

**Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security
October 2014, Security Council Chamber**

Statement by Ms. Nguyen Phuong Nga, Permanent Mission of Viet Nam to the United Nations

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 10 member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and my own country, Viet Nam.

We commend your initiative, Madam President, to convene this annual open debate on women and peace and security. We are grateful for the detailed and comprehensive reports and briefings by the Secretary-General, the Assistant Secretary-General and the Executive Director of UN-Women.

ASEAN is heartened by the progress made in the implementation of landmark resolution 1325 (2000) and the subsequent relevant resolutions, as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/693). The role of women and issues related to women, including sexual and gender-based violence, gender equality and social exclusion, have been increasingly integrated in relevant mechanisms and regimes. Women's participation in peace and security issues has been growing across the spectrum. The normative framework has been gradually strengthened and enforced on the ground.

However, there is no room for complacency. More conflicts are raging. More women and girls are fleeing their homes. Basic services are badly needed, especially in health care and education. Sexual violence and organized crime targeting women and girls are still a source of serious concern in many regions. Gaps in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) remain to be addressed as we tackle new challenges.

ASEAN is deeply concerned about the increasing number of refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and stateless people. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 51.2 million people were forcibly displaced in 2013, a staggering 6 million more than the number only a year before. When basic institutions are in tatters, one cannot hope for better basic services for women and girls, let alone ways to address their specific health care needs. Of further concern is the fact that immediate security needs and chaos may force the normative framework and efforts for the protection of women and girls to be neglected and relegated to obscurity. ASEAN therefore welcome the initiative by Argentina to focus on the issue of women and girls as refugees and IDPs.

As we are about to review 15 years of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), ASEAN finds it imperative that the international community, with the United Nations playing a central role, renew our commitment to promote the framework on women and peace and security. ASEAN believes those efforts should focus on the following areas.

First, it goes without saying that, in addressing issues that women face in conflict settings, we must deal with the conditions that give rise to conflicts in the first place. Conflict prevention mechanisms, especially those under United Nations auspices, should be promoted. Political reconciliation, the rule of law, socioeconomic development and poverty eradication are the foundations for sustainable

opportunities for women and girls. Institutions for gender equality and respect for human rights at the national and international levels should be continuously strengthened.

Secondly, women's participation in peace and security matters, especially at decision-making levels, must be enhanced. Their involvement has indeed been proven to be a vital factor in securing peace and promoting reconciliation in many instances. It is therefore essential to mainstream gender-sensitive approaches in promoting more inclusive and effective responses to conflicts, displacement and other humanitarian emergencies. With well-targeted actions to address their specific needs and ensure their full and meaningful participation at all levels, women and girls can thrive as both survivors and leaders.

Thirdly, normative standards on women and peace and security should be further integrated into the relevant regional and national mechanisms. Efforts by ASEAN in the context of the work of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children and regional workshops on women and peace and security are cases in point.

Fourthly, our understanding of many issues relating to women and peace and security and the way forward rely heavily on clear, current, accurate and verifiable data. It is important, therefore, that due care continue to be taken to ensure the integrity of data before reports emanating from the United Nations are released.

Finally, ASEAN looks forward to the upcoming comprehensive review of the 15 years of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) by various United Nations entities, Member States and civil society. We welcome the global study announced by Ireland, the United Arab Emirates and UN-Women last month as a contribution to that process. ASEAN finds it most important that the review gather best practices, examine challenges and propose concrete measures for more effective implementation of the relevant resolutions and frameworks.

Let me conclude by reiterating ASEAN's commitment to working closely with Member States, the United Nations and regional organizations in our joint efforts to safeguard the rights and promote the role of women in conflict-related situations. That commitment stems from our collective understanding that, as women and girls are better off, so is all humankind.