



Presentation

by

**Mr. Anwarul K. Chowdhury
United Nations Under-Secretary-General
and**

**High Representative for the Least Developed Countries,
Landlocked Developing Countries
and Small Island Developing States**

at

the 816th Wilton Park Conference

on

**Peace and Security:
Implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325**

**Sussex, England
30 May 2005**

Greetings to all of you from the United Nations !!

I consider it a particular honour to share the opening session with the eminent and distinguished President of Liberia Her Excellency Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf at this 816th Wilton Park Conference. As the Wilton Park logo mentions, for the last six decades, it has been bridging divides and providing an excellent environment for policy makers and opinion formers to discuss the best ways to deal with key challenges facing the world. I pay tribute to the Wilton Park for its commitment to global understanding and cooperation and also for choosing the implementation of the Security Council resolution 1325 as the theme for this Conference.

More than six years have gone by since the idea was mooted in the Security Council to focus on the role of women in war, peace and security. Lots of efforts have been made – global networking has taken roots in advancing the core focus of the resolution. The foundation for all this was laid in the Independent Experts Report prepared in 2002 by President Johnson-Sirleaf and European Parliament Member Elisabeth Rehn. My special tribute to both of them for coming up with not only a thorough analysis of the impact of armed conflict on women and women's role in peace-building but also articulating a very comprehensive set of recommendations, implementation of which would bring in wide ranging changes that we can be proud of. I am therefore very happy that President Johnson-Sirleaf is here to share her views on the implementation process as our inaugural speaker. We are also privileged to hear from Elisabeth Rehn on moving forward as our final speaker.

It is encouraging that during the last years, there has been an increasing recognition by governments, international organizations and civil society of the importance of gender issues and empowerment of women in the continuing struggle for equality, democracy and human rights and for poverty eradication and development.

In nearly every country and region of the world, we can point to areas in which there has been progress on achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. Yet, this progress has been uneven and the gains remain fragile. Virtually nowhere are women's rights given the priority they deserve. And, despite increased global awareness, in many countries the rights of women are still under threat. Women are deeply affected by conflicts which they have had no role in creating. Women's interests have been neglected by the peace process, which has resulted in male-centered conventional approaches to peace and security.

Equally challenging is the growing violence against women and girls in armed conflict. In today's conflicts, they are not only the victims of hardship, displacement and warfare, they are directly targeted with rape, forced pregnancies and assault as deliberate instruments of war.

The intrinsic role of women in global peace and security had remained unrecognized since the creation of the United Nations. The inexplicable silence of 55 long years was broken, for the first time, on the 8th of March 2000, on the International

Women's Day, when the President of the UN Security Council issued a statement that brought to global attention the unrecognized, under-utilized and under-valued contribution women do make and can make to preventing war, to building peace and to bringing individuals and societies back in harmony. I consider it my proud privilege that as the Council President, I could take that initiative. It was this statement that played the most crucial role in the process of adoption of the now famous and unique Security Council resolution most well known just by its number 1325. My proposal attracted particularly the enthusiastic support of many NGOs.

The potential of Resolution 1325, its implications and its impact in real terms are enormous. Women and many men all over the world have been energized by this resolution, and political support for its implementation by UN members, international organizations and, most importantly, civil society is growing. This conference with the focus on 1325 is a significant example of that.

That women make a difference when in decision- and policy-making positions is no longer in dispute. When women participate in peace negotiations and in the crafting of a peace agreement, they keep the future of their societies, their communities in mind. They think of how their children and grandchildren will be able to live in their own homeland in a peaceful and secure environment, how they will benefit from the structure of peace envisaged in the agreement. They have the broader and longer-term interest of society in mind. Whereas, historically in post-conflict situations, men are interested in ensuring that, the peace process will give them the authority and power that they are seeking.

Let me mention one shining example from your region, Madame President. The Mano River Women's Peace Network brings together women from the West African nations of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, in pursuing their vision of peace, the women rallied together to call for disarmament and played a crucial role in paving the way to solve the regional conflict by having the three heads of government of these countries sit at the same table. This joint peace initiative by the women of the Mano River region was awarded the UN Human Rights Prize for 2003 in recognition of the Network's outstanding achievement.

A lasting peace cannot be achieved without the participation of women and the inclusion of gender perspectives and participation in peace processes. Informal peace initiatives of grassroots women's groups and networks, organized across party and ethnic lines, have carried out reconciliation efforts and have been increasingly recognized by the Security Council. The Council has met with women's groups and representatives of NGOs during its field missions to the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kosovo and Sierra Leone.

Much, nevertheless, remains to be done. We continue to find reports that women are still very often ignored or excluded from formal processes of negotiations and elections and in the drafting of the new constitution or legislature frameworks.

What then can we do in the coming months and years to move forward an effective implementation of the Security Council Resolution 1325 in letter and spirit? I believe so far the Security Council deliberations on the implementation have not been able to focus on the core of the resolution, that is women. There is no full and equal participation of women in this process. There is no consideration of women's needs in the deliberations. The main question is not to make war safe for women but to structure the peace in a way that there is no recurrence of war and conflict. That is why women need to be at the peace tables, women need to be involved in the decision-making and in the peace-keeping teams, particularly as civilians to ensure real and faithful implementation of 1325.

