

Security Council Open debate on women, peace and security – 5th October 2009

Statement by Ambassador Hilario G. Davide, Jr., Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations

Philippines

Mr. President,

I thank you for giving the Philippines this opportunity to address the Council on this 9th year anniversary of the landmark Security Council Resolution 1325.

My delegation congratulates Viet Nam's Presidency of the Council for giving priority to a debate on the issues of *Women, Peace and Security*, with the theme "Responding to the needs of women and girls in post-conflict situations for sustainable peace and security, and for circulating a concept paper in relation thereto. This debate will be a valuable contribution to the forthcoming commemoration of the 15th year of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

The Philippines forthwith submits that any debate in the United Nations concerning women must always be rooted in the solemn declarations in its Charter reaffirming faith in the equal rights of men and women, and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizing that the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. This is the only strategy that removes us from mere sound and fury on so crucial an issue as **women**.

The role of women in matters of peace and security is particularly significant to the Philippines. It was under the leadership of our recently departed President Corazon Aquino, a woman and a housewife, who brought the Philippines out of a long dictatorship. She was a standard bearer for those who suffered under tyranny, and still standing, thereafter became a symbol of strength and hope.

This experience is enshrined in the 1987 Constitution of the Philippines through a provision which reads: "The State recognizes the role of women in *nation-building*, and shall ensure the fundamental equality before the law of women and men." Its spirit continues to permeate throughout the public sphere. The incumbent President is a woman, our second in about 25 years. The Supreme Court during my watch as Chief Justice undertook unprecedented moves to ensure that women benefit equally and participate directly in the Judiciary's structures, processes and development programs and activities. Just last August, the Congress passed a *Magna Carta for Women* which mandates the representation and participation of women in policy making. We are currently conducting field consultations for a National Action Plan on Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 in various regions of the Philippines. These consultations will culminate in a national consultation in Manila on 19 October 2009. The Philippine Action Plan on 1325 and 1820 will be the blueprint that various stakeholders will use to ensure that women are able to meaningfully participate in all the peace processes and decision-making on peace and security issues in both the formal and informal realms.

We know that in this time of asymmetric warfare, use of sexual violence against women and girls as a weapon of war poses an even more fundamental and pernicious concern. It is a weapon that is intended to humiliate and destroy women both as individuals, and as the heart and spirit of social order and the foundation of family and community life.

It should then follow that within the peace and reconstruction processes, the woman's voice must be an indispensable one in all phases. Women are often the primary figures in the education and upbringing of our children and, therefore, primarily carry the effects of conflict through the generations. Without this voice of stability and sense of community, children grow up knowing only war as their livelihood.

Mr. President,

Today's debate must not just be an occasion to celebrate the role of women. It must be to celebrate a shift of the international community's approach in post-conflict situations from narrow humanitarian and relief activities to more comprehensive efforts towards sustainable peace. This means greater focus on the concerns and the roles of women in bridging the gap between conflict and post-conflict development. For my delegation, gender-sensitivity in a post-conflict environment would mean paying attention to women's access to employment opportunities and productive assets such

as land, capital, education and training and health services. It also means looking at the role of women in ensuring food security in the community, and prioritizing the conditions at refugee settlements. In short, the rehabilitative approach to post-conflict situations involves a serious consideration of the short-term to long-term development needs of the community concerned.

Mr. President,

My delegation welcomes the resolution that was just adopted by the Council. We are encouraged, among others, by the efforts to improve the resource allocations for gender within the United Nations by enhancing the monitoring of spending for gender-related activities, similar to the system pioneered by the United Nations Development Programme. We are happy to note that at last, as evidenced by operative paragraph 19 of the resolution, an assessment of the needs and challenges of women and girls in post-conflict situations, along with a request for possible responses, including in the area of effective financing, is being systematically done by the UN. It took a whole nine years after the passage of the landmark resolution 1325 before the Council seeks to request a study on women's participation and inclusion in peace-building in the aftermath of a conflict. My delegation believes that such a report is long overdue. Therefore, it should be given the most prompt attention, if the United Nations is to urgently address the situation of millions of women affected by the ravages of war.

Let me conclude with these words of poet William Ross Wallace:

All true trophies of the ages

Are from mother-loved imperaled;

For the hand that rocks the cradle

Is the hand that rules the world.

Thank you.