

Women Making Peace

United Nations University Tokyo

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Distinguished guests and participants,

It gives me great pleasure to extend my warmest congratulations to all of you as you mark the 10th anniversary of the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, our shared effort to strengthen the UN through the work of women peace makers.

For women who have long organized for peace on the ground, Security Council Resolution 1325 represented a long overdue recognition of their accomplishments and challenges. The Council's action gave much needed political legitimacy to their struggle. And today, women are breathing life into 1325. It is not simply a UN document; it is a window to greater protection and promotion of the rights of those who are often the most vulnerable, the most invisible, and who have the greatest stake in peace.

Ten years ago, I played a very strong role in assisting the Security Council in drafting and securing passage of Resolution 1325. The Security Council's accomplishment then set a new threshold of action - for itself, the UN system, and for all governments -- with 1325. Over the past ten years, I, along with others within the United Nations, have taken the challenge presented to the UN system by SC 1325 to strengthen the UN's peacekeeping, very seriously.

Words *can* become deeds and actions. Our challenge, now, is to turn commitment to action and achieve the far-reaching recommendations made by the Secretary General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 some ten years ago. Women's organizations such as Women for Peace and the newly-established UN Women

must be part of a common partnership to prioritise and operationalize the vision set out in 1325.

While we hope that women and gender issues are routinely included in the regular country-based and thematic items on the Security Council agenda, the vigilance of those of us with stewardship for 1325 should not lesson. Now more than ever, it is imperative that we protect, maintain and increase the gains of 1325 in its implementation with the UN system.

More than ever before, the United Nations has proved its value and courage, in responding to the challenge of war and conflict across the globe. In Darfur, in South Sudan, in Congo, Timor and elsewhere, the UN's ability to keep the peace is being tested – as it has never before. The contributions of women – in societies in conflict, within political leadership of the world's nations, within the ranks of the UN peacekeepers – are now part of the UN's resources in war zones and places of conflict the world over. And the role of women peacemakers cannot be discounted, and most certainly, cannot be squandered.

Women are an essential part of the peace – and ten years on, they are a part of the United Nations resolve. While much progress has been made in redefining the peace and security agenda and in peace operations, much more needs to be done.

I thank you.

Dr Noeleen Heyzer

Dr. Noeleen Heyzer is Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).