

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

Statement by Under-Secretary-General Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director for UN Women

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Members of the Council,

It is an honour for me to address the Security Council for the first time since assuming my position as Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, UN Women. I would like to express deep gratitude to you, Mr. President, for giving me this opportunity to address the Council and to present the report of the Secretary-General (S/2010/498). I commend your commitment and leadership in the intense preparations and deliberations leading up to this Open Debate. I would also like to recognise the unprecedented level of representation by Ministers at this historic tenth anniversary meeting on resolution 1325 (2000). I take inspiration from this presence which clearly shows that Member States are determined to see accelerated implementation and concrete results in women's protection and in their full engagement in making, keeping, and building peace.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Members of the Council,

The report before you presents a comprehensive overview of progress made as well as the obstacles encountered in the first decade of implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in response to a number of mandates of the Security Council. It responds to the Security Council's request in operative paragraph 18 of resolution 1889 (2009) to present an overview of progress in implementing Resolution 1325 (2000). The report also presents an assessment of the processes by which the Security Council receives, analyses and takes action on information pertinent to resolution 1325 (2000), and recommendations on further measures to improve coordination across the United Nations system, and with Member States and civil society to deliver implementation.

Furthermore, it gives highlights of progress achieved in implementing the 2008–2009 System-wide Action Plan for resolution 1325 (2000), as well as an update on further development of the set of indicators contained in the April 2010 Report of the Secretary-General (S/2010/173) as requested in operative paragraph 17 of resolution 1889 and in Presidential Statement (S/PRST/2010/8). The report ends with a number of recommendations for consideration by the Security Council. These recommendations, if accepted, will provide the Council with tools to ensure accelerated implementation. They offer a monitoring framework for the Council's work on women peace and security. I am confident that with strong Council leadership, Member State determination, Civil Society engagement, and UN commitment and assistance, we will together ensure coherent implementation of the important work on women peace and security.

Mr. President,

The report before you presents a mixed picture. It highlights areas in which progress has been made in implementing resolution 1325 (2000) in the last decade, outlining a great number of activities that have been carried out by various stakeholders, including Member States, entities of the United Nations System, Civil Society and the Security Council itself.

United Nations system entities have invested in training, development of policies, action plans and guidelines, and programming to ensure women's access to resources, justice, and opportunities to participate in decision-making. UN Peacekeeping missions have become more effective in engaging women in peacebuilding. As a result, most reports of the Secretary-General on peacekeeping missions now include information on actions taken to ensure the participation of women in conflict resolution, public decision-making, and recovery efforts. They also detail the consequences for women and girls of armed conflict and its aftermath. There has been an effort to develop consistent standards and procedures to guide various aspects of the work of the United Nations on women peace and security.

The need for coordination of the activities on women peace and security in the United Nations system was recognized and led to a call by the Security Council for the development of a United Nations System-wide Action Plan. The first evaluation of the performance of this Plan led to its revision and the definition of a new System-wide Action Plan as a results-based programming, monitoring and reporting tool.

Within a few years of the resolution's adoption, a number of Member States were actively working on their own initiatives at national level, often reaching out to women's organizations to create partnerships to implement resolution 1325 (2000). Spearheaded by Canada, an informal group of Member States, the "Friends of Women and Peace and Security", continues to advocate for and support intergovernmental coordination, allocation of resources and acceleration of implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) by United Nations entities. Twenty-two countries have so far developed national Action Plans on women peace and security. In a number of post-conflict countries there has been a dramatic increase in numbers of women in national politics in part because of the use of electoral quotas. In Nepal women hold one third of seats in the Constituent Assembly. More than half of Burundi's Senate is female. Sudan's general election this year resulted in a national assembly with women in over a quarter of seats.

Just this month, 90 female police advisers from Rwanda were deployed to the UN-AU Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) to serve as gender-based violence and child protection advisers. Sierra Leone, which only allowed women into their armed forces in 2008, recently sent seven female peacekeepers to Sudan, including one female Brigadier General, and will shortly send twenty more. In addition to facilitating the gender-responsiveness of UNAMID military and police components, these examples show that post-conflict countries are emerging as the standard bearers of 1325 implementation. There are many other examples of Member State commitment to resolution 1325 (2000) which are highlighted in the report.

Civil society has played a key role in advocating for accountability in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Within the United Nations, the NGO Working Group on Women and Peace and Security continues to emphasize accountability and the need to establish a monitoring framework for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). In 2010, a high-level Civil Society Advisory Group was established and its chair has participated as an observer in a High-Level Steering Committee, chaired by the UN Deputy Secretary-General, to guide preparations for the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000).

The involvement of civil society has provided essential guidance and insights from women around the world on their priorities and concerns. On a country-specific level we have seen important examples of women's peace activism. This year women in Afghanistan lobbied consistently and successfully to ensure an unprecedented number of women participating in the important June Peace Jirga. In Kyrgyzstan, after the ethnic clashes of June 2010, women peace activists struggled to have their voices heard at the High Level Donors Forum, held on June 27. A persistent campaign reiterating that 'women count for peace' and 'nothing for us without us' resulted in the allocation of 5 seats at the donor conference, and an invitation to participate in the peace negotiations committee. Civil society has a crucial role to play in advancing resolution 1325 (2000).

