



## Open Debate on Women, Peace, and Security: “Towards the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Resolution 1325”, 7 March 2023

Malta Statement delivered by the Hon Rebecca Buttigieg, Parliamentary Secretary for Reforms and Equality

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President

I begin by thanking you for convening this debate to reflect on the challenges and opportunities for accelerating the implementation of the WPS Agenda. We also greatly appreciate the contributions of today’s briefers and thank them for enriching the discussion with their insights.

President

Last year, the UN pronounced that the unconditional defence of women’s rights, and the protection of women human rights defenders, should be among the most visible markers of the UN’s work on peace and security.

This must remain our goal, and we must accelerate action immediately. Despite ample evidence that gender equality offers a pathway to sustainable peace, the Security Council’s robust normative framework, comprising 10 WPS resolutions and 16 presidential statements, has yet to be effectively resourced and made operational.



President

Despite these commitments, we continue to witness harrowing violations against women all over the world, and in many countries that are on the Council's agenda, including Afghanistan, Ukraine, Myanmar, Yemen, Syria, Haiti, the Central African Republic, Mali, Sudan, and Somalia.

Malta deplores the Taliban's relentless and systematic gender persecution and discrimination against women and girls across political, economic, and socio-cultural spheres. We cannot risk normalising these violations. The perpetrators must be held accountable. Our expectations are clear. The full spectrum of the rights of Afghan women and girls must be respected: women's right to live in dignity, their right to political participation, to work, to education, and to defend their rights without fear of reprisals. The world cannot watch on as progress made over the past twenty years, including on gender equality, is reversed. As an international community, we are obliged to respond to abuses of governance that institutionalise discrimination.

President

We must refocus on the implementation challenges of the WPS agenda in the following ways:

The protection of women human rights defenders is a collective moral responsibility. The UN system must ensure that the risks facing women are never used as an excuse to exclude them. The mandates we authorise must



monitor and respond to these risks and reprisals against all human rights defenders and peacebuilders.

The UN must lead by example. We must ensure women's full, equal, and meaningful participation in all peace and security efforts, beginning with those authorised and led by the UN. Only then can we ensure that processes are inclusive and sustainable and meet the needs of the communities they are meant to protect.

Funding must be directed to reverse the financing deficit for gender equality in crisis situations.

In all actions to prevent conflict and build peace, we must also address the distinct and disproportionate impact of the climate crisis on women and girls.

Our actions to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism must respond to the misogyny and patriarchal violence used by terrorist and violent extremist groups in their propaganda, recruitment tactics, and victims.

To address impunity, we believe that the Security Council can make more proactive use of targeted sanctions against those who perpetrate and direct sexual violence in conflict and, where appropriate, include sexual violence as a stand-alone designation criterion. We must also ensure survivor-centered approaches in preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence.



Finally, we welcome the WPS national action plans adopted by 105 countries. Malta adopted its first National Action Plan in 2020 and is working on increasing outreach and awareness on this important agenda both locally and internationally. We actively encourage those who have not done so to develop strategies that strengthen their domestic and foreign policies in relation to the WPS agenda.

President

Malta is a proud WPS Shared Commitments holder. Resolution 1325 was an evolutionary step forward in the Security Council's architecture and repertoire of practice. It is indeed one the Resolutions that is most quoted and well-known. However, we must ensure that Resolution 1325 does not remain a topic of discussion in academic or political circles. We must use it as a catalyst to bring about transformative change, sustainable and inclusive peace, and gender equality for all.

I thank you.