



MALAYSIA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**STATEMENT BY
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**AT THE SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN DEBATE ON
“PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS:
PROTECTION CHALLENGES AND NEEDS FACED BY WOMEN AND GIRLS IN
ARMED CONFLICT AND POST-CONFLICT SETTINGS”**

NEW YORK, 30 JANUARY 2015

Mr. President,

I wish to thank you for convening today's open debate on the issue of protection of civilians (POC) and for seeking to focus discussion on the theme protection challenges and needs of women and girls in armed conflict and post-conflict settings. My delegation also wishes to thank Chile for the thought-provoking Concept Note.

2. I wish to thank UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, for his remarks and the presentations made by Ms. Helen Durham, Director for International Law and Policy of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Ms. Ilwad Elman on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, which we heard with much interest.

Mr. President,

3. Malaysia reaffirms the importance it attaches to general principles on the protection of civilians in armed conflict and in particular, to the protection of women and girls in such situations.

4. As a member of this Council, Malaysia is keenly aware of the significant responsibility shouldered in this regard and reiterates its commitment to continue contributing to further implement such principles.

5. We continue to note with deep concern that in many violent crises around the world, non-combatant women, girls and children comprise the vast majority that are in desperate need of protection and humanitarian assistance.

6. Malaysia shares the assessment that women and girls are particularly vulnerable and face specific risks in conflict situations. We are deeply disturbed by the increasing trend of deliberate targeting of women and girls by belligerents in violent conflicts.

7. While great strides have been made in recognizing the differentiated impact of armed conflict on women and girls as well as in the corresponding efforts to respond to their needs since the adoption of Resolution 1325, Malaysia is of the view that more could be done.

8. In this regard, one key aspect which could benefit from more focused attention relates to the tendency of policymakers to view women and girls as victims and to design or design protection measures based on such perception.

9. Malaysia holds the view that much more could be done to recognize the role of women as agents for action. Such recognition could further empower them to play an active role in creating a protection environment that comprehensively addresses their immediate and long-term needs.

Mr. President,

10. We all agree that the protection of civilians is one of the most visible and key functions of a significant number of existing peacekeeping operations. In this context, Malaysia reaffirms its support for the prioritizing of POC mandates of those peacekeeping missions.

11. Given the unique and disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women and girls, Malaysia also believes it is relevant to assess whether current POC efforts adequately address their concerns and needs.

12. In this regard, we note that DPKO (the Department of Peacekeeping Operations) has developed a three-tiered approach to POC and view that such approach provides a useful framework in framing the discussion on POC in general, and on the protection of women and girls in particular.

13. Additionally, we support the Gender Forward Looking Strategy 2014-2018 and hope that it will be fully implemented in the context of fulfilling POC mandates, including by ensuring that an appropriate number of Gender Advisers and Women Protection Advisers are deployed to peacekeeping missions where mandated.

14. Malaysia also wishes to underscore that blue helmets mandated to protect women and girls must be held to the highest standards. As such, we call for the strict implementation of the zero tolerance policy for sexual exploitation and abuse by UN personnel.

Mr. President,

15. Peacekeeping mandates have over time evolved to become more complex and multidimensional. In this regard, Malaysia shares the view that peacekeepers and civilian personnel deployed in the field must be equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge so that they may navigate complex environments involving multiple actors fulfilling diverse roles and mandates.

16. As such, it is important that peacekeeping missions mandated to carry out POC tasks are also supported with adequate means to do so, including the provision of resources and training for this purpose. In this connection, Malaysia believes that standardized training is especially important to ensure clear understanding of the general peacekeeping mandate including the POC component - where applicable – and to take into account gender considerations and sensitivity.

17. Mindful of the need for such multidimensional training, Malaysia's Peacekeeping Training Center (MPC - established in 1995) has and continues to collaborate with DPKO to provide training on various aspects of peacekeeping for countries in Asia and beyond. To date, MPC has provided training to roughly 2000 peacekeepers from over 50 countries.

18. Most recently, MPC with the assistance of UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and several donor governments including Japan and Norway has embarked on a new training programme to cater to the complex and multidimensional nature of new peacekeeping mandates.

19. The present phase of the project, which runs from March 2014 to December 2015, involves developing training manuals and modules on gender, cultural diversity in peacekeeping operations and protection of civilians.

Mr. President,

20. Malaysia believes that creating an environment conducive for the long-term protection of women and girls is equally important as addressing immediate concerns in conflict situations.

21. In the context of post-conflict peacebuilding, the establishment of a secure environment that would allow for development and growth and for the building of domestic institutions and capacities must be prioritised. Properly implemented, such initiatives would positively contribute in preventing relapse into conflict.

22. Active participation of women and girls must be encouraged so as to ensure that they could contribute towards ensuring that adequate strategies are developed in the post-conflict setting.

23. For example, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes must be able to address the needs of former women and girl-combatants who often face stigmatization for their non-traditional involvement in conflict.

24. Given that women are often thrust into positions of responsibility in times of conflict and in the post-conflict scenario, Malaysia believes that women and girls must be given the tools and the opportunity to rebuild their lives through education and economic opportunities.

25. On a related note, ensuring accountability and justice for serious violations committed is also a crucial means of guaranteeing long-term protection for women and girls. We view that tackling impunity through strengthened justice mechanisms should be made a priority.

Mr. President,

26. We hope that the discussion today provides valuable perspectives that will be taken into account in the various review processes that are ongoing this year, including the Global Study and High Level Review on the implementation of Resolution 1325.

27. The intersection of the peace operations, peacebuilding and women, peace and security reviews provides a unique opportunity to ensure that the rights of women and girls are threaded throughout the efforts to maintain international peace and security.

I thank you, Mr. President.