

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Rule of Law and Transitional Justice in Conflict- Affected Situations, October 18th, 2013, Security Council Chamber

Statement by UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo- Ngcuka

It is an honour to address the Security Council and present this year's report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security.

Like the Secretary-General, I thank the Presidency of Azerbaijan for hosting this Debate and introducing the topic of women, rule of law and transitional justice in conflict-affected situations.

I thank the other speakers: Ms. Navi Pillay, High Commissioner on Human Rights, and I thank Ms. Brigitte Balipou, a trailblazing women's rights lawyer from the Central African Republic, speaking today for civil society.

Above all, I thank the entire Council membership for demonstrating its determination in today's resolution – resolution 2122 – to put women's leadership at the centre of all efforts to resolve conflict and promote peace.

This resolution is about women's peace leadership. This resolution puts the onus on all of us – the Security Council, the United Nations, regional organizations and Member States – to create the space and provide seats at the peace table for women.

I know for sure that there are women who are adequately trained for these roles, that women are available for high-level appointments and, further, that qualified women are everywhere.

It is up to us, together, to take responsibility and open the doors to their full participation.

We have a mechanism to set up through the Special Envoys and Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for a consultative process. Mediators and their teams must encourage negotiating parties to invite women to the table and address women's issues in ceasefire and peace accords. This is in the best interest of lasting peace.

It is critical that the Security Council members should ask for briefings on the specific impacts of conflict on women. That they ask that all conflict-related crimes perpetrated against women are reported by International Commissions of Inquiry, Sanctions Committees and other accountability bodies.

Friends of peace processes and hosts of donor conferences should provide additional financing for the inclusion of women's groups and women leaders. Women's rights organisations must be supported in their efforts to build constituencies for peace and justice.

Of course women's inclusion alone is not enough. All stakeholders must have access to gender expertise. Gender analysis must be used to identify the impact on women's rights of all peace-related decisions.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda shows progress and good practice over the past year.

Ninety-three per cent of directives for police components in missions now include specific instructions to address women's security—40 per cent more than last year.

International Commissions of Inquiry now routinely include gender crimes investigators.

I warmly welcome the appointment of Mary Robinson as the Secretary- General's Special Envoy to the Great

lakes region, and thank Aïchatou Mindaoudou Souleymane for her work as Special Envoy for the Darfur process.

We are now seeing what could be described as a 'new generation' of gender-responsive mediation practice from these and other peace leaders. Elements of this new practice include: holding early and regular consultations with women leaders and women's rights groups; securing a gender advisor for the mediation team; and ensuring that crimes against women are addressed in ceasefire and peace negotiations.

I include here the efforts this past year of a growing number of senior officials such as Margaret Vogt in the Central African Republic, and Special Envoy Prodi in the Sahel region, to ensure more inclusive and gender-responsive practices.

But the Secretary-General's report shows that gains in women's participation are neither as consistent nor sustained as they should be.

This year three out of ten peace agreements in UN-supported processes included provisions for women's political participation or protection. This is more than the year before. You will all agree with me that such provisions should be raised in all peace accords.

We also see that post-conflict countries using temporary special measures, such as electoral gender quotas, have more women in parliament, well above the global average of 21 per cent. Countries without these quotas, on the other hand, record only 10 per cent of women on average elected to parliament.

And we see that over the past year, the numbers of women at senior levels in United Nations field missions have remained relatively stagnant. While there has been some progress in political and peacebuilding missions, there has been a decrease in the share of women in top mission leadership positions.

With your help, I am determined that we make progress that we can report back to you.

Mass atrocities that included violence targeting women and girls have occurred in the past year in contexts as diverse as DRC, Mali and Syria. In other contexts, such as Afghanistan, there has been increased targeted killing of women leaders and human rights defenders.

In some areas of peacebuilding there is an increase in spending on gender equality and women's empowerment, which we must applaud. However it rarely reaches the 15 per cent minimum set by the Secretary-General in his

Seven Point Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding. This we can take further.

I am committed to work with all of you so that we can see better results. For this, the Secretary-General's report sets out strategic measures for all stakeholders to accelerate implementation, many of which are reflected in today's resolution.

These measures focus on removing obstacles to women's peace leadership, and on building the capacities of the Security Council and the United Nations system to address gender issues across all peace and security work. There is also a call for a global study of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 to help us all prepare for the 2015 Ministerial meeting of the Council on this topic.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

Before I conclude let me touch again on today's topic. In recent years, the Security Council has paid increased attention to transitional justice, recognizing that victims have a right to truth, justice and reparation. Respect for the rule of law is connected to every aspect of peacebuilding. But the President of the Council is right in making us ask: what does the rule of law mean without respect for women's rights? In some contexts, law itself is gender-biased. It fails to criminalise some forms of violence against women. Even where laws are consistent with international human rights standards, authorities may be inconsistent in their application. The well-known result is a climate of impunity for crimes committed against women. This sets back efforts to advance gender

equality.

I welcome the Security Council resolution adopted last June to strengthen capacities to stop the use of sexual violence as a tactic of warfare. I stand shoulder to shoulder with my colleague Zainab Bangura, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, in the fight against impunity for these war crimes, whose support and collaboration is highly valued.

But we must remember that the public and visible forms of gender-based violence in wartime are based on the private violence against women in many homes, and on the serious inequalities between women and men.

In this regard, I welcome the General Recommendation on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post conflict situations, adopted today by the Committee to End all Forms of Discrimination against Women. This gives guidance on the implementation of States obligations to guarantee women's rights and eliminate discrimination against women in conflict contexts.

Women's leadership and collective action have changed the world by combatting violence against women and building equality. Women's leadership is central to reconciliation and conflict resolution and to peacebuilding efforts that bring results for families and communities.

That is why, your excellences, I welcome today's resolution on women's peace leadership.

When we next report to you, we would like to show that we have made real progress and, together with you, we have made the world a better place for women.

I thank you.