

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security
Tuesday, 26th October 2010, Security Council Chamber (GA-TSC-01)

Statement by H.E. Mr. Wolfe, Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the United Nations

I wish on behalf of the Government of Jamaica to thank you, Sir, for convening this open debate on women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

Resolution 1325 (2000), unanimously adopted by the Security Council 10 years ago brought to light one of history's best-kept secrets: the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women and girls. Recognized as a historic and unprecedented document, the impetus for its adoption was strong. That led to, for the first time, the Security Council devoting an entire meeting to a debate on women's experiences in conflict and post-conflict situations and their contributions to peace.

Ten years on, as we celebrate the anniversary of that watershed event, significant achievements are difficult to identify. It remains a matter of serious concern that women have become caught in the centre of violent conflicts and often become the direct and deliberate victims of the most egregious abuses committed by parties to armed conflicts. We must therefore strengthen our resolve to eliminating the disproportionate effects of war on civilians, particularly women and children.

Over the years, the Council's presidential statements have called on Member States, the United Nations system and civil society to commit to the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), including through the development of strategies and action plans, the establishment of monitoring and accountability mechanisms at the international and national levels, and ensuring the full and equal participation of women in all peace processes. But some of us have not yet heeded this call.

My delegation recognizes the important work that the United Nations has undertaken in increasing the representation and participation of women at high levels within the United Nations system. The most recent instances of this were the appointments of the Under-Secretary-General for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Executive Director of the new gender entity, UN Women, and of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Let me once again reiterate Jamaica's heartiest congratulations to both women and assure them of our continued support in fulfilment of their mandates.

Nevertheless, we believe that much more needs to be done, and in this we call upon Member States to play an integral role in ensuring the appointment of qualified women at high levels.

My delegation is aware that resolution 1325 (2000) does not exist in a vacuum. Many resolutions, including 1820 (2008) and 1888 (2009), which focus on sexual violence in situations of armed conflict, were created on the momentum generated by resolution 1325 (2000). Treaties, conventions, statements and reports also preceded it, and thus formed its foundation and an integral part of the women, peace and security policy framework.

Although they have been late in coming, my delegation is pleased to note that on this the tenth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), there are now signs of increased commitment and action by the Security Council to ensure that the goals of the resolution are fully implemented. The Security Council's expressed intention to take action on a comprehensive set of indicators on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) is a very encouraging development. These indicators would represent a clear step forward for improving accountability and the implementation of the groundbreaking resolution.

As we all know, resolution 1325 (2000) reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, and also in peacebuilding. We acknowledge that, in some parts of the world, women have become increasingly effective participants at the peace table and have continued to assist in creating an enabling environment for conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. However, progress in these areas has not been consistent.

Jamaica has played its part in ensuring the participation of women in peace and security over the years through its increased presence in United Nations peacekeeping operations. We have also been encouraging the recruitment of women police officers to peacekeeping missions, being keenly aware of the impact that their experience and service have had on the United Nations and host country's recognition of the role of women in peace and security. Our women peacekeepers, despite serving in some of the most difficult, high-threat environments and inhospitable places and faced with diseases and violence, have nonetheless been having a positive impact on the lives of women and girls in conflict situations.

Our women peacekeepers have increasingly acted as role models in the various local environments, inspiring by their very example women and girls in the often male-dominated societies where they serve, demonstrating to communities that peace is inextricably linked to equality between men and women, and persuading disadvantaged women and girls that they can indeed achieve. Our women peacekeepers continue to be dedicated to the tasks to which they have been assigned. They have made tangible differences in the lives of many, while showing the world the caring and committed face of the United Nations.

It is clear that peacekeeping long ago evolved from its traditional role of silencing the guns, and has been redefined increasingly as an avenue for fostering a culture of sustainable peace in countries devastated by conflicts.

Today, Jamaica recommit itself to ensuring that this vital work will continue, through active participation as long as it is needed. We reaffirm our collective commitment to building a world free from the scourge of war. The persistence of violence against women in situations of armed conflict detracts from the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, whose targets in many ways are intertwined with the goals of resolution 1325 (2000).

Today's celebration is therefore a reminder that the high cost of peacekeeping and of reconstruction in post-conflict situations weighs heavily in favour of prevention and peacebuilding measures to address the root causes of deadly conflicts. Women have proven instrumental in building bridges rather than walls. Women are entitled to an active role in rebuilding their societies. Their ability to influence the direction of change and to create a more just social, economic and political order should not be overlooked. Gender equality therefore is an essential precursor to democratic governance and inclusive and sustainable human development.

Finally, the United Nations Population Fund *State of World Population 2010* report — “From Conflict and Crisis to Renewal: Generations of Change” — speaks of the three Rs, resilience, renewal and redefining roles between boys and girls and men and women. It further shows how communities and civil society are healing old wounds and moving forward. We concur that more still needs to be done to ensure that women have access to services and have a voice in peace deals or reconstruction plans. But we believe that recovery from conflict and disaster presents a unique opportunity to rectify inequalities, ensure equal protection under the law and create space for positive change.

Thus, by ensuring that all aspects of resolution 1325 (2000) are implemented, we will give women the chance to use their voice and their advocacy in ensuring sustainable peace for all.