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STATEMENT

BY

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AT

THE SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN DEBATE
ON

**“WOMEN AND PEACE AND SECURITY:
PREVENTION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE”**

NEW YORK
24 JUNE 2013

Mr. President,

I thank you, Mr. President and your country, the United Kingdom for scheduling this important debate on Women, Peace and Security, Addressing Impunity: Effective Justice for crimes of sexual violence in conflict. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General, the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict Ms. Zainab Bangura for their informative and illuminating introductory presentations on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Their presentations together with the concept note you circulated will no doubt guide our deliberations today.

Mr. President,

Sexual violence wherever it is committed, is a crime against humanity, when committed in conflict situations is more than a double-edged sword to the victims. As highlighted in the concept note, it not only affects a large number of women and girls, but also men and boys. Without downplaying the impact of sexual violence against men and boys, it is more often women and girls who are disproportionately affected because the consequences they have to live with are much more severe than in the case of men and boys. Despite that, no human being should be subjected to such heinous and disgraceful crime. It is purely a manifestation of evil that cannot be justified or tolerated in the 21st century.

In conflict situations, the dignity of women and girls must be respected and cannot be treated as sub humans. They are first and foremost, human beings endowed with rights to pursue happiness in every possible way. Secondly, they are grandmothers, mothers, wives, sisters and sweet little girls in eyes of their parents and the community in general. In conflict

situation too, the family bond remains and must be accorded adequate protection.

Mr. President,

My country has made its modest contribution to issues of women in peace, during Namibia's Presidency of the Security Council in October 2000, an open debate and discussions were initiated, which culminated in the adoption of the Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). The Security Council also adopted resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1960 (2010) highlighting the seriousness of sexual violence as threat to international peace and security.

The urgent question confronting international community today, what are the appropriate strategies to end sexual violence in conflict? The international justice mechanism should support the restoration or establishment of justice and accountability at the national level. Empowerment of women and girls as well as educating boys about the rights of girls and women are some of important elements that help the long term nurturing responsible behaviours. We welcome the call by G8 for urgent action to address impunity and hold perpetrators of sexual violence in armed conflicts accountable. There can be no sympathy for any person or group of persons who commit sexual violence anywhere. My delegation acknowledges the important role the Security Council plays by encouraging the development of joint government-United Nations Comprehensive Strategies to Combat Sexual Violence.

We encourage the Special Representative on Sexual Violence to work with governments and armed groups to seek their commitments for accountability to prevent sexual violence. We

also support the proposal to deploy women protection advisers to UN missions as well as addressing sexual violence in the context of Security Sector Reform (SSR). Furthermore, my delegation supports establishing a mechanism to monitor commitments by parties to conflict, including issuing clear orders through chains of command and put up codes of conduct prohibiting sexual violence. Those who have been identified and proven beyond reasonable doubt to have perpetrated or condoned acts of sexual violence should be excluded from any future security institutions or holding positions of influence. Specific measures to impose targeted sanctions on those committing or condoning sexual violence should be taken against the perpetrators.

When the legal mechanisms are insufficient to fight against sexual violence in the context of justice sector, reforms both in the administration of justice and the legislative process may become necessary. We would therefore, like to stress that continuous capacity building of staff and other stakeholders on gender equality be enhanced.

Mr. President,

While this debate is mainly addressing issues of sexual violence, we must also focus our attention beyond conflict periods. An area of concern to us, however, is the continued low representation of women in all structures and phases of the peace building process. Despite the disproportionate impact of conflict on women, they continue to hold their families and communities together and often undertake initiatives across warring factions under extremely difficult conditions. When involved, they will bring their experiences into formal peace processes. Thus, it is imperative that they are included in all levels of peace building processes.

It is unfortunate that more often than not, the efforts of women are insufficiently recognized and supported, both politically and financially. As a result, women's rights are rarely integrated in peace agreements, and in the structures supporting post conflict reconstruction.

We therefore urge that the role of women in these processes be built in the peace agreements from the very beginning. The challenge we have before us is on how to increase the number of women in all phases and levels of peace processes. Men need to be sensitized on the positive contributions that women can make in the society.

In conclusion, Mr. President, my delegation urges the Security Council to act expeditiously on the information presented to it in the report under discussion. The paramount consideration should be that more needs to be done to protect women and girls, men and boys from the scourge of sexual violence.

I thank you.