

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

Statement by Ambassador Mark Lyall Grant, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his introduction this morning and to congratulate Madam Bachelet, SRSG Wallstrom and USG Alain Le Roy and the participating ministers for their important interventions.

I would also like to thank Uganda for leading the Council's efforts to mark the 10th anniversary of resolution 1325. This Council has passed many important resolutions over the decades, but few have changed the way that which we look at conflict. Resolution 1325 did just that. In many respects, it opened the Council's eyes to what now seems obvious: that women are the principal victims of many conflicts, but also that they are essential to preventing and resolving conflict.

The British Foreign Secretary, William Hague, regrets that he is not able to be here today but he has issues a statement today to mark this debate. It quotes:
"Countless women have dedicated their lives, and in some cases sacrificed their lives in order to bring peace to societies ravaged by war and to stand up for human rights.

Today we pay tribute to these women and reaffirm our commitment to work for the protection of women in armed conflict and for their active involvement in conflict resolution.

No society can address its problems by drawing solely on the talents of only half of the population. Lasting peace cannot be achieved unless there is justice for the female victims of war and unless they are actively involved in rebuilding societies in which their rights are respected and their voices are heard. "

Mr President,

Today is a firstly an opportunity to reflect on the progress we have made since the adoption of resolution 1325. At the UN, we now have a special representative of the Secretary General to tackle violence against women in conflict, a new agency in the form of UN Women, and a greater number of women in leadership roles. Outside the UN, 22 member states have adopted National Action Plans. Partnerships between governments and women's organisations, and the integration of gender perspectives into development, political and defence policy, are increasingly common.

We should pay particular tribute to the role that has been played by women's groups and civil society to build awareness and strengthen the argument for implementation of resolution 1325 on the ground. But Mr President recent events in the DRC serve as a sobering reminder of the scale of the challenges we still face. We welcome the two high profile arrests for the mass rapes in the DRC this summer as the first sign that impunity will not be tolerated.

As the Security Council witnessed on our recent mission to Sudan, devastating sexual violence continues to destroy the lives of women trying to rebuild communities in Darfur. And yet during that visit, we also had the chance to hear how inspiring women leaders are striving to rebuild inclusive and democratic societies in Southern Sudan.

Overall, as the Secretary General's latest report confirms, the burden of conflict still falls primarily on the very part of society that we rely on to rebuild families and communities.

Mr President,

Looking forward, there are three main challenges on which we need to focus in the coming years.

First, we still lack effective methods for understanding the problem and monitoring the impact of our work. The adoption today of indicators represents an important step forward. We will, for the first time, be able to understand the scale of the challenges we face, evaluate the progress we are making and target our approaches

more effectively. We encourage the Secretary General to implement these indicators as widely as possible.

Second, Women remain acutely under represented women in peace negotiations. And they are often marginalised in efforts to build sustainable peace. Fewer than one in five peace agreements contain specific provisions on women's rights and needs. We need to ensure women are included in conflict resolution and post-conflict peace-building as a matter of course. We welcome the Secretary General's report of women's participation in peacebuilding as an important step in that direction.

Third, we must ensure that the entire international community takes responsibility for implementing Resolution 1325. This requires more than warm words. It requires meaningful actions that will ultimately make a difference to the situation of women on the ground." Making this difference, to protect women, to support their participation in conflict resolution and peace-building, is a global challenge that requires action by all Member States.

Mr President,

The 10 year anniversary has brought new momentum to this Council's work on women, peace and security. The challenge now is to translate that into concrete action on the ground. The UK stands ready to play its part. The British Government just approved a new National Action Plan that sets out our future commitments, including specific strategies for supporting women in priority countries including Afghanistan, Nepal and DRC.

Mr President,

All of us; the UN, member states and regional organisations must seize the opportunity and take forward this ambitious agenda,

Thank you.