INFORMATION NOTE

“Women, Peace and Security: from resolution to action. Ten years of Security Council Resolution 1325”

In the presence of H.E Micheline Calmy-Rey, Federal Councillor and Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, H.E Ambassador Alex Van Meeuwen, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations (UN), H.E Maurice Peter Kagimu Kiwanuka, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uganda to the UN, and Ms Navanethem Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nation Office at Geneva (UNOG), the Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Force (DCAF) and the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union co-organized a high level seminar on 15 September, at the Palais des Nations, to mark the 10th anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security. As part of UNSCR 1325 celebration, this seminar critically discussed progress made in implementing SCR 1325 as well as taking stock of remaining challenges to articulate recommendations “to move beyond commitment to concrete actions” for the High Level Ministerial Meeting due to take place in October at the Security Council in New York.

On her Keynote address, H.E Micheline Calmy-Rey underlined that: “Mobilization for women’s participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding should not only transpire in forum dedicated to Women Peace and Security. Instead commitment to gender mainstreaming in this area must be translated at all levels of policies implementations by the international community”. While praising the efforts made so far by Switzerland, she urged for more progress in implementing UNSCR 1325. Progress to lessen the gap between the spirit of UNSCR 1325 which called for women increased involvement in conflict resolution through participation, prevention and protection and the reality on the ground in countries like in DRC where women’s participation is limited by remaining abuses and sexual violence.
These situations underline the weaknesses of international efforts not only to protect vulnerable groups in remote areas, but also to prevent the occurrence of horrific situations where “rape is used as a weapon of war”. These remarks were echoed by Ms Bineta Diop, Co-Chair of the Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG) and Executive Director of Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS), who was a panellist along with other leading figures including Ms Veronique Arnault, Directorate-General for External Relations of the European Commission, General Jasbir Singh Lidder, UN Deputy Special Representative for Sudan and Dr. Soccoh Kabia, Minister of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs of Sierra Leone.

Ms Diop stressed that: “The 10th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 is not a time to celebrate (…) in view of the day light violation of women’s right in Guinea and DRC.” She pointed out that despite Resolution 1820, 1888, 1885 violence is still happening due to the lack of accountability mechanism. She then underlined that “this 10th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 is an opportunity for States to engage in accountability mechanisms with clear, budgeted and time bound goals indicators on UNSCR 1325”. On that process, she welcomed the adoption of National Action Plans (NAPs) on UNSCR 1325 by 19 countries which includes Côte d’Ivoire, Liberia, Uganda, Sierra Leone and Rwanda. She also encouraged countries which are currently in the drafting phase like Guinea. She underlines that: “although Governments are taking the leadership in adopting NAPs, the ownership of the process actually belong to women’s groups on the ground.” As the Executive Director of FAS, she witnessed how women in Sierra Leone mobilized and engaged with their leadership to get a NAP. Ms Bineta Diop highlighted also the necessity to address cross-cutting issues through a regional perspective in implementing NAPs. She also urged States to support one another through a twining/cross learning approach as it could be useful incentive for States to develop and adopt NAP like “Ireland is planning to do thanks to its twinning partnership with Liberia”.

In terms of Recommendations, Ms Veronique Arnault advocated “going from words to deeds”. To that end, she called on the UN to strengthen a comprehensive approach in implementing UNSCR 1325. She is expecting that the outcome of the Ministerial Meeting will be strong enough to convey the message that “UNSCR 1325 is not only an instrument that concern women”.

General Jasbir Singh Lidder stated that “resource and personnel limitations do not currently allow for the protection of all”, therefore he recommended a greater focus on “environmental security wherein civilians feel safe within their environment” which would do more to allow civilians to operate safely. In also recommended strengthening community-based structures so that improvements in security conditions can be maintained when military forces are withdrawn. Dr. Soccoh Kabia reiterated Sierra Leone’s commitment towards gender mainstreaming. He gave a concrete example of achievements with the Constitutional Review Commission which adopted a legislation providing for 30% of women at the parliament. He recommended more information sharing on UNSCR 1325 for “people to understand their rights”. He stressed also that “UNSCR 1325 provides further basis to establish coalition of Non-Governmental Organization and Civil Society”.

As such he urged the various stakeholders to increase and strengthen their collaboration as they are instrumental in implementing UNSCR 1325. Ms Bineta Diop stressed that the establishment of UNWOMEN offers an opportunity to include in its mandate the promotion, implementation and evaluation of UNSCR 1325. Given that it would be necessary to provide the new agency with adequate funding with about 15% of its pledges in post-conflict recovery reserved for the implementation of UNSCR 1325. She ended her recommendations by restating UN Member States and Civil Society desires to see the Secretary General endorses all the recommendations made in the various consultations undertaken throughout the year.

In the closing address, H.E Maurice Peter Kagimu Kiwanuka, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uganda who will holds the presidency of the Security Council in October, reaffirmed Uganda pledge to use its chairmanship to project a leadership role in implementing UNSCR 1325. Ms Navanethem Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, reiterated the need to link UNSCR 1325 to the existing Human Rights instruments, like the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), for a comprehensive legal and policy framework for women’s rights.
Mr. Sergei A. Ordzhonikidze, Director-General of UNOG, emphasised that this seminar is “an important feature in the international community efforts to work together to turn existing and unfortunate issues into concrete actions” paving the way for the high level Ministerial Meeting which will be held in 28 October 2010.

That event was followed by a Geneva High-Level Consultation on “the Protection Agenda under Security Council Resolution 1325” organised by The European Union Joint team in Geneva, in collaboration with UN agencies and NGOs

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