



*Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya to the United Nations*

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**STATEMENT**

**BY**

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REPUBLIC OF KENYA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**AND**

**CHAIRMAN OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACEBUILDING  
COMMISSION (PBC)**

**DURING**

**THE OPEN DEBATE OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON:**

***"THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION OF  
CONFLICT IN AFRICA"***

**SECURITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**28<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2016**

**Check against Delivery**

**President of the Security Council, Mrs Maria Filomena Delgado,  
Minister for Family and the Promotion of Women, Republic of  
Angola**

**Executive Director of UN Women, USG Phumzile Mlambo  
Ngucka**

**ASG for Political Affairs, Mr Taye Brook Zerihoun**

**Colleague Ambassadors and Delegates**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

I wish to thank you for this opportunity to brief you today, in my capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission during this very important and timely open debate on the role of women in conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. I also thank you for providing us with a comprehensive concept paper to guide the debate.

**Madam President,**

Since its creation, the Peacebuilding Commission has supported the idea that women must participate in peacebuilding processes and to contribute to decision-making in the reconstruction of their countries. The Peacebuilding Commission strongly believes that women's participation is crucial to inclusive, participatory, and sustainable, peacebuilding processes. The report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the review of Peacebuilding Architecture reaffirmed strongly that ensuring women's full participation in peacebuilding processes is "*crucial to the success of economic recovery, political legitimacy and social cohesion*".

This understanding of women's role in peacebuilding is widely shared. The Security Council in its landmark Resolution No. 1325 of 2000 and subsequent resolutions including 2242 of 2015 adopted by the present Council have given us a broad normative framework that I believe is universally supported by Member States. Yet, as the report from the Advisory Group of Experts, and as the Global Study on SCR1325



reminded us last year, much remains to be done in practice to turn global commitments into reality on the ground.

This is also true of the work of Peacebuilding Commission. During its entire lifetime, the PBC has demonstrated a keen interest in gender equality and women's empowerment. Mirroring international policy developments particularly the presentation of the Secretary-General's report on women and peacebuilding, including his Seven-Point Action Plan in 2010, the PBC's developed its own Declaration on women's economic empowerment for peacebuilding in 2013. Equally, the Security Council has adopted various resolutions on Women, Peace and Security since the late 2000s.

**Madam President,**

While the PBC's country-specific instruments of engagement recognize the role of women in building peace, translating formal commitments into concrete action on the ground has not been as systematic and efficient as we would like it to be. The high expectations for the transformative change and strengthening of women's participation in peace and security anticipated in Resolution 1325 has not been fully delivered.

Yet, despite the persistent exclusion of women from the loci of power and influence in many societies across the world, women have continued to make a significant contribution to building inclusive approaches to security, peacebuilding and conflict prevention in their own unique ways. As such, women remain a resource that has not been effectively utilised or enabled to build sustainable peace.

Hindrances to women participation in peace and security include cynical cultural practices that maintain patriarchal attitudes and norms; insufficient political will across the board, to fully implement Res 1325 and its affiliates; militarised interventions and approaches to conflict resolution that tend to 'crowd out' other organic initiatives within society that help build resilience, particularly during peacekeeping and countering violent extremism(CVE), that puts women to a disadvantage; and the absence of gender sensitive economic recovery following conflict

that poses a barrier to women empowerment during transitions. Similarly, top-down bureaucratic processes in implementing the women, peace and security agenda have neglected the local ownership aspects that a complementary bottom-up approach would help bring about.

These manifest bottlenecks have compelled the Peacebuilding Commission to embark on the development of its first Gender Strategy, with the support of the Peacebuilding Support Office and UN Women. This Strategy, which we expect to adopt before July 2016, spells out specific recommendations to strengthen the substantive, cross-cutting integration of gender perspectives in all PBC country-specific thematic and strategic engagement. It identifies thematic priority areas, such as women's participation in peacebuilding/mediation processes and prevention; post-conflict governance and leadership; rule of law; economic empowerment; access to basic social infrastructure while emphasizing that men and boys need to be engaged as partners.

### **Madam President**

The PBC will continue to use its unique leverage to advocate actively for dedicated technical expertise on gender equality and peacebuilding as well as dedicated funding within the UN and also among its national and international partners. The combination of senior leadership commitment, specialized expertise and dedicated financial resources is what can make a real difference. Her Excellency Julian Duncan Cassel, Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection in Liberia, reminded us just last week in her address to the Commission on the Status of Women that Liberia was able to make great strides to sustain peace and empower women economically thanks to the commitment of national authorities, the in-country expertise from the UN Women country office and the catalytic funding from the Peace building Fund (PBF). We should also not forget that Liberia is a country led by a woman at a time of a most difficult transition from war to peace and yet another difficult transition from a horrific epidemic to normalcy.

In Burundi, as stated by the Executive Director, UN Women the same combination of leadership, strategic funding from PBF and in-country



expertise allowed UN Women to support a network of 534 women mediators working across all municipalities. By their count, women mediators addressed over 5,000 conflicts at the local level in 2015. They have been tackling familial, social and land-related conflicts at the community level, which can easily be politicized and risk destabilizing communities. The mediators promote non-violence and dialogue, and counter rumours and exaggerated fears with verifiable information. Evidently, the inclusion of women is essential for achieving lasting peace in Burundi and the experiences of the women mediators could be instructive for all stakeholders involved in current dialogue processes.

**Madam President,**

Peace will only be sustained with the participation of all relevant national stakeholders including civil society. The recent adoption by the Security Council of Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security ushers an important stride towards greater inclusivity in peacebuilding. The role of young women and men in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding is finally getting the recognition it deserves. The PBC also firmly believes that young women are central actors, not just for the future of their countries, but for the present, starting right now.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that the PBC is committed to advocating, on behalf of women and young people, using its intergovernmental approach, its convening power and leverage to engage national partners, to open the space for their participation and to help ensure that they receive the acknowledgement and dedicated support that they deserve.

The PBC Gender Strategy is an important step in the process of operationalizing a transformative Women, Peace and Security agenda.

That is the PBC Statement.

**Madam President**

If I may Madam President, I would like to add a personal special emphasis to this issue of Gender. I've just come from Kenya and I've witnessed again the ruin that 100 years of colonial and post colonial

policies have done to the place of women in our culture and in our society. Women remain firmly at the bottom of the rungs of social progress and empowerment. I can't emphasize enough how conscious I am of the fact that gender is a central factor in the delivery of the 2030 Agenda and the better future that we all want.

Realizing the ambition of a better more inclusive future and that of a sustainable world that attains sustained development that has at its core sustainable peace and security for all, will require that we respond forcefully and with determination to the issue and condition of females in our societies.

The centrality of gender matters within families and communities especially in protecting and promoting girls and women cannot be gainsaid. This is equally true, Madam President, within and among nations and that is why we are having this debate here today at the Security Council. But words without actions are shameful and futile. Global peace and harmony is intrinsically tied up with the promotion and protection of the human rights of women and girls everywhere. We must act accordingly.

Let there be no doubt about that.

**I thank you.**