

Remarks by Mr. Patrick Hayford on behalf of Cheik Sidi Diarra, USG, Special Adviser on Africa and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OSAA/OHRLLS) to the

Special policy dialogue “*The role of women in countries in special situations: Africa, LDCs, LLDCs, SIDSs, post-conflict and post-crisis countries*”

30 June 2010

UN Headquarters, New York

1. Your Excellency the Vice President of ECOSOC, Delegates, panellists and UN colleagues; it is my honour to make a few remarks on behalf of Ambassador Cheik Sidi Diarra, the Special Adviser on Africa and High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Land Locked Countries and Small Island Developing Countries.
2. We welcome the fact that the theme of ECOSOC this year is Gender Equality and Women Empowerment. We also welcome the commitment of the member states to the establishment of a single UN entity, at USG level that will bring together all existing mechanism devoted to gender issues
3. Let me start off my remarks by reiterating the Secretary General’s call for an end of inequality and discrimination against women and girls. Throughout the world, too many women live in fear of violence. One of the Secretary General’s greatest concerns is the disproportionate impact of conflict on women.
4. Women and girls in conflict and post-conflict areas face many challenges including poor access to education and medical services; such as maternal and reproductive health care, trafficking and different forms of sexual violence. Such situations present major obstacles to the attainment of the Millennium development goals.
5. Much attention has been paid to the protection of women in conflict; however, despite the frameworks of protection and engagement stipulated in Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, and 1889, violations of women’s rights in conflict and post-conflict situations are still on the increase. Moreover, women remain marginal in the resolution of conflict and in peace processes.
6. I would like to commend the role that the regional and sub-regional organizations are playing to put in place programmes to secure peace and to prevent future conflicts in Africa and Asia where most of the least developed countries are located. For example, the African Union recently declared 2010-2020 to be Africa’s Women Decade. The Africa Women Decade campaign will be launched in October and will focus on one or two key areas of concern to women every three years. The AU has also declared 2010 to be the Year of Peace. Such campaigns offer an opportunity to bring the issue of women’s their specific needs,

and their involvement to the forefront for a more concerted response. Many Pacific island governments have also recognized the importance of consulting women in conflict prevention, resolution and peace building, as well as understanding their needs and priorities. In 2008, the Pacific Islands Forum Regional Security Committee endorsed the Guiding Principles and Implementation Framework for Customary Land Management and Conflict Minimisation, which reflect the importance of involving women in conflict prevention.

7. I applaud all countries that are nationally implementing the provisions of Resolution 1325. Many countries have launched initiatives that promote the security of women and girls in conflict situations such as gender sensitivity training of police, military, medical and legal personnel; providing the right for women to play an active role in conflict prevention, resolution and peace building processes; mainstreaming conflict prevention and resolution in syllabi and recruiting more women into the military and peace-related positions.
8. Conflict and post-conflict situations also have major ramifications on women's economic status. Women's access to land, particularly in countries where the populations were displaced by war remains a major concern. Security problems mean limited access to decent employment, limited agricultural production and other income generating activities.

Ladies and Gentlemen

9. It is imperative that measures to secure peace and security at national, sub-regional and regional levels are strengthened to facilitate meaningful progress towards poverty eradication, gender equality and the achievement of the MDGs.
10. I am sure that these and many other pertinent issues will be discussed here today and I look forward to a vibrant discussion that will hopefully offer practical solutions and proposals on how we can better meet the needs of women, who constitute half the population of the world.

Thank you.