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STATEMENT

BY

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AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

AT THE

Open Debate of the U.N. Security Council

ON

"THE ROLES OF WOMEN IN THE CONSOLIDATION OF PEACE"

New York, Thursday, 26 October, 2006

Mr. President,

I wish to thank you for taking the initiative in organizing this debate on "Women, Peace and Security" in pursuit of the objectives of this Council's resolution 1325 (2000).

Let me join the preceding speaker in thanking the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, the Executive Director, UNIFEM and the Assistant Secretary-General, Peacebuilding Support Office for the respective briefings and updates. We also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report on this item, which not only covers the extensive efforts made to implement the Resolution but also illuminates the way forward.

Mr. President,

On 31st October, 2000, when the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, it provided a groundbreaking mandate, aimed at achieving the full and equal participation of women in all peace and security initiatives, along with the mainstreaming of gender issues. The Resolution also outlined the range of actions required to achieve that objective.

As we mark the sixth anniversary of the groundbreaking resolution, it is appropriate that we take stock of the implementation of the resolution to assess its achievement, examine good practices and lessons learned, identify challenges and gaps and take remedial measures. On balance, we are of the view that we have only paid lip service to the aspirations underpinning this epoch-making resolution and its implementation has been inconsistent, with mixed and varying results. This is especially true in most developing countries such as Ghana.

Mr. President,

But the way forward is within our grasp. The Secretary General in his annual report to the Council has adequately responded to these challenges by putting forward several concrete recommendations on a number of key priority areas, which merit our consideration. These include, among others, vigorous engagement with Member States, development of an effective accountability, monitoring and reporting system, enhanced coordination across the UN and effective as well as adequate resource allocation.

The ultimate purpose of gender mainstreaming to eradicate all the factors that reinforce the vulnerability of women in society and to overcome this we need to change our mind set and make more determined efforts, especially at the

national level making optimal use of both existing structures and the creation of new ones, where necessary.

In this regard, I would like to comment briefly on some of the proposals that my delegation believes hold the keys to addressing our concerns. First and foremost, we must take seriously the national level implementation. In designing programmes for our women, the content should take into account the high prevalence of illiteracy and the useful nature all of which place them outside the mainstream and therefore out of reach of most programmes. Indeed, the overall implementation of SCR 1325 has been ad-hoc and haphazard at the national level. To date only a few governments have developed national action plans for 1325 implementation, most of which, ironically, are found in the developed world and are neither conflict nor post-conflict countries.

It is easy to call on the UN and international community to act, but as Member States we must acknowledge our own role and heed to the call "to continue to implement resolution 1325 (2005), including through the development of national action plans or other national level strategies" as stated in the Council's PRST of October 2005. Achieving the goals we have set for ourselves simply requires a concerted response to accountability at the national level. There should be better cooperation and coordination between the relevant public institutions that deal with peace-keeping and women's affairs. In my country, for example, this will apply to the Ministries for Women Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Internal Affairs and Defence.

Troup contributing countries should mainstream gender issues in their recruitment, training and development, including in UN peacekeeping operations. In this respect, the particular needs of conflict ridden or post conflict countries must be taken on board in order to translate the commitments made into concrete measures that will improve the situation of women. Member States and partners must continue to give the needed financial support to the implementation of 1325. An effective and robust accountability, monitoring and reporting system should be developed. However, without timely and clearly earmarked resources, it may not move beyond the drawing table. It is also of cardinal importance that in drawing up the national action plan, women at the grassroot level or in communities are encouraged to play a positive role in this exercise in partnership with civil society.

At the global level, in the current climate of UN reform, the time is propitious to thoroughly examine and strengthen the intergovernmental oversight and provide the ultimate layer of oversight to review both national implementation of SCR 1325, and the implementation by UN entities. Further, intergovernmental oversight is woefully inadequate. The only mechanism developed by the Security Council to track its own implementation has been

the annual open debate and the Arria Formula style meeting on women, peace and security. The Council should play a more proactive role by setting up a mechanism for a more systematic, effective and coordinated implementation of resolution 1325 in its work by designating a SC member to serve as a focal point and an expert level working group on women, peace and security consisting of Council members.

It is our view that wholly missing from the Secretary-General's recommendation is action at the regional level. We recognize that in some developed regions, efforts have been made to implement resolution 1325 but again, ironically, not much has been done. Given the history of conflicts in West Africa, a region like ours would benefit from such an exercise.

Mr. President,

The main instrument for implementing SCR 1325 at the UN System level is the Secretary-General's System-wide Action Plan developed by the Inter-Agency task Force on Women, Peace and Security. However, its shortcomings have detracted it from its overall purpose, thereby making it ineffective in accurately tracking progress, as clearly articulated in the Secretary-General's report. It is also not encouraging to read that a third of the entities within the UN failed to respond to the questionnaire on this issue, which may be interpreted as lack of commitment on the part of these bodies. We fully support the Secretary General's call for the System-wide Action Plan to be revised and renewed beyond 2007 in order to remedy its shortcomings and make it more supportive of the ideals and goals of resolution 1325.

The recently established Peace building Commission (PBC) has an important role to play in all this and we must ensure that our core commitment to gender equality in line with resolution 1325 is fully integrated in its work. We expect, in this connection, to be more proactive. The Inter-Agency Task Force could be replicated at the country level where this aspect of their work could be enhanced.

Mr. President

SCR 1325 holds us all to a new standard of accountability both during and after conflict. What we should do is to reinforce the political momentum and start more conscious initiatives and activities to intensify the implementation of the resolution. This is the surest way that we can turn gender equality commitment into reality.

I thank you, Mr. President.