

Statement
by
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at
The Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security
New York, 23 October 2007

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

I have the honour to introduce the report of the Secretary-General on women, peace and security. May I begin by expressing gratitude to you, Mr. President, for convening this crucially important meeting on a coherent and effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Your presiding over this Council today is testimony to the deep commitment of Ghana to peace, gender equality and the empowerment of women worldwide.

The report before you (document S/2007/567) contains the results of a second implementation review of the 2005-2007 United Nation System-wide Action Plan on resolution 1325 (2000) and an update of the Action Plan for 2008-2009. The second implementation review conducted by my Office in consultation with UN entities noted new progress in implementing resolution 1325 (2000) by the UN system, through an increased political commitment to gender equality, leadership and support by senior officials, strengthened or new policies and programmes; enhanced capacity-building on gender mainstreaming, improved advocacy and better engagement with Member States and civil society.

It also reaffirmed the findings of the first review of the implementation of the System-wide action plan that was conducted in 2006 and reported to the Council in document S/2006/770. The lack of such key elements as baseline data, performance indicators and timelines that constitute an effective tool for measuring performance negatively affected the monitoring, reporting and accountability processes.

The updated Action Plan for 2008-2009 has been reconceptualized and transformed into a results-based programming, reporting and monitoring tool. The proposed framework is rooted in intergovernmental mandates contained in resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent Presidential Statements on women, peace and security. It has three new main features: a sharpened focus through the consolidation of 12 areas into five thematic areas (prevention, participation, protection, relief and recovery, and normative) to enable the UN system to promote interagency synergies within the thematic areas; a results based management framework (including indicators to measure progress in achieving goals under each of the above thematic areas, expected accomplishments and baseline data). The development of a common set of indicators provides the basis for the enhanced reporting, monitoring and accountability for the implementation of resolution 1325 by the UN entities. The establishment of accountability procedures by utilizing common standards is central to a coherent and efficient implementation of resolution 1325 by the United Nations. Where there is accountability we will progress; where there is none we will underperform.

Mr. President,

It is imperative for international organizations, national governments and civil society to work together to identify priorities and to develop a practical approach to implementation strategies on women, peace and security at the national level. The challenges are many and continue to defeat the best efforts of Member States, UN entities and civil society in the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

Member States play a critical role in implementing resolution 1325 (2000) at the national and local levels. As national governments shape and contribute to peacemaking, peacekeeping and rebuilding efforts and conflict prevention, their commitment to women, peace and security enhances women's empowerment in survival and reconstruction efforts or their inaction leaves existing structures of discrimination, poverty and violence unchanged. In this connection, I wish to pay a special tribute to the Government of India for sending an all women police contingent to the UN peace mission in Liberia. As role models to the women of Liberia, they have contributed in no small measure to the substantial enrollment of Liberian women into the Liberian police. National action plans and strategies provide a catalyst for ensuring that these commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment are effectively translated into domestic and foreign policies.

The UN system, other multilateral institutions and international partners should, in turn, be held accountable for supporting nationally-owned plans and strategies and making sure that they meet international standards and norms. Once these are in place, the support provided by the UN and the partners should align with national plans, priorities and approaches.

Mr. President,

Resolution 1325 (2000) is primarily about how to make this world safe for women's and girls' equal participation in matters of peace and security. Determined action to eradicate gender based violence will be required to enable achievement of these goals. Impunity for perpetrators and insufficient response to the needs of survivors are morally reprehensible and unacceptable. Sexual violence in conflict, particularly rape, should be named for what it is: not a private act or the unfortunate misbehaviour of a renegade soldier, but aggression, torture, war crime and genocide.

This Council has done much to place the issue of sexual violence in conflict on the global policy agenda and strongly condemned it. However, despite this Council's repeated condemnation of all acts of gender-based violence, and its demands to all parties to conflict for the immediate cessation, sexual violence remains pervasive. If this situation is not addressed now and with urgency, thousands of women and girls will continue to die, and tens of millions more would be sexually brutalized, traumatized, tormented, stigmatized and ostracized.

I firmly believe that we are at a moment in history when the world should finally be ready to alter the course of human development and renounce all forms of violence by decisively accepting the responsibility to stamp it out. Today this Council can help accelerate this shift by establishing a dedicated mechanism to monitor the situation of women and girls in conflict and hold parties to conflicts accountable for sexual and gender-based violence.

I urge all Governments, Parliaments, international organizations and civil society to join a world-wide campaign on violence against women and girls to be launched by the Secretary-General later this year, to build and sustain a global political commitment and action to prevent and to respond to gender based violence. Only by acting together can we create more equal relationships and more peaceful societies.

Thank you, Mr. President.
