

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security
November 30th 2012, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Ms. Burgstaller Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Nordic countries, namely, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

I would like to begin by thanking the Indian presidency for organizing this debate. I also thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General Michelle Bachelet and Under-Secretary-General Hervé Ladsous for their valuable remarks at the beginning of this meeting. I also wish to express special thanks for the valuable insights of Ms. Bineta Diop on behalf of civil society.

The full implementation of all Security Council resolutions on women and peace and security is a priority for the Nordic countries. The issues at stake are central to the core mandate of the Security Council, namely, the maintenance of peace and security.

We welcome the presidential statement adopted by the Council on 31 October (S/PRST/2012/23). We are also grateful for the report of the Secretary-General (S/2012/732) and fully support its recommendations. The Nordic countries echo the concern about the lack of implementation, as shown by the information collected and analyzed while using the indicators. We call for renewed urgency and greater consistency in implementing the resolutions on women and peace and security, all of which were unanimously adopted and are thus binding and relevant to all Member States.

Not providing protection for women in conflict constitutes serious neglect; not tapping the resources of women in building peace is seriously wasteful.

The Nordic countries support civil society, in particular women's organizations that tirelessly work to prevent and solve conflicts, build peace and stability and defend human rights, while often putting themselves at great personal risk in difficult conditions. Their work contributes to more sustainable and legitimate peace. They deserve our full political and financial support, as well as physical protection.

The Nordic countries work with numerous civil society organizations from many different countries and we plan to do so in the future. The implementation and review of our own national action plans has greatly benefitted from our close cooperation with civil society. This year, through a series of meetings with women's rights advocates from several countries on the Council's agenda, the Security Council has had an opportunity, before renewing mission mandates, to hear directly from women who are working for peace and security in their respective countries. We are encouraged by the steps taken by the Council in its country-specific work to address the concerns brought forward by those women advocates.

The incorporation of a gender perspective in peace and security efforts is not only necessary, but effective and strategically opportune. Not only women, but whole families and communities will benefit; as will national institutions, the overall security situation and the rule of law, which is strengthened through, for example, measures to address impunity for human rights violations, including sexual violence.

Women and men must have full and equal opportunity to participate in all political processes linked to conflict resolution and the promotion of stability, peace and security. That includes conflict prevention, mediation processes at all levels, including contact groups and informal consultations, as well as formal negotiation, peace-agreement implementation mechanisms and donor conferences. It is of particular importance to support women's full and effective participation in post-conflict constitutional and electoral processes, including through special measures and security arrangements. Special attention should also be paid during times of mission drawdown.

That of course requires everyone to do their part. As committed Member States, we commit to supporting women's active participation and to fostering a gender perspective in all our peace and security efforts. That includes promoting women's inclusion in peace processes and ensuring that personnel and troops are adequately trained to take women's rights and perspectives fully into account.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/66/811) on strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution and its annex I, entitled “Guidance for Effective Mediation”. Both the report and the Guidance highlight the importance of the role of women. We call on the Secretary-General to nominate women as chief mediators and special envoys and as members of mediation teams.

Let me finish by commending UN-Women for its crucial work in leading and coordinating the United Nations system work on women and peace and security. We commend the work of the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Margot Wallström. We also welcome the appointment of her successor, Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, and look forward to working closely with her, as well as with the United Nations Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict.

In conclusion, 12 years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), we, the Nordic countries, renew our commitment to the equal right of women to determine the peaceful future of their societies. We recognize that full and effective participation of women and men alike enhances the legitimacy of peace processes, as well as the prospect for a durable and lasting peace. We have a collective responsibility to translate that awareness into further actions.