



10th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325:

Ensuring women's participation in peace and security

Egmont palace, Brussels, 9th of September 2010

Closing Remarks

Author: *Mrs. Elisabeth Rehn, Minister of State*

During this seminar, we have got first hand information through the rich and rewarding discussions by true experts of war and conflict. We have listened to the encouraging speeches from presenters who through their positions have power to contribute to a change.

The Outcome Declaration expresses commitment to change and action, not only calls and recommendations. All of us present here today have to live up to a personal and professional commitment.

I would like to inform you that an outcome declaration with 3 types of recommendations will be circulated to all participants. They are directed to the UN Security Council, the EU and the international community as a whole.

We hope of course that a number of the recommendations are put into action at the ministerial debate in the UN Security Council in October, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of resolution 1325. I am sure Ms Ashton will keep in mind a number of recommendations she heard today.

The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 as such could have been sufficient enough, if only implemented. I must admit I cannot agree that adoption of new UN-resolutions are regarded as important steps taken, as only implementation can measure the success. Frankly, a lot of time and energy has been spent on the preparation of resolutions. During ten long years the time would rather had been used for concrete action where help was needed.

We are very pleased about the new position of UN SRSG on Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict. During many years the civil society has called for it, not at least in the Call to action from the International Women Leadership Colloquium in Monrovia March 2008. We wish Margot Wallström a lot of luck and support her in her difficult work.

But, this important position could well have been created based on SCR 1325 much earlier.

The Outcome Declaration points strongly on the fact that still so few women are appointed to high level positions in the Peace and Security operations. We express our gratitude to High Representative Ashton for leading the way by the very recent appointment of Dame Rosalind Marsden to EU Special Envoy in Sudan. It has been considered almost as a scandal that amongst the great amount of EU-envoys there has not been one single woman until now. The door has been opened, certainly because of the fact that High Representative has committed herself to change this disproportion.

This also shows that women in leadership position are creating opportunities for other women, as leaders, and very important, as role models for women in the countries we want to help to overcome war and conflict.

It is though not enough that UN, EU, AU, NATO and other organisations are willing to appoint women to missions of Peace and Security. The governments have a strong responsibility in proposing merited women candidates, who they are prepared to lobby for and to support with all possible energy. Unfortunately, it is obvious that male candidates are getting more attention and support, all the way to the end of the process.

Merited women are cautious with a candidature proposed by their government, if they fear there will not be enough commitment and support.

It is also important to look into the criterions of the leadership positions for Peace and Security. They are mostly made to suit merits of men. All experience from the theatre of wars shows that true peace only can be achieved when the needs and situation of the civilian victims are met from the very beginning. Very few peace agreements have mentioned the specific situation of women victims or gender sensitivity.

My own quite wide experience from many regions of conflict is clear: Women must be paid special attention, women must be present at negotiation tables, women must be a part of the peace processes, at all levels. The merits and experience of women certainly are in many cases much more suitable for the leadership position than of their male competitors. The merits and criterions for mandates must be looked into also from this aspect.

The Outcome Declaration mentions fighting impunity as an important element. I fully agree. Through my new position as Chair of the Board of Directors of the Trust Fund for Victims of ICC, a problem I have met is the generous amnesties given as a part of the peace agreement. The result is often that raped woman, with children fathered by the rebels, is everyday suffering from fear because of the presence of the rapist who is a free man living in the same village.

At mediators meetings amnesty is more and more a subject for discussion. Usually the discussion though ends stating that it is more important to ensure the peace agreement, than to endanger the outcome through too much focus on raped women...

As the TFV projects for victims of war, now in Uganda, DRC, CAR and also soon in Kenya, to an essential part are focused on women and their reintegration in the society, it would be valuable if EU when seeking partners also could establish cooperation with TFV, not only the Court itself.

National Action Plans for 1325 are important; they are means to engage governments in the implementation of 1325. They must build on cooperation between relevant ministries and the civil society. For example, the NAP for Finland is signed by several ministers, there is a reporting system, a follow-up committee, and monitoring of achievements in 2011. I am glad to inform that one of the most active ministries is Ministry for Defence.

Many regions have initiated cooperation based on SCR1325. The Regional Women's lobby for South Eastern Europe, African cooperation in the Great Lakes region, Mano River countries, Fiji with other small island in the Pacific are working on Regional Actions Plans for 1325.

EU and our member states can financially support the creation of them. Finland has done it through Femmes Africa Solidarité, resulting in National Action plans for Rwanda, Burundi, DRC. It is a good way of cooperation between EU and AU.

When calling for a bigger share of women in political leadership and participation, we must also see the problems. Every election campaign needs money. Women have much less access to financial support than men. Through financial support to women organisations campaigning for women candidates, we can create a better platform for them to be elected.

The financial support for women's participation in peace talks must also be guaranteed. It is easy to demand women's presence at the negotiation tables, but they must also be able to afford to be there. To pay for travel and accommodation are often impossible for women when not invited to be a part of the official delegation.

Gender focal points in missions are not solving any problems, if not given a strong mandate and position in the hierarchy. The person appointed must have influence and power to react on gender injustice.

I join the Civil Society Organisations calling for EU to create a high-level function on Women, Peace and Security, let us call the person an EU Special Representative. The person would be the coordinator, contact and link on 1325 for High Representative to NATO, AU and UN, and especially the head of the new entity, UN Woman.

The Functions of the UN Woman have not yet been spelled out, but it will consolidate the mandates and functions of the existing four entities.

Bottom up activities are good, and what happens in the field is most important, but so is indeed covering of normative, policy, advocacy, monitoring and other functions currently carried on. This means UN Woman must be the coordinating entity within UN for Women, peace and security, in collaboration with other relevant UN entities, agencies, funds and programs.

It is impossible for EU alone to change the world. We want to be good partners with international organisations, governments and civil society. But we can of course give a good example, to be the role model so many are asking for.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to inform you that we are all invited to have a look at the small NATO information fair on women's participation in peace keeping, installed just before the conference hall. NATO has a crucial role in the implementation of 1325, their efforts are appreciated.

Thank you