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Costa Rican Chairmanship

**Joint Statement of the Human Security Network
in connection with the agenda item:**

“Women, Peace and Security”

Ambassador Eduardo Ulibarri, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica
Open Debate of the Security Council
New York, October 26th, 2010

(Check against delivery)

**Declaración conjunta de la Red Informal de Seguridad Humana
en relación con el tema del programa:**

“Mujer, Paz y Seguridad”

Embajador Eduardo Ulibarri, Representante Permanente de Costa Rica
Debate Abierto del Consejo de Seguridad
Nueva York, 26 de Octubre de 2010

(Cotejar con la alocución)

Mr. President,

It is an honour for Costa Rica to speak today in its capacity as Chair of the Human Security Network (HSN). The network is a cross-regional group of countries, which includes Austria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, Norway, Slovenia, Switzerland and Thailand, and South Africa as an observer.

On behalf of the members I would like to express our appreciation to the Republic of Uganda for convening this important Ministerial - level open debate on Women, Peace and Security – a priority issue for the Network – and to welcome the Executive Director of UN Women, Michelle Bachelet, to her first briefing to the Security Council and thank her for her presentation of the Secretary General's report, marking the progress we have made and highlighting the challenges we continue to face in implementing Security Council Resolution 1325.

Today, we are commemorating the tenth anniversary of that Resolution, which has recognized the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts as well as in peacebuilding and opened a new path in the protection of women's full enjoyment of all human rights in armed conflicts and in the efforts to strengthen the participation and representation of women in peace and security processes.

It is evident this landmark resolution has greatly contributed to an increased political focus on the area of women, peace and security. Over the years, the Council has remained active in this area through the adoption of resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and, most recently, resolution 1894 (2009). With resolution 1888 (2009) the Council established the mandate of a Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict. We welcome the appointment of Margot Wallström to this important position. Together these resolutions form the basis of the United Nations policy framework on Women, Peace and Security, and guide Member States, UN entities and civil society. We also welcome the recent creation of "UN Women". With its central focus on supporting the attainment of gender equality and on the empowerment of women in all aspects and in all situations, this new entity will make a crucial contribution to meeting the needs of women and girls worldwide and will accelerate progress in further advancing the women, peace and security agenda. We welcome the appointment of Michelle Bachelet as the head of the new agency, and we look forward to cooperating with "UN Women" both here in New York as well as in the field.

However, despite the progress of the past ten years, many challenges remain. The abhorrent conditions that women and girls face in armed conflict situations persist, and effective and comprehensive methods for addressing those realities are still lacking. As

we speak in this Chamber, discrimination and violence against women in conflict and post-conflict situations – often seemingly committed with complete impunity – are still rampant in certain areas of the world. The horror of such gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, continues to be brought to the attention of the Security Council and efforts to prevent such crimes, including by peacekeeping missions, and to fight impunity have to be redoubled. Let us not forget the statement, delivered by Alain Le Roy, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations in the UNGA Fourth Committee just days ago stipulating that widespread or systematic use of sexual violence against civilians in armed conflicts is used as a tactic of war. This indeed is a very disturbing fact of today's reality.

An urgent and effective response from the international community is required. There must be clear objectives, starting with ending impunity, empowering women, rejecting various forms of discrimination, mobilizing political leadership and increasing awareness of rape as a tactic and consequence of armed conflict. In addition, greater coherence of and a more systematic response by the United Nations system, and increased consultation and cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations and member states as well as civil society, are vital to the success of such action.

With regard to impunity, we should recognize the essential role of international criminal justice, and particularly of the International Criminal Court, in addressing cases of sexual violence in armed conflict. The Rome Statute, and this was in itself a major achievement, recognizes sexual violence as potential war crimes and crimes against humanity. Now the Court is examining situations involving sexual violence, which demonstrates the central contribution that international criminal justice can and does make in dealing with sexual violence in armed conflict.

The widespread or systematic use of violence against women in armed conflicts is a security issue, as well as, of course, a human rights issue. It affects a whole society, significantly exacerbates situations of armed conflict and may impede the restoration of international peace and security. As has recently been reaffirmed by the Council in PRST/2010/20, the Peacebuilding Commission plays an important role in promoting and supporting an integrated and coherent approach to peacebuilding, including women's participation. Women play a pivotal role in the economic recovery of post-conflict countries. The PBC has committed to working on this issue as part of its broader efforts to promote and address women's post-conflict needs. But this fact must also be recognized at a political level, namely by increasing women's participation in political posts, whether appointed or elected, by systematically ensuring the full and equal involvement of women in peace negotiations and by taking into account women's needs in peace agreements. Furthermore, education is a fundamental requirement for the

elimination of violence against women in armed conflict, and in this respect, civil society has a key role to play in the peacemaking and peacebuilding process.

The issue of violence against women in armed conflict is closely related to that of Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, which is a priority of the Human Security Network. Both the protection of civilians and the provisions of resolution 1325 have to be fully incorporated in the mandates for all peacekeeping operations.

Mr. President,

All member states have a responsibility to implement Resolution 1325. The development of National Action Plans is a key component by which Member States commit themselves to fulfill this responsibility. The coming decade should aim for action and accountability. Women's full enjoyment of all human rights have been at the heart of the Human Security Network since its inception. We are committed to supporting meaningful steps to promote and enhance the role of women in peace processes. Without women's participation in this, sustainable peace is not possible. Women must be an integral part of all our thinking on peace and security. We look to the Security Council for strong leadership towards the effective implementation of Resolution 1325 and its related resolutions.

Thank you.