field level, we have also appointed two women as Deputy Special Representatives in the last year: Ms. Rima Salah to MINURCAT, and Ms. Leila Zerrougui to MONUC. This brings to 6, the current number of women Special Representatives and Deputy Special Representatives in our peacekeeping missions.

Lessons learned from women's participation in the security sector

Our experience in peacekeeping has also underlined the importance of supporting women's leadership aspirations in situations where we have a mandate to support reform of the security sector. The percentage of women recruited to the police sector in such missions for example, has been higher than the global average, which is presently under 10 percent. Yet in Timor, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Kosovo, the percentage of women in the police force averages between 12-20 percent. The lessons from this are clear.

First, targeted outreach to enhance recruitment of women to the security sector, and the use of special measures to offset women's qualification gaps - as was in case in Liberia - has proven successful. Second, increased

representation of women in the police can facilitate greater attention and responses to sexual and gender-based violence in the post-conflict period. In the DRC for example, the commendable work of a female police officer, Major Honorine who heads a Women and Children Protection Unit in South Kivu, is contributing greatly to efforts to combat sexual violence against women and girls. Similarly in Liberia, we have observed that the increased recruitment of women to the police sector is facilitating more serious attention to sexual violence crimes and helping to change the attitude of male officers to dealing with these crimes. Both of these examples demonstrate how the presence of women in the police can enable better responses to gender-specific crimes in post-conflict environments. In Darfur, the presence of women as of chief of security and as deputy commissioner in UNAMID is also sending a positive signal to local women and the state authorities, about the capacity of women to successfully exercise leadership in non-traditional professions.

Third, just as in the political arena, retention of women within security institutions requires investments in building support networks to enable them to combat discrimination, sexual harassment and marginalization within low-ranking jobs.

In working to promote gender-sensitive policing practices, DPKO has recently issued gender guidelines for UN Police in peacekeeping missions, to enable them to address gender concerns in the advisory, mentoring and training support they provide to local police in post-conflict countries.

We have also recently joined forces with UNIFEM and UN Action to develop guidance to better-assist military peacekeepers to protect women and girls from sexual violence.

Our efforts to increase the number of uniformed peacekeeping personnel to better respond to operational priorities however remains a challenge. To reverse this trend, we need troop and police contributing countries to nominate greater numbers of women, particularly as military observers and as police officers. This will ensure that we reach out better to women in the local population in our areas of operation. It would further enable us to respond more effectively to gender-related challenges such sexual violence crimes. Women peacekeepers also serve as role models and standard-setters for local women. We have seen evidence of this across all our missions.

We count on your cooperation as Member States to enable us to lead by example. It is an unfortunate fact that we have yet to appoint a woman to a Force Commander or Deputy Force Commander position in any peacekeeping mission. I would like to challenge Member States to provide nominations of women to future senior military appointments in our missions and I will proudly report on this to you next year.

The role of women in civil society

Mr. President, another important lesson we have learned to date is that our strategy for advancing women's leadership in peace processes must incorporate support to women's organizations in civil society. Women in civil society can critically support women who are elected to political office to more effectively advance women's rights in post-conflict countries. In the DRC, the adoption of a law on sexual violence in 2006, was greatly facilitated through strategic partnerships between women parliamentarians and women in civil society. In Liberia, women in civil society have also been important allies facilitating outreach activities to recruit more women to the Liberian National Police Service.

Conclusion

Mr. President, through investments in the development of policy, guidance and training in recent years, we have sought to better assist our peacekeeping missions to translate Resolution 1325 into practice. Over the coming year, we will give priority to monitoring effective implementation of all guidance on gender and peacekeeping, whilst also continuing to inform and revise our policies based on the lessons we are generating from the field.

In closing, let me reiterate the full-scale commitment of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to cooperating with this Council, as you exercise your oversight role to guide implementation of Resolution 1325 over the coming year. I urge you to give attention to women's participation and contributions to peace processes when you assign mandates to peacekeeping missions, when you undertake field visits, when you request briefings from the leadership of peacekeeping missions, and in the course of reviewing periodic reports from our missions. Your commitment must extend beyond this once-a-year gathering.

I thank you.