

Statement
by
Rachel Mayanja
Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women
at the
Regional Conference on the Implementation of the National Action
Plans on resolution 1325 (2000) in the Great Lakes Region

Bujumbura, 13 – 14 August 2009

Excellencies,
Distinguished Moderator,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Colleagues and Friends,

I am honoured to have been invited to take part in this regional conference and to share in the exchange of experiences in the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 and in discussions of how to move toward the establishment of National and Regional Action Plans based on peace and security initiatives identified at the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region.

Allow me at the outset to express my appreciation to the Ministry of Human and Gender Rights of the Republic of Burundi, the Executive Secretariat of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region and Femmes Africa Solidarité for organizing this conference. I am grateful in

particular to the staff of Femmes Africa Solidarité for the excellent arrangements for my participation. Femmes Africa Solidarité's leadership and commitment to women's participation in all efforts to secure and sustain peace is well known and appreciated. I congratulate you and encourage you to persevere. I extend my appreciation to the government of people of Burundi for their warm welcome and hospitality.

Distinguished Moderator,

Almost nine years have passed since the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security on 31 October 2000. The adoption of that resolution marked an historic step forward in the acknowledgement of the critical role of women in the peace processes – be it conflict prevention, conflict resolution, post-conflict peacebuilding and sustenance of peace. By calling on all actors involved in negotiating and implementing peace agreements to adopt a gender perspective that would take into account the special needs of women and girls during repatriation and settlement, rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction, resolution 1325 (2000) held great promise of

bridging the wide gap between the traditional roles of women and men in conflict management, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding.

Yet nine years after the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), progress in realizing this promise and closing this gap remains scanty. Those of you present here today need no introduction to SCR 1325 (2000) or to its great potential to secure women's participation in all conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes and inclusion of their concerns. Regrettably, for too many people, including policy makers and those responsible for policy implementation, SCR 1325 (2000) remains relatively unknown and initiatives to ensure its implementation remain weak and fragmented. On the eve of the tenth anniversary, we are still confronting ignorance of the resolution, including in places where it should have been championed. Therefore, our first task is to make Resolution 1325 (2000) widely known throughout local and national institutions.

How do we ensure that this happens?

I propose that we pause to reflect on and to review what we have done well and what we have done less well. The lessons from our successes and

failures in implementation whether by developing action plans – nationally, regionally and within the United Nations System, or by alternative strategies such as integration of provisions of the resolution into a broader gendered framework, use of gender audits or formation of inter-ministerial bodies – give us some good clues about what directions to take as we approach the second decade.

Let me start with the experience within the UN system. It took five years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) for the United Nations system to develop a system-wide action plan for implementing the resolution. The goal was to strengthen commitment and accountability from the highest levels throughout the entities, as well as to allow for improved monitoring and reporting of progress on implementation within the UN system. When this action plan was reviewed in 2007, it was found to have fundamental flaws. Among them were lack of clear baselines, lack of performance indicators and lack of timelines. In fact, the first action plan could be described as a “compendium of activities” being carried out by the United Nations system to promote the resolution.

But the review process itself produced important benefits. By bringing all the stakeholders together to review the plan, a new momentum and ownership was generated. This recommitment to the implementation resulted into a transformation of the original plan into a results-based tool with clear baselines, performance indicators and timelines. This is a clear lesson which must be applied to future efforts.

At the national level, a number of Member States were also working to develop national action plans for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Some Member States were quick to come up with National Action Plans. However, like the UN system Action Plan, flaws would later be discovered in these early plans. With the support of the government of Norway, my Office decided to undertake a project to strengthen the implementation of the resolution at the regional and national levels through awareness-raising and capacity-building. Two High-Level Policy Dialogues on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) were organized -- one in Latin America and the Caribbean and the second in Africa with the key objectives being to raise awareness among government officials about the importance of national implementation of the resolution, highlight key areas of concern and build their capacity for the development of national action

plans and strategies. I am pleased to note that some of you who participated in the Africa High Level Dialogue are present today.