Gender perspectives must be fully integrated into the terms of reference of peace operations related Security Council resolutions, reports and missions. Peace support operations should include gender advisers and specialists and consultations with women's groups and networks are to be ensured. The decision for the establishment of a single multi-dimensional training unit by the UN DPKO – the so-called Integrated Training Service (ITS) – should have a dedicated Gender Trainer or gender component such as a Gender Focal Point included from the outset. Full involvement of women in peace negotiations at national and international levels must be provided for, including training for men on formal peace processes. Gender perspectives should also be an integral part of post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes. A no-tolerance, no-impunity approach must be used in cases of violation of the code of conduct in peace-keeping operations. And very importantly gender sensitivity training must be provided to the peacekeepers before they arrive for their assignment. As a matter of fact, I would recommend that all prospective peace-keepers must pass “the 1325 test” before they leave their countries and there should be no relaxation with regard to this qualifier. Troop contributing countries should be aware that repeated violations by their contingents would put them on a global blacklist.

I believe it is important that the United Nations Resident Coordinators are also adequately briefed and advised on the implementation of 1325 at all levels in the countries concerned. It is also important that education, both formal and non-formal, in each country needs to include gender sensitivity along with human rights, social and economic justice, non violent alternatives, traditional peace processes and conflict resolution. If we start at a very early stage of an individual's life with these elements in their education process, we would not have the exclusion of women that we now face. Peace education should therefore be an integral component of the implementation of 1325.

The new Peace-Building Commission just established by the UN General Assembly need also to make 1325 integral to its terms of reference and working methods as well as staffing. They need to incorporate and be responsive to the skills that women bring to peace-building at the country level as well as at regional and global levels. They need to pay attention not only to the skills and contributions but also to needs and interests of women in post-conflict situations. The new Commission should be absolutely aware of this dimension and benefit from talking to women and civil society

organizations so that the Commission is appropriately sensitized and oriented from the start.

I believe that the time has come to prepare an exhaustive and comprehensive list of indicators to monitor and measure progress in the implementation of 1325 in its letter and spirit. In that context, the statement by the Security Council issued on 8 March 2000 should also be taken into account as that laid the foundation of the resolution. The civil society/NGO network that now exists and is evolving to become broad-based and inclusive should be the main anchor in monitoring the progress. A global network should be created for the purpose of monitoring because it is very important to keep in focus the broader dimensions of 1325 that incorporates the promotion of the Culture of Peace and peace education in all parts of the world.

It would be worthwhile to bring out an annual global ranking of countries, organizations and other important actors for their role and efforts as required in the implementation process.

Within the United Nations, as a number of offices are involved in the implementation process, I believe a practical way should be found to make all these actions pulled together to be meaningful.

Here, I would like to underline two areas that need special attention. First, is the role of the senior officials within the United Nations system relevant to the implementation of 1325 and the need for their awareness, sensitivity and training. Second, the evolving role of the regional organizations and non-UN peace-keeping forces in the context of 1325. It is absolutely essential that the peace-keeping forces like those of the NATO and the African Union are appropriately trained in their responsibilities as envisaged in 1325.

One practical area that UN is already trying to do is to develop model provisions for peace agreements where the role of women can be ensured. This should be pursued with all seriousness by the NGOs. This would be particularly relevant in the context of the implementation of the peace agreement, when the societies will build up institutional structures that will ensure due recognition and equal participation of women. At the UN we talk about increasing the representation of women at the senior level, particularly in the peace operations but it is also necessary that the support system also be fully geared to the gender issues and gender participation. A practical thing would also be to meet with the Members of the Security Council – all of them – from time to time to make them aware that it is their responsibility to push the implementation process. The ten rotating members of the Security Council are sometimes big agents for change and they may be more easily approached. Well, for this conference of course, our thanks go to a permanent member.

In March 2004, there was a very focused dialogue on women's role and equal participation in post conflict peace-building and came up with a number of thoughtful suggestions which include establishment at the national level of a gender task force to

follow up on Security Council resolution 1325 and relevant sections of the Beijing Platform for Action; arrangement of a national forum comprising of representatives from different Ministries and NGOs to exchange ideas on issues relating to gender culture and peace, and development of an education curricula to promote culture of peace. We need to ensure that these are appropriately implemented.

Culture of peace begins with education and training programmes that target violent attitudes and norms of behaviour. The Global Campaign for Peace Education championed by The Hague Appeal for Peace is a commendable initiative and should get the full support of the international community for expansion to cover all regions of the world. It is also necessary to keep in mind that our overall objectives of promoting human security would be greatly advanced through the implementation of 1325. I would therefore underline that promoting a culture of peace and ensuring human security in the context of the implementation of 1325 would be mutually supportive and reinforcing.

I strongly believe that the responsibility for the implementation of 1325 should go beyond the Member States to carry forward the implementation of the resolution 1325 in its true spirit. In this context, I would commend the remarkable and substantive work done by the NGO Working Group relating to the 1325 implementation and the five-year review report that it published last year.

Finally, I believe it would be purposeful for the United Nations to have a full-time advocate and monitor for 1325 – a kind of Special Representative of the Secretary-General for 1325.

Let me conclude by stressing again that sustainable peace is inseparable from gender equality. In coming years, women could and should play a more significant and substantive role in making the transition from culture of violence to culture of peace. We should not forget that when women are marginalized, there is little chance for an open and participatory society.
