



Topic- Strengthening the role of women in international security and disarmament.

Committee- United Nations General Assembly.

Country- France.

Name-Swarnajit Sarkar

The delegate of France would like to point out the current situation of women in international security and disarmament. Building lasting peace and security requires women's participation. Half of the world's population cannot make a whole peace. Therefore, women play a vital role in maintaining peace and security.

It is well known that violent conflict disproportionately affects women and girls and intensifies pre-existing gender inequalities and discrimination. Women are also active agents of peace in armed conflict, yet their role as key players and change agents of peace has been largely unrecognized. Acknowledging and integrating the different understanding, experiences and capabilities of women into all aspects of UN peace operations is essential for the success of UN peacekeeping efforts and sustaining peace.

There are obvious reasons why women are important to the peace building process. For example, they constitute half of every community and the difficult task of peace building must be done by men and women in partnership. Women are also the central caretakers of families and everyone is affected when they are excluded from peace building. Women are also advocates for peace, as peacekeepers, relief workers and mediators. Women have played prominent roles in peace processes in the Horn of Africa such as in Sudan and Burundi, where they have contributed as observers.

Women are often viewed as victims of conflict. But this view masks the important roles women play as leaders, especially in helping end conflict, developing post conflict reintegration efforts and economic life, and even in leading the organization of camps for internally displaced persons. In conflict zones, women are active participants in the conflicts that affect their countries. They may become combatants. They may become the sole providers for their families, more active in the informal or formal sectors of the economy, or more active in peacemaking groups as a result of conflict. Yet during war and in its aftermath, women too often are excluded from activities aimed at resolving the violent conflicts that so deeply affect them. Those conflicts cannot be brought to a lasting end without making women's lives more secure, and it is women who are best positioned to determine how that security is achieved.

Women are typically excluded from formal peace processes. They tend to be absent at the peace table, underrepresented in parliaments that are developing policy in countries emerging from conflict, and underrepresented in peacekeeping forces. The United Nations reckons that fewer than 3 % of signatories to peace agreements have been women and that women's participation in peace negotiations averages less than 8 % for the eleven peace processes for which such information is available. Low numbers of women acting as military peacekeepers reflect the low overall rates of participation of women in the armed forces of countries that contribute peacekeeping forces.

Another area for women's participation in peace building lies in peacekeeping operations. Those advocating for increasing the number of women in peacekeeping missions argue that the prospects of sustainable peace are improved by providing those living in conflict areas with positive female role models, facilitating good relations between traumatized civilians and security services, giving authority a female face, and offering an alternative perspective on conflict resolution.

France is mobilized at the Security Council for gender equality, one of the sustainable development goals adopted by UN Member States in 2015, and for the protection of women's rights.

France actively contributed to the adoption and implementation of the security. These resolutions (1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106 and 2122) call on States to strengthen women's protection during conflicts and to enhance women's participation in peace negotiations and decision-making processes. In 2010, France adopted a national plan of action to implement these resolutions. A second plan was adopted in March 2015 for the 2015-2018 period.

France fully supports UN Women, the United Nations entity in charge of defending women's rights. They implement together many concrete cooperation actions. France financially contributes to projects reinforcing women's participation in countries such as Mali, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan, and the Central African Republic or for Syrian women refugees.

On a national level, France adopted two action plans for the implementation of the "Women, Peace and Security" agenda. They are based on several pillars, such as prevention and promotion of the agenda, the fight against impunity or the protection against violence carried out against women. The elaboration of the 3rd National Action Plan to implement "Women, peace and security" resolutions constitutes France's last prioritized axis regarding the agenda.

In conclusion, Representation in parliament is also critical to ensuring that women's concerns are taken into account in countries rebuilding after war. Although there is debate about whether quotas are the best means to achieve increased representation, France believes that quotas are essential for strengthening their role in taking decisions on major decisions.

Women should be staffed, trained, and deployed in gender-balanced units at all levels within the military. France believes that cultural resistance within military institutions and in society can be the main reason for encouraging this practice. Whether at the peace table or in parliaments, a critical mass of women is required to introduce gender-sensitive legislation and agreements for consideration.