

**Statement by Mrs. Napaul on Women, Peace and Security**  
**28 October 2002**

Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting today. On behalf of my delegation, I wish to thank the Secretary-General for introducing personally the report on the results of the study on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls and on the role of women in peace-building and the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution. Our delegation found the observations very useful, and we support the recommendations fully.

This week we mark the second anniversary of landmark resolution 1325 (2000). Indeed, much has been done to bring into focus the problems faced by millions of women and girls in armed conflicts throughout the world. However, despite increased attention to that issue, the daily lives of women and girls in armed conflict areas have not improved to the extent we would wish them to have. We have yet to see the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

We welcome the concrete and practical recommendations in the report before us. We would wish all of them to be implemented as quickly as possible, but, to be practical, perhaps the Council needs to prioritize them in such a way that we could implement those that would show immediate results. The increase in the participation of women in all aspects of peace operations, among international staff and particularly at the highest levels of decision-making, has been identified as a priority and should be implemented immediately. In that regard, the Secretary-General's intention of setting concrete targets to appoint women as his special representatives and special envoys, with a view to gender parity by 2015, is praiseworthy. We hope that Member States will seize that opportunity and will submit nominations of qualified women for those posts.

The Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, which is currently looking into ways of enhancing the role of special representatives of the Secretary-General, has made a recommendation for the appointment of more women at that level.

There is a need for more women in peacekeeping missions to act as role models. It is an undeniable fact that the presence of women in missions helps facilitate contact and foster confidence and trust among local women. Concrete examples can be seen in Timor-Leste, Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, where gender units and gender advisers of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor, the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo have contributed respectively to capacity building among local women. The recruitment of officers with specific expertise in issues such as gender bias and sexual violence by the Civilian Police Division of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations is another positive step to be encouraged.

Additionally, training of personnel of peacekeeping missions to develop awareness, commitment and capacity on the relevant gender perspectives needs reinforcement. We remain concerned at the limited availability of human and financial resources, both at Headquarters and in field missions, to effectively promote gender mainstreaming. We hope that necessary resources will soon be released to enable the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to fulfil its gender mainstreaming responsibilities in line with resolution 1325 (2000). We urge those responsible to take concrete action in that regard.

In almost all States that have had armed conflict, women have been denied justice. Crimes against them have gone unrecorded. In many cases, increased violence against women has continued in post-conflict periods, be it at home, on the street or in camps. Those who have survived sexual violence do not talk about it because of fear of rejection by their family or community. They have often been humiliated, mocked and laughed at during their testimony in courts. They have nowhere to turn and are left struggling to recover and return to meaningful community life. We would like to draw attention here to the positive and important role played by non-governmental organizations by increasing awareness and helping to alleviate the miseries of women in such situations.

With very few exceptions, those who have committed heinous crimes against women in wars have not been punished, nor have the women been granted redress.

We need to put an end to this culture of impunity. My delegation strongly supports the recommendation of the Secretary-General to condemn all violations of the human rights of women and girls in situations of armed conflict and to ensure that amnesty provisions included in peace agreements exclude impunity from all war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, including gender-based crimes.

Additionally, judicial and quasi-judicial mechanisms set up by the Council need to apply international legal standards in gender-sensitive matters. It is reported that the two ad hoc tribunals, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), have both been hampered by serious lapses and inconsistencies in the prosecution of crimes of sexual and gender violence.

In a few cases, women have had to withdraw their complaints because the Tribunals failed to provide adequate support and protection, as required by the rules of the Tribunal. There is therefore an urgent need to ensure that the interests of all victims are properly protected.

Central to any transition process is the need to take account of the different needs of women and men at all stages of the rebuilding of societies and of the importance of concrete mechanisms to ensure that all men and women enjoy freedom and participate equally in rehabilitation and reconstruction.

There is a need for the implementation of quick impact projects for women in countries emerging from conflicts that will ensure their early rehabilitation in cases where they have been subjected to severe abuse. Systematic attention should also be given to the incorporation of gender perspectives in economic reconstruction programmes and to the involvement of women in decision-making. They should also benefit directly from resources mobilized through multilateral and bilateral donors.

Finally, words alone are not the solution to the problems of millions of women and girls in situations of armed conflict. The Council needs to be updated regularly on the progress made on the recommendations of the Secretary-General to alleviate the sufferings of these women and girls and to eliminate all discrimination against them.