

## **Security Council Open debate on women, peace and security – 5<sup>th</sup> October 2009**

Statement by Ambassador Rosemary A. DiCarlo, U.S. Alternate Representative for Special Political Affairs

### **United States of America**

Thank you Mr. President. My delegation would like to welcome you to the Council and congratulates you on assuming the presidency. You can be assured of our full support during this busy month.

We would also like to express the gratitude of the United States for the cooperation we received from fellow Council members during our presidency.

Mr. President, the United States believes that the Council's continued focus on women, peace and security is critical and we are very appreciative that the delegation of Vietnam has organized this important debate today.

We Thank Deputy Secretary-General Migiro for her presence, and welcome the message of the Secretary-General that she has conveyed to us. We are also pleased to hear the comments of Ms. Mayanja, Ms. Alberdi and Ms. Amin, and thank them and Deputy Secretary-General Migiro for their commitments and all their efforts to improve conditions for women in conflict situations.

The Secretary-General notes in his recent report that, while much has been done in response to Resolution 1325 in the nine years since its adoption, armed conflict continues to have a devastating impact on women and girls – all too often leaving them wounded, traumatized, sexually assaulted, socially and economically marginalized or without political power. The United States is in complete agreement with the Secretary-General on a key point: Member States must renew their commitment to Resolution 1325 and intensify their efforts to implement its provisions.

We strongly support the Secretary-General's proposals for action and Resolution 1889 which we adopted today.

Mr. President, we have heard many times in this chamber that more women should be included in peace processes and post-conflict deliberations. If a sustainable peace is to be achieved in any post-conflict situation, a peace agreement must take into account the concerns of those most harmed by conflict. But more often than not, women are excluded from peace negotiations and peacebuilding efforts. In fact, the United Nations Development Fund for Women points out that since 1992 only 2.4 percent of signatories to peace agreements were women and women's participation in negotiating delegations averaged about 7 percent.

Women have often led the call for peace in conflict-torn societies. Let us recall the example of Liberia, whose grassroots women's organizations had a direct and visible impact on peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction efforts. The activism of these groups – on behalf of the welfare of the average citizen – helped to break the impasse produced by leaders of warring factions in the struggle for political dominance. But to do so, these Liberian women had to travel to Accra, Ghana, and demonstrate outside the seat of negotiations. Women should not have to go to such great lengths to be heard.

The Secretary General rightly notes that Member States should ensure that women participate in decision making. And he adds that that the international community should pursue a strategy to ensure women's participation in all peace processes, including by providing appropriate training and capacity building programs toward this end.

Mr. President, Resolution 1325 emphasizes the responsibility that all States have to put an end to impunity and prosecute those responsible for crimes against humanity and war crimes, including those relating to sexual violence and other assaults against women and girls. Resolution 1820, of 2008, established a clear link between maintaining international peace and security and preventing and responding to the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war.

Last week this Council took decisive action in addressing the sexual violence that all too often follows in conflict's wake by adopting resolution 1888. The resolution sends unequivocal message: violence against women and children will not be tolerated and must be stopped. The Council made it clear that ending impunity is essential if a society wracked by conflict or recovering from it is to come to terms with abuses committed against civilians in the past – and to prevent such outrages occurring in the future.

The United States looks forward to the complete and rapid implementation of Resolution 1888. That includes the Resolution's call to appoint a Special Representative of the Secretary General to lead, coordinate and advocate for efforts to end conflict-related sexual violence. As Secretary of State Clinton said in this chamber when the resolution was adopted: "It is time for all of us to assume our responsibility to go beyond condemning this behavior, to taking concrete steps to end it, to make it socially unacceptable, to recognize it is not cultural; it is criminal."

Mr. President, the Secretary-General emphasizes that we need to increase the number of women who serve as mediators, special representatives and special envoys and peacekeepers around the world. My government commends the Secretary-General for his leadership and efforts to increase the number of women in senior UN positions. We hope that these appointments will continue to increase.

We also commend Member States such as Jamaica and India for ensuring that women figure prominently in their peacekeeping contingents.

We join others in the call for more systematic UN reporting on women's participation and inclusion in peacebuilding and planning and we request the Secretary-General to continue to appoint gender advisers to UN missions and to develop a set of indicators to track implementation of Resolutions 1325 and 1889.

Mr. President, the United Nations must do all it can to keep the issue of women, peace and security in the spotlight, especially as we look to the 10th anniversary of Resolution 1325 and the creation of a composite gender entity, an entity that the United States strongly supports. We must all work together to ensure that half of the world's population is accorded fully equal rights and fully equal opportunities and we must work to end violence against women that destroys the very fabric of societies and hinders stability of lasting peace.

Thank you again, Mr. President, for providing this occasion to address this important issue.

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