



NGO WORKING GROUP ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

777 United Nations Plaza New York, New York 10017

Mr. President, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning.

I would like to thank the Security Council for this invitation and honor to be with you today. I am here on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, a coalition of international civil society organizations formed in 2000 to advocate for a Security Council resolution on women, peace and security. We continue to advocate for its full and effective implementation. Unfortunately, it is the case that we are not at a point where we can say that the implementation of 1325 has been coherent and effective and we value the opportunity to discuss this as we mark the seventh year since the adoption of 1325.

The coalition now comprises 12 organizations, including Amnesty International, Boston Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights, Femmes Africa Solidarité, Global Action to Prevent War, Global Justice Center, Hague Appeal for Peace, Human Rights Watch, International Alert, International Women's Tribune Center, Women's Action for New Directions, the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, United Methodist Women's Division, and the PeaceWomen Project of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

The strength of the coalition lies in its role in providing gender and human rights expertise at the highest levels of international policy-making. By harnessing NGO members' networks with women's groups from conflict-affected areas, the coalition represents a unique and important linkage between women in conflict-affected regions and United Nations policy-makers.

Seven years later, we come here before you to ask the question what has the implementation of 1325 meant for the situation of women and girls in Sierra Leone, in the DRC, in Liberia, in Burundi, in Cote d'Ivoire, in Afghanistan, in Haiti, in Timor Leste, and all other situations on the agenda of the Security Council?

Seven years later, women and girls in situations of armed conflict continue to be subjected to widespread and systematic sexual violence. This *is* a matter of international peace and security.

Seven years later, women remain largely excluded from the very structures that make the decisions to sustain peace or to engage in conflict and are still marginalized in peacemaking and peacebuilding processes. This *is* a matter of international peace and security.

Seven years later, the integration of 1325 into the work of the Security Council remains inconsistent. This means that in the situation in Darfur, women are still struggling to be part of peace talks in Tripoli. This means that in the situation of the Democratic Republic of Congo, sexual violence continues unabated and with impunity.

Greater efforts must be undertaken to end impunity and to prosecute those suspected of crimes against women, particularly sexual violence - not only in the states where the crimes occurred and the states of which the suspects are nationals, but also in other states where suspects may be found.

Seven years later, there are still no monitoring or accountability mechanisms to ensure the coherent and effective implementation of 1325.

These *are* matters of international peace and security.

We note the progress that has been made and which has been mentioned by other speakers here this morning. We would like to focus on the role of the Security Council in driving progress in the implementation of 1325. It *does* make a difference when the Security Council integrates 1325 into its work.

For instance, in the June 2006 mission to Sudan led by the United Kingdom, Security Council members met with women's groups and gender experts in both Khartoum and Darfur. Two months later on August 30th 2006, the Security Council issued a resolution that both invokes 1325 and contains useful gender-specific language.

Resolutions need to contain such language. However, where mission mandates contain adequate language on the integration of a gender perspective or women's human rights, too often the 'gender mandate' is not reflected in the directives, guidance, terms of reference, and incentive structures for the mission's staff, including the Special Representative.

Mandates also need to contain standard provisions for regular and adequate monitoring and reporting on implementation of 1325 by the field missions. There needs to be reporting on concrete and specific issues that address questions such as: What is the status of women's participation in the maintenance and promotion of peace and security? What is being done to ensure that women are able to effectively participate in elections? What work is being done with national women's machineries in regard to matters of security?

As the situation stands, some field missions do have a mandate to monitor and report on, for example, grave violations of human rights, but the data and trends regarding many violations, such as sexual violence, are still lacking. Reports need to provide a picture of the security situation in regard to women, especially the violence that affects their everyday lives.

Strong accountability mechanisms and systems are imperative to drive and support effective, timely and systematic implementation. Such a mechanism would help address inconsistency in invoking resolution 1325 in the directives from the Council to the field, and inadequate monitoring and reporting on implementation by field missions – particularly on violations of human rights, such as sexual violence.

The NGO Working Group respectfully urges the Council to consider how it could provide more effective monitoring and reporting on the implementation of 1325, including through the establishment of a focal point or an expert-level working group with appropriate leadership to ensure its active engagement with all aspects of the work of the Council.

We would like to thank you for your attention and to end with a quote from Ms. Barbara Bangura from Sierra Leone who spoke last October. She said:

“Women rely considerably on the guidance and assistance that the United Nations, in its many forms, provides. 1325 can only be successful if the Security Council is proactive in the use of the resolution in their work. As such, the onus is on you here in New York, to cast your light on the path we follow. Our failure is your failure. Our successes, your successes.”

Thank You