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United Nations
Security Council

Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security

Statement by
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Ambassador
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(Check against delivery)

Mr. President,

We welcome this yearly stock-taking session in the Security Council on the implementation of Resolution 1325. We also welcome the fact that the Security Council has to an increasing extent included a gender approach into its work for maintaining international peace and security. This is the approach that should be integrated into all UN activities.

Response to conflict is more effective and the ground is better prepared for sustainable peace and security when both women and men are involved. Women's experiences of war provide them with a knowledge base that has to be utilized by engaging with women and by involving them in conflict prevention, crisis management, peacebuilding and reconstruction. Women serving in the operations can more easily reach out to local women. The participation of women in peacekeeping operations can further serve as a positive example towards the local population and can contribute to building confidence between the mission and the local community

It is important that all those involved in operations are sensitised to gender issues and understand the gender dimensions of conflicts. This can also ensure responses that are more appropriate to the needs of the local population as a whole and contribute to the effectiveness of the operation. Therefore 1325 is not only an issue for women, but equally for men.

Mr. President,

There has been progress in the implementation of 1325. We have to admit, however, that a lot of work still needs to be done. During the debate on resolution 1820 one member state put it rather bluntly: It is not self-evident that in all states there is the necessary political will to implement 1325. This political will is needed in order to change deep-seated traditions which discriminate against women. We must also remain firm in the fight against impunity; amnesties encompassing rape or sexual and gender-based violence are simply not acceptable. In an open and cooperative spirit we must remain determined to do all we can to overcome these challenges.

We will need this political will as actors of the international community, too. In this, the UN system can have a major role to play in ensuring that women's wider involvement in peace processes, crisis prevention and management and in post conflict operations becomes a standard practice. In this regard the first step is to ensure that Resolution 1325 is fully included into the mandates of peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations, as well as the mandates of Special Representatives and

Special Envoys. Consequently, Member States are to hold the Special Representatives accountable for the implementation of the 1325 elements of their mandate at the time of their reporting to the Council, by asking what has been done in order to include women in the peacebuilding processes they lead.

Mr. President,

We need to join our forces and to work at different levels. We need to start our work at home and examine what we can do to get more women involved, and to have a gender perspective integrated into conflict prevention, crisis management and peace building. A National Action Plan on the implementation of 1325 can be a way forward in this field.

Finland adopted its National Action Plan in September. The National Action Plan serves as a useful reminder of what we could be doing better. For example, Finland is focusing more of its attention on gender equality in the recruitment for civilian and military crisis management. We strive to have more women involved in crisis management, and pledge to support female candidates for operational leadership positions. To ensure women's participation and leadership, President Tarja Halonen has been active in supporting concrete actions, such as the International Colloquium on Women's Empowerment, Leadership Development, International Peace and Security to be held in Liberia next year, and the International Women's Commission for a Just and Sustainable Palestinian-Israeli Peace.

To conclude, I would like to stress that the guiding principle in the National Action Plan is that women should not only be seen as victims, but as capacity, and often as a driving force, for building global security. Let us all be guided in our work by the wise words of the Secretary-General during the SC discussion on Resolution 1820 in June: *"By creating a culture that punishes violence and elevates women to their rightful role, we can lay the foundation for lasting stability, where women are not victims of violence, but agents of peace."*

I thank you, Mr. President.