

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION
AT THE SECURITY COUNCIL HIGH LEVEL DEBATE
ON RESOLUTION 1325**

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(Check Against Delivery)

Mr President,

It is an honour to address this august gathering on the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. I would like to thank the Spanish Presidency of the UN Security Council for October for initiating this discussion.

Exactly 15 years ago, the Security Council, under the presidency of Namibia, adopted resolution 1325 on 31st, October 2000. That resolution recognized and affirmed the crucial role women play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts as well as their roles in post-conflict reconstruction. Indeed, the resolution was based on the Windhoek Declaration on “Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations”, and reflected the growing awareness of the role of women generated over the five years following the Beijing Conference.

Today this debate is very important as it gives us the opportunity to review progress made since 2000. No doubt same remarkable progress has been made both at national and global levels. I therefore, believe as nations we have a lot to share around resolution 1325. Though the resolution is known as the one on Woman, Peace and Security, the main element is the importance of world peace. Therefore, the full and equal participation of women at all level as subjects of peace making and peace building is very central to sustainable world peace, for sustainable development to be achieved.

The successes of this landmark resolution, has raised international awareness, on the unique and grave issues that girls and women face during and after conflicts. It has undoubtedly increased international commitment on women empowerment at national and global levels. Since the adoption of this resolution and the subsequent ones, we have not only seen the number of women raising to positions of political leadership, but also in security forces over the last decade. At the same time, the number of women in UN peacekeeping Missions has also increased.

In Namibia, we have always recognized the link between peace and gender equality. That is what we have learnt from our long years of our liberation struggle for independence, in which women including my self have fully participated. Before returning from exile, in his last general address to the Namibian exiles in 1989 in Angola, our Founding President, then President of SWAPO Comrade Sam Nujoma, had called on Namibian women to be on alert and not to allow the country to be messed up once independence is achieved. Therefore, the peace we are enjoying today since Namibia’s independence 25 years ago, was achieved through a critical role, played by women.

Mr. President,

Namibia attaches great importance to the full implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), and other subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security as well as other relevant international instruments. Namibia was the first SADC country to ratify the SADC Protocol on Gender and development in October 2009. That protocol calls upon member

states to put in place measures to ensure that women have equal representation and participation in key decision making positions and peace building processes.

This explains why Namibia is one of the largest female police contributing countries at the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation (UNAMID) in Darfur, Sudan. As a matter of fact, during 2010, we deployed our first full female contingent of 31 Officers to Darfur. Namibian women in peacekeeping missions have demonstrated remarkable commitment, high competences and aptitudes for innovation. Today, in Namibia, women are rising through the ranks and expanding their influence. More importantly, they've served and sacrificed for peace and indeed, they have given us a competitive advantage.

Mr. President,

Resolution 1325 should be viewed as a blueprint legal framework that can enhance the inclusiveness, transparency and sustainability of peace processes. While the good beginning has been made in the implementing of Resolution 1325 much still needs to be done. We can be encouraged by a growing awareness of the principles of the resolution as demonstrated in follow-up resolutions, namely, 1820, 1888, 1889 and 1960. These demonstrate a general resolve by the international community to be less tolerant of the impact on women of situations of conflict.

The move by the chair of the African Union Commission to establish an Office of the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security is highly commendable. Since it's establishment that office has been busy contacting woman in conflict areas in Africa and assists them to contribute to peace in their respective countries.

Mr. President,

The 15th Anniversary of Resolution 1325 this year is an important and historic event. It is an event that should unite us, for a definite action and rallying international concerted effort, for the promotion of international peace in which women have to be involvement in all it's aspects.

On the eve of the launch of the Global Study on the Implementation of Resolution 1325, we have the chance to evaluate what has worked and what remains to be strengthened. At the core, while acknowledging that improvements have been made, there is still a critical shortage of women-players in peace-processes around the world. This is especially true in post-conflict resolution.

This is an area the Global Study gives evidence that, when controlling for other variables, peace processes that included women as witnesses, signatories, mediators, and/or negotiators demonstrated a 20 per cent increase in the probability of a peace agreement lasting at least two years. This percentage increases over time, with a 35 per cent increase in the probability of a peace agreement lasting 15 years. While I quote these numbers for you from the study, this has been a personal experience for Namibia since we emerged from armed liberation struggle 25 years ago. Women's meaningful participation in our post-conflict reconstruction has been pivotal to the peace and stability in our country today.

Namibia therefore, stresses the need for the United Nations to engage more women in high-level decision-making and peace processes including special envoys, special representatives, peacekeepers, mediators and negotiators. Further, Namibia calls upon women to penetrate the entire UN system in leadership positions.

Mr. President,

It is our belief that the significant presence of women peacekeepers in conflict and post-conflict areas has an added advantage of creating safer spaces for girls and women who have suffered sexual violence. Studies conducted by the UN in support of resolution 1325, from experience in operations in Cambodia, Kosovo, Timor-Leste, Afghanistan, Liberia and the DRC, have also demonstrated that female soldiers do not face the same cultural restrictions as their male counterparts, and are able to gain information from women and children. This ability to gain the trust of local populations should be considered a vital component of any peacekeeping operation.

Further, evidence shows that the presence of women can transform the institutional male dominated culture and promote women's rights within security organs. Furthermore, by bringing in a variety of skills and competencies, the increased participation of women can help create a more trusted and legitimate security apparatus.

The Government of Namibia welcomed the appointment of Major General Kristin Lund, as the first ever woman to head a peacekeeping mission. Her appointment is a great validation for this important resolution, however, 15 years after the adoption of Resolution 1325, we are still faced with too many firsts. Therefore, there are indeed still many doors yet to open for women participation in peace processes we must do a better job by tapping into their talents and address their unique challenges by affording women the opportunity to exercise their leadership role.

Mr. President,

Those charged with leading and supporting peace processes, especially the UN Department of Peace Operations and regional bodies, should be committed to bring talented women to the peace processes where negotiations are conducted; and peace agreements signed and implemented. There is a need for the Security Council to move the agenda forward from the general calls to concrete directives on how the peacekeeping department should promote the participation of women as Special Envoys, Special Representatives, Peacekeepers, Mediators and Negotiators.

Mr. President,

Finally, Namibia welcomes the holding of the 2015 High Level Review, and the report of the Global Study, that has reviewed the progress made at the national, regional and global levels on the implementation of Resolution 1325. The Global Study, which will be launched tomorrow, will contribute to a global vision and strategies we need to make Resolution 1325 a powerful tool for peace and security. The study must present us with concrete and action oriented programs with measurable targets and indicators that will guide future implementation of the resolution. It will be in the interest of world peace if member states are to use this Study as a blueprint and to examine seriously, their national policies and where they stand to benefit from this Study.

While identifying the position of women in peace operation we must also find out the root courses of conflict. We must silence the gun. Human being, we have now realized that the products we produce namely arms and ammunitions are motivating us to act against our selves. Why not stop the production of arms and develop more friendly industries to create necessary jobs and create wealth we need for sustainable development. Our individual interest should not cost us international peace stability and security.

I thank you,