Following the high-level dialogues, several African countries started work on developing their own national action plans. These included Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Uganda. Liberia, whose national action plan was launched at the International Colloquium on Women's Empowerment, Leadership Development, International Peace and Security in March 2009, represents one of the good examples. The preparation of Liberia's Action Plan involved all relevant stakeholders including ministry officials, staff of United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and INSTRAW, representatives from other government institutions, civil society organizations, grassroots and community-based organizations. The Liberian National Action Plan also incorporates some of the components of Security Council resolution 1820 (2008) on rape and sexual violence in conflict situations. The Uganda Action Plan also offers some unique lessons. It covers three instruments: Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), Security Council resolution 1820 (2008), as well as the Goma Declaration on Eradicating Sexual Violence and Ending Impunity in the Great Lakes Region. By covering aspects of Security Council

resolution 1325 (2000) and the newer resolution 1820 (2008), both the Liberia and Uganda Action Plans demonstrate the need to adopt a comprehensive approach to addressing the gender aspects of conflict resolution and peacebuilding. This is an important lesson and must become a requirement for future plans if we are to make significant progress in addressing this challenge in the next decade.

Why focus on national and regional implementation?

It is clear that resolution 1325 (2000) foresaw that success in securing and maintaining peace required the active involvement of the whole community including women. Recognition of the management, supervisory and service delivery roles which women play during and after conflict has placed women at the centre of peace efforts. But where are the women? Certainly not just at the global level but at the national and local levels as well. Thus policy- and decision-making, planning, budgeting and institutional structures at the local and national levels must reflect the centrality of women's concerns. Those concerns must be fully addressed and supported if peace is to be sustainable.

This meeting is pushing the scale up one more step, to the regional level. This is absolutely essential as evidence demonstrates how porous borders are. Conflicts often spill over into neighbouring countries turning what started as a local conflict into an inter-state conflict. The Great Lakes region has not been spared in this regard. The adoption of regional plans therefore may be seen as an “insurance policy” for the region in the pursuit of peace and security. I therefore commend the efforts by the countries of the Great Lakes, their partners and the UN entities supporting them for this effort.

Distinguished Moderator,

Allow me to capture briefly what I consider key lessons which must be taken into account in designing future plans and strategies.

Lessons Learnt:

- The process must be inclusive – from the grass roots to all levels of government. All stakeholders – government, parliamentarians, judiciary, civil society organizations, must play a part.

- Coverage must be multi-sectoral to reflect the breadth of the issues pertaining to women and peace and security.
- The methodology to be adopted must provide for a thorough preparation and all inclusive approach. This should seek to establish at the outset critical elements such as baseline, performance indicators and timelines to ensure proper assessment, monitoring and reporting of progress.
- Periodic reviews must be undertaken to assess performance and enlist recommitment to implementation and sustain the momentum.
- Recognition and acknowledgement of the interlinkage of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) with a number of instruments such as Security Council resolution 1820 (2008), CEDAW, Beijing Platform for Action, but also with regional instruments such as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, the Goma Declaration on Eradicating of Sexual Violence and Ending Impunity in the Great Lakes Region, to name but a few. Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) therefore must not be seen in isolation.

- The willingness and readiness to allocate resources to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Without resources words alone would remain empty promises.
- The transformation of the resolution into concrete actions requires political commitment starting at the highest level.

As we approach the 10th Anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) in October 2010, we should be guided by the hard lessons we have learnt over the past 9 years. We should not hesitate to acknowledge that our achievements have fallen far short of our goals and our dreams. Instead, we must resolve to do better and make up for lost time.

This regional conference will feed into several events taking place around the world in the lead up to the 10th Anniversary. The conclusions we reach here will feed into many other discussions that will be taking place in the context of the 10th anniversary such as the European Commission meeting on “Twinning of 1325 (2000) Action Plans” and the African Great Lakes Regional meeting to be held in Kigali in February 2010.

Let me suggest that a commitment be made during this conference to finalize the regional action plan for the Great Lakes region in order to showcase it at the 10th anniversary celebrations in New York in October 2010. I would also ask everyone here, including representatives of United Nations entities and other partners, to encourage their counterparts in other African sub-regions to move equally quickly to develop their respective regional plans. In so doing we could look to putting these into an African regional action plan ready for the 10th anniversary. There is much work to do, and that work will involve everyone here today, Member States, the United Nations and civil society. I encourage you to use the opportunity this conference provides to focus your discussions on what needs to be done now concretely in order to be able to launch your regional action plan in October 2010 and, as a result, set an example for other regions of the world to follow.

I wish you every success in your deliberations.

Thank you.