This Council has itself continued to play an active role. The role of women in peace and security is now more clearly integrated into the Council's deliberations. The past year's heightened activities by the Security Council and the United Nations to achieve coordination and bring sharper attention to the issues of women and peace and security in general and sexual violence in conflict, in particular are worthy of note. This Council's adoption of resolutions 1820, 1888, and 1889 illustrates the increased commitment of the Council to the issue of women and peace and security. In response to Security Council resolution 1888, the Secretary-General appointed a Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict to bring greater focus to this challenging aspect of the area of women peace and security.

The call of the Security Council in resolution 1889 (2009) for indicators to monitor the implementation of the resolution was a bold and an important step towards the development of a much needed monitoring framework for resolution 1325 (2000). The Council's persistence in requesting the development and operationalization of these indicators has kept up the pressure needed to transform the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) from just focussing on activities to instead an output and results-driven endeavour.

Mr. President,

Despite these activities and implementation successes, there are a number of sobering messages in the report before you that call for our concerted and urgent action. Ten years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), significant achievements are difficult to identify or quantify. Although activities to implement resolution 1325(2000) have been carried out with increasing intensity over the years, these activities have lacked a clear direction or time-bound goals and targets that could accelerate implementation and ensure accountability. While these discrete activities have indeed contributed to improvements in efforts to address the needs of women and girls in the context of armed conflict, evidence of their cumulative impact is inadequate. Because of design, implementation and resource limitations, the System-wide Action Plan devised to bring greater coherence to UN system implementation efforts fell short of its goals.

Mr. President,

Given the urgent need to accelerate implementation of the resolution and the formidable obstacles to be overcome, the Security Council may wish to consider a range of initiatives and interventions to ensure that the coming years see more determined and effective implementation.

The report before you recommends the development of a single comprehensive framework consisting of an agreed set of goals, targets and indicators to guide the implementation of the resolution in the next decade. The Council, in that regard, could convene a review or summit at the ministerial level every five years to assess progress towards these goals and targets and to address the obstacles in implementation. This framework should build on the comprehensive set of indicators presented in the annex to the report.

The comprehensive set of indicators in the present report has been acknowledged as a breakthrough in the architecture for monitoring the implementation of 1325 (2000) and as a crucial building block of stronger accountability. They represent a highly practical new tool to support implementation of the women peace and security agenda.

I strongly urge the Council to agree to move forward on the indicators contained in the annex as a preliminary set, and begin to use them as a basis for the Council's review, analysis and intervention on issues related to women and peace and security at both the global and country levels. This will demonstrate a new level of commitment of the Council to act on the information that it receives. As section three of the report before you notes, the effectiveness with which the Security Council processes and takes action on information pertinent to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) will make the difference in achieving its objectives.

Mr. President,

Actions such as the horrific mass rapes in July and August 2010 in the eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo cannot be allowed to continue with impunity. These events are an affront to humanity and underline the desperate urgency of accelerating implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) to strengthen capacity of member states to resolve conflict and build security and justice systems that protect the human rights of all. Therefore, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report, the Security Council may wish to instruct that those who abuse women and girls and violate their human rights in conflict and post-conflict situations, including those who commission these abuses, must be brought to justice in accordance with national laws, international law and international humanitarian law. The Council must remain vigilant and relentless in bringing pressure to bear on perpetrators and their supporters.

The creation of UN Women in July this year was the result of an exceptional commitment by Member States who seek greater leadership, coordination and coherence from the United Nations on gender equality and women's empowerment. For my part, I can assure you of my determination to work to chart a clear path to achieve this goal. Along with the Secretary General, I especially recognize the need to identify better ways to achieve progress in addressing the challenges in the area of women peace and security and in the

implementation of Security Council resolution 1325.

What is needed now is determined leadership — by all of us working together. UN Women will support existing and new efforts to improve the protection environment for women during and after conflict, to engage women in conflict prevention, and to ensure peacebuilding processes are guided by women's perspectives and address their needs. UN Women will be an essential partner to the SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict in building UN system capacity to protect women in conflict. UN Women will use the resources at its disposal to work with the entire UN system and other relevant stakeholders to enhance coordination and coherence on women peace and security.

I mentioned earlier that the key ingredients are in place for much more determined implementation. The Security Council is better equipped than ever before to ensure that women engage in peace talks and to build a stronger protection environment for women. We all know that women count for peace. But for them to count for peace, they have to be able to count on you, members of the Security Council. Let us make this the beginning of a new decade in which women can put their stamp on conflict resolution so that throughout the world we can have more effective peace-making and more sustainable peacebuilding.

I look forward to your support in the next decade of the implementation of this landmark resolution.

Thank you.