



**REMARKS BY COMMISSIONER N. GWERE**

**AT THE EVENT TO COMMEMORATE THE 21<sup>ST</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED  
NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325**

**22 NOVEMBER 2021**

**MEIKLES HOTEL, HARARE**

## **SALUTATIONS:**

Director of Ceremonies

Honourable Minister, Oppah Muchinguri-Kashiri, Minister of Defence and War Veteran Affairs.

H.E Ambassador Fionnuala Gilsean, Ambassador of Ireland to South Africa and Zimbabwe

Hon. Jennifer Mhlanga, Deputy Minister of Women Affairs, Community Development and Small to Medium Enterprises.

Hon. Members of Parliament here present.

Commissioner Margret Mukahana-Sangarwe , Chairperson of the Zimbabwe Gender Commission

Ms. Delphine Serumaga, UN Women Country Representative.

Mrs. Virginia Muwanigwa, CEO of the Zimbabwe Gender Commission.

Senior Government Officials here present.

Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe.

Ladies and Gentleman

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1. It is an honour for me to be part of this this high-level Commemorative event of the 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of the United National Security Council Resolution 1325. This event is a culmination of efforts by many stakeholders including the NPRC led by UN Women as we continue to press the lobbying and advocacy pedal for the development of the Resolution 1325 National Action Plan.
2. Indeed, 'buy-in which entail the engagement of all implementing Departments and diverse stakeholders, including non-traditional actors is critical to increase broader societal ownership and political will for the development of the National Action Plan.
3. I applaud all the organisations that have joined us in this lobbying and advocacy efforts. I particularly recognise the African Women Leaders Network Representatives and the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe.

4. Indeed, the importance of collective action in shaping inclusive and gender sensitive peace building cannot be emphasised.
5. In the same vein, I wish to thank the Honorable Ministers here present.; Hon. Oppah Muchinguri-Kashiri, Minister of Defence and War Veteran Affairs and Hon. Jennifer Mhlanga, Deputy Minister of Women Affairs, Community Development and Small to Medium Enterprises, who are here with us today. We are humbled and we greatly thank you for being part of this process. In the same manner we are encouraged by this testament of your commitment to the cause of gender equality in peace building processes in the Country.
6. I have no doubt the deliberations and recommendations coming out of today's event will be useful in informing further processes by our Government in pushing the button of developing the resolution 1325 National Action Plan forward.
7. The NPRC in its conflict prevention and peace building mandate, strives to ensure the participation of women in all peace building processes.
8. This is in the letter and spirit of the gender equality principles laid out in the national, regional and international instruments on gender that we continue to hold dear to.
9. The NPRC Act Section 9 mandates the Commission to consider and address gender imperatives in peace building work, put in place and implement mechanisms for supporting Victims of conflict related Gender Based Violations and address issues of sexual crimes.
10. UNSCR 1325, a specialized normative framework on women, peace and security thus presents an important tool for the implementation and monitoring of interventions with regards to women participation in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, maintenance of peace in humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction.

#### **Ladies and gentlemen**

11. We are assured of the able Government leadership in the implementation of normative frameworks on gender and we are already encouraged by various milestones by our Government and stakeholders in pursuit of the provisions of resolution 1325 even though there was no clear-cut resolution 1325 Action Plan being followed.

12. As the leading machinery for peace building in Zimbabwe, the NPRC has also implemented a number of interventions, however, allow me to share with you just one of our ground-breaking programmes; the Women Safe Spaces Programme. The NPRC initiated and continues to implement the women safe spaces programme to provide a physically and emotionally secure environment for women to narrate and engage with their experiences of human rights violations in the context of conflict and violence. The safe spaces programme leverages on women's social assets through empowerment and confidence building to avoid perpetuating victimhood or objectifying women and girls. It also seeks to create leadership amongst girls and women and capacitate them to fully participate in healing, peacebuilding and reconciliation processes.
13. The Women safe spaces programme largely fulfil the broader United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (SCR1325) by recognizing the under-valued and under-utilized contributions women make to peacekeeping, conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and peace building.
14. Notwithstanding these efforts, we also acknowledge that it has been a challenge to implement UNSCR1325 in Zimbabwe due to low level of awareness on the resolution.

#### **Ladies and Gentlemen**

15. Yes, Zimbabwe is not in a state of war, but there are several structural drivers of conflict, which have gendered implications. Women, youths and vulnerable groups are also largely excluded in the peace building processes particularly in decision making. Therefore, what is critical is the development of an inward-looking framework that identifies key domestic and priority issues for Zimbabwe in terms of peace, security and reconciliation.
16. To solidify, consolidate and accelerate efforts to address these gaps, the development of the National Action Plan becomes fundamental. The NAP presents an opportunity for Zimbabwe to identify and prioritize key peace and security issues facing women and determine indicators for the UNSCR1325's implementation at country-level. Let us therefore seize this momentum, and place the enjoyment of women's rights at the core of the peace and security issues in the Country.
17. No doubt the National Action Plan's strategic actions should address four main pillars namely: **Participation, Protection, Prevention and Relief and recovery.**

18. Allow me therefore to share some reflections to motivate us to develop the National Action Plan.

- i) Development of a NAP is an opportunity for resource mobilisation for gender responsive peace building processes as it can also be used as a tool for identifying and promoting partnerships with Civil Society and local organisations working on Women Peace and Security issues and for encouraging predictable and sustained funding for Women Peace and Security efforts.
- ii) In the context of the 4<sup>th</sup> pillar of **relief and recovery**, the National Action Plan is an opportunity to shape responses to multiple threats to peace and social cohesion such as the COVID 19 pandemic and other increasing emergencies, induced by both natural and manmade disasters. In humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction gender considerations ought to be made to ensure participation and agency of women and all groups in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding.
- iii) The NAP can strengthen implementation of intersecting agendas and strategies, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the other normative frameworks on gender. This helps in ensuring policy coherence on cross-cutting issues, avoiding overlap and duplication of efforts.

19. As I conclude, I would like to say as we commemorate the 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of the United National Security Council Resolution 1325, let us take this opportunity to also celebrate the acts of courage and determination by our heroines; women who have played and continue to play extraordinary roles in peace building, decision making and in the security sector. Some of them are non-other than Hon. Oppah Muchinguri, Minister of Defence; Ellen Chiweshe, the first female Commodore, my fellow NPRC Women Commissioners, other Chapter 12 Women Commissioners, special mention of Commissioner M. Mukahanana-Sangarwe Co- Chairperson of POLAD, women peace builders countrywide and women in the peace keeping missions just to mention but a few.

20. Once again, thank you to our Hon. Ministers for being part of this process. As the NPRC, we recommit ourselves to continue engaging with you and other stakeholders

to see through the process of developing the National Action Plan to localise the UNSCR1325.

As we say at the NPRC, **PEACE BEGINS WITH ME, PEACE BEGINS WITH YOU, PEACE BEGINS WITH ALL OF US.**

THANK YOU.