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Security Council
5294th Meeting

Women and Peace and Security

Statement by
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Mr. President,

Thank you very much for taking the initiative to organize today's open debate on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000). The issue of "Women, Peace and Security" is of great interest and of paramount importance across the globe, for many countries in various parts of the world in conflict or in post-conflict situations and the United Nations.

Greece fully aligns herself with the statement to be made by the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. President,

Five years ago, the Security Council voted resolution 1325 (2000). It is a landmark. It called for women's equal participation and their full involvement in conflict prevention efforts, peace negotiations, peacekeeping operations, humanitarian assistance, post-conflict reconstruction and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration initiatives, as well as their protection from human rights abuses.

Since then Member States, United Nations entities and civil society actors have made significant efforts in implementing the resolution by developing policies, action plans, guidelines and indicators; increasing access to gender expertise; providing training; promoting consultation with and participation of women; increasing attention to human rights.

Despite significant achievements, major challenges remain in all areas.

Mr. President,

Resolution 1325 stressed the role of women in the prevention of conflict and the need to increase their role in decision-making in conflict prevention. There is no doubt women's contributions to preventing conflicts are particularly important in "people to people" diplomacy. Women can play a critical role in building the capacity of communities to prevent new or recurrent violence. We should assist more effectively into this direction.

We welcome the various initiatives taken by Member States, the United Nations and civil society in supporting and increasing the representation of women in peace negotiations, mainstreaming gender perspectives into peace agreements. Developing and implementing post-conflict strategies and programs taking into account women's needs is also very important. We must encourage and strengthen all these initiatives.

This principle is as old as our world. In this context let me remind the anti-war masterpiece *Lysistrata* written in 411 BC by Aristophanes. This comedy focused on the effects of the Peloponnesian war and the efforts displayed by an Athenian woman named Lysistrata to stop the war and secure peace through negotiations with support of other women from the enemy cities of Sparta and Corinth.

A major element for the full implementation of the resolution 1325 (2000) is the incorporation of a gender perspective in post-conflict reconstruction efforts is. All relevant actors should do more to ensure the inclusion of the gender aspect in the reconstruction strategies and programmes.

Building and sustaining peace in a coherent and holistic manner and guaranteeing a smooth and enduring transition to peace was one of the great concerns in the recent High Level Event. The creation of a Peace-building Commission and the Peace-building Support Office to ensure this transition gathered extensive support. In this context we must ensure the Peace-building Commission will contribute meaningfully to the full implementation of Resolution 1325(2000). We strongly believe that the Peace-building Commission offers the international community a major opportunity to ensure that a gender perspective becomes a normal part of any peace-building process.

Mr. President,

Gender-based violence in armed conflict is another key area of the resolution 1325 (2000). Preventing and responding to this violence remains one of our greatest priorities.

Despite improved prevention and protection mechanisms, the response of the international community remains inadequate. In our view we should exercise increased pressure on parties to armed conflict to cease sexual and gender-based violence, including trafficking in persons, and ending impunity.

Compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law must be ensured.

Preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse of local populations by humanitarian and peacekeeping personnel is a serious impediment to the achievement of the goals of resolution 1325 (2000) and remains one of our greater priorities. We must express our satisfaction for the significant progress in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) by the measures taken by the Secretary-General. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations has increasingly paid attention to issues concerning women, peace and security and gender concerns are raised in all new peacekeeping.

Mr. President,

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes in general remain primarily focused on male ex-combatants even though women and girls are involved in armed groups. The establishment of the Peace-building Commission should contribute to the full implementation of Resolution 1325(2000) and pay increased attention to the needs and contributions of women and girls in post-conflict peace building.

Mr. President,

In Our view, the key issue remains a better implementation of Resolution 1325. We need more systematic gender mainstreaming into all policies and programmes at the international and national level. We should emphasize the need for development of national plans, building alliances, inventing new monitoring devices, giving access to the UN organs of all concerned. Enhanced cooperation with the countries in conflict areas and awareness of key players is a prerequisite.

National initiatives and the national plans are very significant. In this context, I would like to remind that Greece, while holding the EU Presidency, during the first semester of 2003, produced a paper on "The integration of a gender dimension in the EU external relations policies". At the same time we have organized the "Athens Forum", on "Gender, Peace and Foreign Policy: The EU Perspective" (28-30.5.2003).

In this respect we must stress the existing cooperation between the EU and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and its readiness to continue cooperation with other international organizations and international NGOs.

We are pleased to welcome the UN system-wide action plan, presented by the Secretary-General. It will help ensure closer attention to gender perspectives in conflict prevention and peacekeeping activities.

Mr. President

In closing, I will reemphasize that in order to achieve fully the goals set out by Resolution 1325, what is required is continuous, strong political will, concerted action and accountability from all players, national or international, member states, United Nations and civil society organizations.

Thank you Mr. President.