

**OPEN DEBATE OF THE
SECURITY COUNCIL:**

WOMEN AND PEACE AND SECURITY

STATEMENT

BY

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Mr. President

I wish to thank the Japanese presidency of the Security Council for holding this open debate on the roles of women in the consolidation of peace. This initiative is not only timely because of the sixth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325. It is also particularly important because the Peacebuilding Commission has recently taken up its work and held the first country-specific meetings. The outcome documents of both meetings include references to SCR 1325. Whether such references will ensure the successful involvement of women in the peace processes in those and other countries will depend, to a very large extent, on the measures taken and promoted at the local level. In fact, we have witnessed in many processes of peace consolidation and institution-building a common pattern of relegating family law and community dispute resolution to the traditional and customary sector, leaving them beyond reach of the state. Quite often those sectors show, however, a strong resistance to the idea of equal participation of women in all decision-making processes, including peace processes. As long as such kind of tacit arrangements between national and traditional authorities persist, it will, therefore, be extremely difficult to translate national strategies for the implementation of SCR 1325 into concrete and sustainable action. For this reason, we consider it crucial that the Peacebuilding Commission establish the necessary mechanisms to facilitate, together with the countries concerned, the participation of representatives of local women's groups and networks who are able to make the voices and priorities of women from local and rural communities heard in country specific configurations. Such mechanisms will also have to encompass financial and other support to those groups and networks to enable their effective engagement with the PBC.

Mr. President

The Security Council could assume leadership in such efforts by giving the right example and increasingly listening to the voices of local women's groups as well. This would be a clear sign of its commitment to the implementation of SCR 1325. While we commend the Security Council for its measures to further mainstream SCR 1325, we are concerned that six years after the adoption of this historic resolution the Council still has no systematic way to ensure the integration of a gender perspective in its work. We therefore wish to join other delegations in calling on the Council to establish a focal point or an expert level working group on women, peace and security to ensure systematic implementation and integration of SCR 1325 within its

work, including in all resolutions that establish or extend peacekeeping missions and in terms of references for Security Council mission trips and mission reports.

Mr. President

Despite past efforts of many stakeholders, there seems to be a continued and widespread lack of awareness of the fact that women need to be enabled to play an active role in connection with armed conflicts and peace building. The United Nations and its operations on the ground are perfectly placed to utilize this largely untapped resource, and we wish to commend, in this respect, the Secretary-General for his report on the implementation of the System-wide Action Plan. In particular, we welcome the identification of strengthened inter-agency cooperation in the field as a priority area for further action to implement the Plan. In this connection, we also support the emphasis placed on closer collaboration with mechanisms for gender equality and advancement of women within countries, including women members of Parliament and civil society. In fact, most United Nations entities which have contributed to the evaluation signalled effective partnership with civil society as a challenge, especially in the field, and pointed out that the networking with women's organizations was inadequate.

Mr. President

Liechtenstein has been advocating, for many years already, the appointment of women as special representatives and envoys of the Secretary General because we are convinced that such appointments can play a catalytic role for the stronger involvement of women in peace processes, especially when those reach more formal stages. They might also have a positive impact on the level of reporting on gender-related issues to the Security Council, which is still unsatisfactory. Therefore, we consider such appointments as crucial for a better implementation of SCR 1325. Progress on the representation of women in those leadership positions has, however, again been disappointing since the last time the Council met on this topic. We are, of course, aware of the need to provide the Secretary General with the names of potential, well-qualified candidates for such posts and invite all interested States and NGOs to join forces in gathering the necessary information. There is no doubt in our mind that there are enough suitable candidates for such functions. We just have to seriously look for them.

I thank you.