



Govt. of India

**STATEMENT BY MR. V.K. NAMBIAR, PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE ON WOMEN AND PEACE AND SECURITY IN
THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON OCTOBER 29, 2002**

Mr. President,

We are very pleased to see you chairing this meeting of the Council.

The subject under discussion in the Security Council today is one of great importance in view of the increasing number of conflicts in which women and children find themselves involved.

Let me begin by referring to the report of the Secretary General pursuant to resolution 1325 adopted unanimously in October 2000. The Secretary General had made a very pertinent point when he said women suffered the impact of conflict disproportionately, but also that they held the key to solution of conflict.

The various action points listed in the report provide practical recommendations that are designed to ensure the full and equal participation of women in all stages of conflict resolution, peacekeeping, peace-building, peacemaking and the reconstruction process following conflict.

As with many delegations we support the proposal to integrate gender perspectives in the planning and mandates of peace processes. We are happy to note that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations is developing concrete measures to help mainstream these perspectives into the daily work of mission components. While there have

been calls for a gender balance in the composition of peacekeeping forces, we have some doubts about the overall desirability of such a move. Would it be in the interest either of peace or of gender equality for women to embroil themselves in conflict, even if it is in the cause of the UN? We would, instead, support a greater role of women as Special Representatives, within DPKO and in negotiations for settling conflict as provided for under resolution 1325.

We see the logic of the establishment of gender offices or focal point in field missions. This action would undoubtedly contribute to increasing gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping mission. Also important is the need for inclusion of women, girl and child soldier in the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programmes which could be applied to all future missions involving DDR Programmes.

A very pertinent point relating to the fact that, in conflict situations, women and girls were the victims of all forms of violence, particularly sexual violence and exploitation, have been brought out in the report. This element in conflict situation requires careful attention and one in which the international community would need to seriously consider remedial measures. Reintegration of women is another important element which requires to be given due attention. Any peace agreements under the sponsorship of the UN should automatically incorporate the

gender perspective, including the role women played.

While women bear a disproportionately large share of the burden of conflict, they have only a marginal say in matters of war and peace. As was mentioned at the debate yesterday, in the First World War 80% of those who died were men while in today's conflicts 80% of the victims are civilians, mainly women and children. My delegation has, in the past, drawn attention to the fact that gender imbalances in our societies, as reflected in positions of power and influence, is an important contributory factor to the existing situation.

Clearly, another reason for the increasing instances of civilian casualties in today's conflicts can be ascribed to increasing incidents of terrorism worldwide.

Mr. President,

The attacks of September 11 were one of the worst and most manifest form of terrorism witnessed by modern society. However, this phase of terrorism was not unfamiliar to countries such as my own and many others. India has been the victim of unrelenting terrorism, primarily targeted against women and children for the past twenty years resulting in almost 60,000 casualties.

In recent months, the world has been witness to the most heinous instances of terrorism, whether in Moscow, New York, Bali, parts of Jammu and Kashmir, Gujarat or even New Delhi. The difference between incidents in many other parts of the world and those in India is that while many of the recent international incidents have been perpetrated by nebulous groups operating in secrecy and disclaiming State support,

those in India are the product of a carefully crafted, hardnosed State strategy. Terrorism has been used to conduct low intensity conflict aimed at soft targets, namely, women and children and unarmed civilians. This policy had perhaps served its purpose well until the international drive against terrorism took root in the aftermath of September 11 and came to be enshrined in SCR 1373.

It must be understood that one can no longer profess to be a part of the global coalition against terrorism on the one hand and sponsor terrorism on the other. It is no longer possible to "run with the hare and hunt with the hounds".

Two of the most reprehensible terrorist crimes committed recently, mainly against women and children, have occurred in India. Both have been attacks directed at provoking instability, fear and the prospect of a backlash. I am referring to the "Kaluchak" massacre perpetrated by terrorists on 14th May 2002 in the State of Jammu and Kashmir when 3 terrorists indiscriminately opened fire on the passengers of a transport bus, then moved to the family lines of an army unit in the area and once again fired indiscriminately on army family members present in the premises. As a result twenty-eight civilians were killed and 35 wounded, most of them women and children. In a more recent instance, designed to ignite communal violence in the State of Gujarat, terrorists entered a place of worship systematically firing into the large numbers of peaceful worshippers on the premises resulting in the deaths of over 30 innocent men, women and children and hundreds others wounded.

Mr. President

At the height of the Taliban terror Kishwar Naheed wrote a lovely poem that

began: Wo jo bacheeyon se dar gaye (They who felt threatened by girl children). The women and children in our lives assure our future. They must live in security. While there is much talk of the need to safeguard the interests of women and children, there is less talk of cooperative effort to ensure sustained economic growth which alone can eradicate the poverty and deprivation which is at the

root of their exclusion. The renowned economic philosopher Amartya Sen speaks of the right of people to “seek our identity as we choose” It is this identity which should be assured to all irrespective of gender if we are to create an environment of peace and security for all in our interconnected world.

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