

Women: Stabilising an Insecure World

Brussels 6th March 2008

On the eve of International Women's Day, we call for internationally agreed human rights standards and instruments to be implemented with renewed vigor, including UN Security Council Resolution 1325. The contribution that women make to the security of their families, their communities, and the world is still too often overlooked. Women's rights are human rights. Women's security is human security.

We commit ourselves to ensuring that women are actively engaged in local, national and international decision-making and call upon leaders everywhere, male and female, to do the same.

We pay tribute to women who in the face of hostility, discrimination or repression persevere in their struggle for justice and democracy. We call for the immediate liberation of Aung San Suu Kyi and Ingrid Betancourt who symbolise this spirit of determination. We condemn unreservedly the assassination of Benazir Bhutto.

We salute the countless women who rebuild societies and families shattered by conflict and disaster, and who have the courage to lay the foundations of local stability, without which there can be no global security.

We commit ourselves to address the particular vulnerability of women in the face of security threats old and new, including poverty, natural disasters, violent conflict, and climate change.

We note with deep concern the targeting of women and children in contemporary conflicts and the use of sexual violence as a method of warfare. We call for effective action to bring perpetrators of such crimes to justice, to end the environment of impunity in which they operate.

We call for the outlawing of violent practices aimed at controlling or repressing women, such as genital mutilation and stoning, as well as trafficking in women.

We commit ourselves to strengthen dialogue with those governments and leaders sceptical of the need to enhance women's empowerment.

In particular we will promote education for women and girls, which is the key to women's empowerment and to ensuring that women play their part in

shaping a more secure future for themselves, their communities, their countries and our world.