

PRESS RELEASE

Statement of UN Women Representative 2010

Ten years of UN Resolution 1325: Women Continue to Deepen Democracy

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Most UN Member States do not fully leverage the wisdom and leadership of women. Yet doing so would greatly benefit all citizens in these countries. This was Caecilia J. van Peski's conclusion to her statement as UN Women's Representative to the 65th General assembly of the United Nations in New York this morning.

Van Peski illustrated her conclusion with the following facts, amongst others: It is only in the rarest of cases that women sit at the roundtables of peace-making and reconstruction. Also, the percentage of women in decision-making positions still remains a far cry from the 40-60% parity zone, a target endorsed by the UN's Economic and Social Council. Moreover, women continue to be seriously underrepresented as candidates for and holders of public office.

The cost of this underrepresentation and de-facto exclusion is high, said van Peski. It ignores the irreplaceable and indispensable contributions that women could make to make our countries more stable and our societies more peaceful, prosperous and democratic.

Van Peski concluded her statement with five calls for action to be taken by the UN System and the UN Member States. She had formulated these calls for action after numerous and in-depth consultations with the women's and peace movements in The Netherlands and other countries.

The UN Women's Representative calls for action are:

- Firstly, to promote and support legal and institutional frameworks and electoral systems that provide a level playing field for all citizens including women to vote and hold public office.
- Secondly, to further forms of genuine democracy and good governance that create more opportunities for more people - including women - to participate directly in democratic processes in their societies.
- Thirdly, to actively support women's organizations to contribute to developing peaceful and democratic societies, empowering women, and mainstreaming gender, from the local levels up to the UN System as a whole.
- Fourthly, to encourage and support the development and implementation of National Action Plans for the implementation of Resolution 1325, in all Member States with priority given to fragile states.
- Lastly, to promote and support the development and deployment of early warning systems that take full advantage of women as agents of change, to more effectively prevent the outbreak of conflict.

Caecilia J. van Peski's statement comes against the backdrop of the 10th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, by the end of this month. This landmark resolution on Women, Peace and Security reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention of conflict, in peace negotiations, and in post-conflict reconstruction. Resolution 1325 calls upon governments to utilize women's knowledge and experience in peacework and security building, as well as to involve women in peace negotiations.

Over the past ten years, the implementation of this resolution has gradually gained momentum. Much has been achieved, yet much more remains to be done. The five calls for actions highlight priority areas most urgently awaiting action by UN and its Member States.

Ever since the United Nations' founding in 1945, the Kingdom of the Netherlands has each year nominated a UN Women's Representative to speak at the UN General Assembly in New York. The Netherlands has been unique and leading in this. From the very beginning, the UN Women's Representative has been selected by the Netherlands Council of Women, an influential advisory body to the Dutch government.

Weblog of UN Women's Representative 2010:

<http://www.nederlandse vrouwenraad.nl/vrouwenvertegenwoordiger/> (only in Dutch)