

THIRD COMMITTEE INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE

WOMEN IN THE PEACEBUILDING PROCESS
(11 October 2005, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., Conference Room 1)

Statement by Mr. Tuliameni Kalomoh Assistant Secretary-General Department of Political Affairs

- I am pleased that the Third Committee is hosting today's meeting on a subject that certainly needs to be addressed at the highest policy level within the international community and here at the United Nations. It is also appropriate that this discussion is taking place on the heels of the High-level Summit which focused on needed reforms within the United Nations.
- In the context of peace building, these reforms will impact not only the existing structure, but also the United Nations' peace building activities, especially with the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission. While the modalities for the operation of this entity and its support structure, the Peacebuilding Support Unit in the Secretariat, are not yet fully defined, this far-reaching exercise cannot overlook women's contribution to and participation in all aspects of peace building.
- Security Council Resolution 1325 reaffirms the central role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflict. It also stresses the importance of their participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. I should like to add that for women's participation to be effective, women should be represented at the decision-making level and throughout the implementation process
- In today's conflicts women and girls are disproportionate victims of gender based violence. As we all know, the end of fighting does not immediately lead to better security for all and particularly for women and girls.
- Peacebuilding offers an opportunity for women to play a role in the shaping and rebuilding of institutional mechanisms which will guarantee their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. It also offers an opportunity to institute respect for the rule of law which, in turn, can promote a culture of gender justice and contribute to the achievement of sustainable peace and security.
- Peacebuilding is therefore an opportunity for the United Nations and the international community at large to integrate a gender perspective in the rebuilding of society and have women as effective participants. Our efforts

to enhance women's roles in these activities should therefore begin with increasing their participation in all stages of peace negotiation processes.

- This would ensure that women have an effective role in the planning and execution of projects for rehabilitation, reintegration, national reconciliation, reconstruction and development. It would also guarantee their right to participate fully in electoral processes.
- Sensitization, the incorporation of local voices, coordination of our individual and collective efforts, political will and gender targeted donor funding are among the key strategies for success in this regard.
- Sensitization should also be the connecting thread in policy making by international institutions, governments and civil society. The question "where are the women?" must therefore be asked at all levels of policy making.
- Coordination in peace building activities is another key factor. One of the most frequently heard complaints of local communities, particularly women's groups, in post-conflict countries, concerns lack of coordination.
- Peacebuilding efforts should lead to the empowerment of local actors, not their displacement. We must therefore ensure that the planning and execution of peace building projects include the ideas and perspectives of the local community, and that women participate fully in this process. For peacebuilding to succeed the international community will need to provide sustained and coordinated assistance.
- Perhaps one of our biggest challenges is the sustained provision of adequate funding for peace building activities. Donors may wish to target gender specific projects as a way of ensuring that women participate in and benefit from peacebuilding activities. Since women expertise is a constant challenge, such funding could also ensure that this expertise will be available throughout.
- Ultimately, what really matters is the political will to make policy decisions that would ensure women's participation at all levels of the peacebuilding process. And this is our collective responsibility.
- DPA will continue to do its utmost to promote the participation of women in peacebuilding, and to support all relevant efforts in this regard.
- I thank you.