

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security – 29 October 2008
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Mr. Dabbashi (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): Eight years have passed since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). Generally speaking, we are satisfied with the implementation of the resolution by the United Nations and on the national level by States throughout the world. However, the situation of women and girls in conflict zones remains a source of great concern, as shown in the Secretary-General's report (S/2008/622) submitted for our consideration today. Resolution 1325 (2000) has helped a growing number of women to overcome the obstacles confronting them along the road to participation in decision-making processes, supported the promotion of women's rights and contributed to peace and security throughout the world. Shortcomings remain, however, in the implementation of the resolution, especially in conflict zones.

We recognize that the greatest share of responsibility for the implementation of the resolution lies with Member States. Indeed, the United Nations cannot provide for greater female participation in peacekeeping operations if Member States do not ensure that there are sufficient women candidates for peacekeeping missions. One cannot expect the promotion of women's rights and their advancement and protection in conflict areas and in other States if there are no national strategies for that.

We agree with the statement in the Secretary-General's report that there is no single agreed approach for dealing with the issue of the gender gap. We must take into account the specificities and needs of each State. We reaffirm yet again that it is the responsibility of States to adopt effective national legislation to promote the rights of women, to eliminate the culture of impunity and to encourage greater participation by women in decision-making processes. We should also undertake media campaigns and set up education programmes to raise awareness of women's rights and to eliminate cultural discrimination against them.

In terms of the African continent, we are satisfied to see the commitment shown by African States to promoting gender equality and empowerment of women, in conformity with the Constitutive Act of the African Union. We pay tribute to the progress achieved so far at the regional level. Indeed, a final draft of African Union policies for women has been elaborated with the assistance of civil society organizations. That final draft will be submitted to the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in the preparations leading up to the declaration of the period from 2010 to 2020 as the African Decade for Women. We should also note that the recently established African Women's Rights Observatory is an important tool to ensure follow-up in the enforcement of women's rights in Africa and to take into account the need to overcome the gender gap.

Despite all of those efforts by the United Nations, the African Union and individual States, we are seriously concerned by sexual violence against women in conflict areas, whether during conflict or in postconflict situations. Effective prevention and response, in our view, requires comprehensive, coordinated and multidimensional long-term efforts involving all stakeholders. We believe that certain measures adopted by peacekeeping operations in conflict areas are effective and, to a large extent, contribute to preventing sexual violence against women. For example, there are policewomen deployed in conflict zones and 24-hour peacekeeping police patrols in refugee and displaced persons' camps.

When we refer to violence against women in conflict zones, we must bear in mind the violence and psychological terror visited upon Palestinian women suffering under Israeli occupation, in brazen violation of all the principles of international law. We can all imagine the terrible suffering of pregnant women who give birth at checkpoints because they are prevented from reaching hospitals. We can all imagine the suffering of thousands of women deprived of drugs and food and whose vital needs remain unmet, including in the Gaza Strip. We can all imagine the suffering of women who see their children killed before their eyes, or women whose children are arrested and then languish in Israeli jails without being brought to trial. I mention the suffering of the Palestinian women because, unfortunately, the Secretary-General's report made no mention of it.

We believe that a drastic solution to the problem of violence against women is to resolve conflicts, to settle them at the very outset, to ensure that peace prevails, to set up an effective and transparent security sector, to accelerate development in post-conflict States and to strengthen the role of women in all fields. That is something in which the United Nations specialized agencies can participate by providing assistance to national efforts towards women's advancement through the financing of education and training programmes focused as a priority on women and girls. Finally, I wish to reiterate the support of my country for all of the recommendations included in paragraph 97 of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/622) to accelerate the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).