

## **Security Council Debate Open Debate on WPS 28 October 2011**

A month of celebrations for the 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 came to a close on 28 October 2011 with the Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security. This year's theme was *Women's Participation and Role in Conflict Prevention and Mediation*. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, UN-Women Executive Director Michelle Bachelet, and ECOSOC President Ambassador Lazarus Kapambwe of Zambia were among the main presenters, followed by Orzala Ashraf Nemat who spoke on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women Peace and Security (NGOWGWPS).

The SG underscored the need for more women's participation in conflict prevention, a greater number of female mediators, and increased funding for implementing strategic framework priorities. Michelle Bachelet discussed the need to fight impunity and reported that currently 32 countries have adopted National Action Plans (NAPs) with twelve others to follow. ECOSOC President, Ambassador Kapambwe, noted the disproportionate effects of conflict on women and girls and the need to include them in reconciliation plans. Speaking on behalf of the NGOWGWPS, Orzala Nemat urged the participation of women in conflict prevention, peace processes, and advocated for equal rights for women to be enshrined in all peace accords. Also stressed was the role of women as agents of change and their appointment as mediators and negotiators.

Among the delegations presenting, Russia made by far the most contrary statement stating that while the establishment of UN Women is a step in the right direction, it is too early to assess the entity's progress. Russia's delegate also warned against allowing the Council to delve into issues of women's rights that do not explicitly affect peace and security. Furthermore, Russia encouraged a more encompassing and multi-faceted view of violence against women, which includes the killing and wounding of women due to excess force, both of which are either left unpunished or classified as "unavoidable."

There was general consensus among other delegations for greater women's participation and more complete implementation of 1325. Holding the Presidency of the Security Council in October, Ambassador Ogwu of Nigeria expressed her commitment to her own country's national implementation of 1325 through the regional support of ECOWAS. Likewise, Tunisia's representative said that the best way to enforce Resolution 1325 is through the implementation of NAPs. Interestingly, the UK took note of the now limited representation of women on the Security Council in light of the elections for next year's rotating seats. At the end of 2011, the Council will see the departure of two strong female presences, Ambassador Ogwu of Nigeria and Ambassador Viotti of Brazil.

Other themes emerged such as female representation in appointments of special envoys and representatives, as noted by the Chinese, as well as support for the linkage between women's participation and economic inclusion from the Brazilians. Peacekeeping was also addressed in the US position that focused on the need for better pre-deployment training as well as improved reporting and accountability on sexual exploitation by peacekeepers. Another poignant suggestion came from the EU

delegation that noted how women's participation must also be incorporated in early warning and security monitoring.

Overall, a number of delegations applauded the work of UN Women and discussed the progress of their respective NAPs. Attention was also paid to the role of civil society in initiating dialogue around these issues as well as acting as critical players in building the capacity necessary to help women participate. This debate is a good annual reminder of the importance of integrating women, peace and security into the Council agenda on a regular basis as well as highlighting the cross-cutting issues involved with securing women's active participation and full political access.