

Briefing on Women, Peace and Security to the Security Council

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Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to thank the President of the Council for having invited me to discuss the critical issue of women, peace and security.

Last month, in its Presidential Statement, the Security Council underlined the importance of enhancing the participation of women in prevention and resolution of conflict and in peace building within the framework of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Today, I would like to affirm, from the extensive field experience of DPKO/DFS that women can and must play a leading role in political participation, conflict resolution and the transition from conflict to peace. I will further illustrate how our missions support the role of women in building peace and support women's civil society organizations for the protection of women's rights. And lastly, I hope to chart a path forward for overcoming the political obstacles and security threats that impede women's groups from more effective engagement in conflict prevention and peace consolidation.

I am grateful to the Security Council for welcoming the contribution of Gender Advisers and Women Protection Advisers to the implementation of resolutions on Women, Peace and Security. I wish to express my

commitment to ensuring that gains made in the protection and promotion of women's and girls' rights and empowerment are sustained, including during United Nations mission drawdown and transitions.

This year, I saw that peacekeeping missions have supported important progress in some areas, notably women's political participation at local and national levels. My experience also showed that in other areas – including the protection of women activists – more could be achieved.

Women continue to be largely absent from, or play symbolic roles, in formal peace processes. Social and cultural norms may pose serious challenges to the full and meaningful participation of women in peace processes. In addition, women are frequently exposed to gender based violence and have limited access to decision making.

Regarding political participation, I have seen our missions work with women's organisations to bring women into state political institutions, to strengthen advocacy efforts, and to form strong, effective networks for peace building, conflict resolution and leadership skills development. We have seen, for example, that women can successfully resolve conflicts relating to land ownership, water and cattle raiding by establishing dialogues with other women's groups from across border lines. In South Sudan, the Women Community Dialogue Forum in Central Equatoria State held meetings with community's leaders to discuss the issues affecting women and children displaced after the conflicts between the Mundari and

Bari communities. Two women who were involved in the Community Dialogue Forum were nominated to the state legislative assembly.

Partout où il n'existe pas, à proprement parler, de conflit armé, les organisations de femmes au sein de la société civile participent à la prévention et au règlement des tensions politiques et sociales. Actuellement, en Haïti, les femmes représentent moins de 4 pour cent des élus du Parlement national et la plupart d'entre elles ont été exclues du processus de reconstruction. En comparaison, au mois de septembre de cette année, les femmes représentaient 20,5 pour cent des parlementaires au niveau mondial et une moyenne de 19,5 pour cent dans la région des Caraïbes.

Bien que la Constitution haïtienne fût amendée pour y inclure un quota de 30 pour cent en faveur des femmes, cette mesure spéciale n'a toujours pas été mise en application. C'est néanmoins un signe encourageant pour le renforcement de la participation des femmes à la vie politique. Cette année, également en Haïti, des représentantes d'organisations de femmes ont mené un plaidoyer auprès du Président de la République afin de trouver des solutions au processus de nomination des membres du Cabinet Présidentiel et du Conseil Electoral Permanent.

Nous devons faire davantage pour soutenir les Etats dans le développement de réformes constitutionnelles intégrant une perspective sexo-spécifique et prenant en compte la dimension des violences sexuelles. Nous devons également soutenir le développement du secteur de la

sécurité et des institutions de l'état de droit, professionnels et responsables. Cela peut se traduire, par exemple, par la formation de policiers spécialisés et le renforcement des capacités des juges et procureurs afin d'assurer une plus grande visibilité des poursuites des cas de violence sexuelle.

Nous devons également renforcer les réseaux de soutien aux survivantes de violence sexuelle afin qu'elles puissent reprendre une part active dans la vie publique. Enfin, nous devons travailler ensemble avec ONU Femmes et nos partenaires de l'Equipe Pays pour aider les Etats à développer des plans d'action nationaux de mise en œuvre des résolutions Femmes, Paix et Sécurité.

Nous avançons dans la bonne direction et avons accomplis des progrès importants. Par exemple, en 2011, en République Démocratique du Congo, la MONUSCO a formé 380 membres des forces armées nationales, dont 280 étaient des femmes, et 767 officiers de police, dont plus d'un tiers de femmes, à la prévention des violences basées sur le genre et à la recherche de solutions appropriées. La mission a également assuré une formation sur l'analyse sexo-spécifique des conflits aux membres de la Commission sur la Résolution et la Prévention des Conflits à Goma. Cette formation a permis de développer la capacité de la Commission à répondre aux déplacements des femmes et des filles dans des zones de conflit, en coopération avec le HCR et OCHA.

Through outreach to the government, our SRSGs can help provide the link between state-led mechanisms and women's groups, to ensure that women's priorities are on the agenda. We need more initiatives like that in Darfur, where UNAMID has been able to support the establishment of the Darfur Women Legislative Caucus, State Committees on Security Council Resolution 1325 and a High Level State Committee on Combating Violence Against Women.

In the DRC, approx. 5,000 women of all political tendencies including civil society flooded Kinshasa's main commercial avenue a week ago, to protest the fall of Goma to M 23 rebels. This was the most massively organized non-violent protest in the country following the fall of Goma. The women protesters were received by MONUSCO's senior management. However, women have not been given any political leverage in the regional negotiations aimed at bringing peace to the embattled Eastern part of the country pursuant to the provisions of SC Resolution 1325 (2000) demanding that women be a core part of all peace building processes and related agreements.

Additionally, when supporting women's organisations, we must mobilise all members of the Country Team to serve as consultative partners for civil society. This gives women's groups confidence to act with the assurance that they may turn to the UN family if they perceive a threat. The Country Team also supports women's organisations with funding, information sharing and capacity building activities. For example, women's groups that

DPKO and UN Women convened at the Open Day in Timor-Leste in 2011 called upon Country Team members to help sustain the participation of women in community-level mediation and peace building activities. As a result, UNDP and the Ministry of Social Solidarity implemented a project that helped establish a “Department of Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion” within the Ministry of Solidarity. The department specifically includes women at the community level in local conflict resolution and peace building efforts. Another positive example is the recently signed Memorandum of Understanding between Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan and five women’s NGOs on the implementation of the Women’s Police Mentoring Programme, which aims to build the capacity of police women and to address the issue of abuse.

Finally, I would emphasize that the critical key to removing the obstacles that impede women’s full participation in conflict prevention and peace building is the active, systematic consultation with local actors and leaders, including women’s civil society organizations; this is the only way to develop effective, context-specific and gender-aware solutions.

Mr. President, last month DPKO/DFS participated in a dialogue with women peacemakers from all over the world who gathered at the University of San Diego. These women recommended that the UN institutionalize and systemize the consultation of women at every step of the UN peacekeeping process, from pre-assessment, to deployment of the mission, to evaluation

of the mission, to renewal of the mandate, and the change of mandate to transition to peace building.

Together with our partner, UN Women, we call on Member States to enhance women's participation and protection by supporting and strengthening their commitment to conflict prevention and peace building.

Once again, Mr. President, thank you for having invited me to offer this briefing.