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**STATEMENT OF GERT ROSENTHAL, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
GUATEMALA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON THE OCCASION
OF THE OPEN DEBATE OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL
ON WOMEN AND PEACE AND SECURITY**

(November 30, 2012)

Mr. President,

Thank you for convening this open debate. As is known, the original idea was to hold it exactly one month ago, under our Presidency of this Council, but Storm Sandy decided otherwise, and we had to leave everything on hold. We are therefore pleased that the initiative was retaken, which will give greater meaning to the Presidential Statement that was adopted on October 31.

We thank Doctor Michelle Bachelet for her presentation, and congratulate her for the high profile she has achieved for UN-Women. We welcome the opportunity to have an Office of this new entity in our own country. We also thank the Secretary-General for his Report, which served as the basis for this debate, as well as Under Secretary-General Herve Ladsous for his own presentation. I am also grateful to Ms. Bineta Diop for having provided a collective view of the organizations of civil society on our topic of today.

Distinguished members of the Council,

On this occasion, we recall the pioneering resolution of the Security Council numbered 1325, adopted in October of 2000, which deals with women, peace and security. Said resolution addresses in a specific manner the condition of women and girls in situations of armed conflict. Each year this Council has been building on the central premise of this resolution: without security for women, no durable peace can be achieved. The more specific topic of today's debate is the important role that women's organizations of civil society can play, together with states, in contributing to the prevention and solution of armed conflicts and in peace building.

As regards Guatemala, fortunately it has been more than 15 years since we overcame our internal armed conflict, which is the element of the agenda that falls under the purview of the Security Council. However, the dividing lines between peace-making, peace-building and economic and social transformation are not clear, to the point that to this day our past concerns regarding the situation of Guatemalan women and girls during our internal conflict of more than three decades duration are intertwined with our current concerns to promote the advancement of women in all areas. I should add that there are multiple areas of intersection between both areas of concern.

One of those intersections is found in the area of prevention. In the context of resolution 1325, this signals that conflict prevention is the best way to protect the security of all civilians from the horrors that accompany armed conflict, in particular for women and girls. But we also apply the concept of prevention from another vantage point: I am referring to the putting in place of policies, instruments and actions designed so that women can break the vicious circle of poverty, and part of that rupture is intimately linked with the economic empowerment that women must attain.

Another intersection is violence, a core characteristic of armed conflicts, but also very present in societies that supposedly live in peace. I am thinking of domestic violence, or, perhaps more dramatically, the extreme violence that Guatemalans, and especially Guatemalan women have been exposed to by the worrying ascent of organized crime, ranging from youth gangs to transnational cartels that traffic in illicit goods and services.

In that regard, if we go to the root causes of violence, we will find that this phenomenon is frequently born out of the dependence of women on those that harm them or subject them to violence, either in situations of armed conflict or in societies in peace. That is why we believe, for example, that any actions that we undertake, both States and civil societies, to offer women greater economic independence and greater opportunities to improve their situation form part of the tool-box of preventive actions towards violence against women.

That is also why we advocate in favor of perfecting the indicators that measure progress and achievements of resolution 1325. This is important because these results allow us to measure the number and type of causes of violence against women that have been eliminated or at least mitigated, in the framework of preventive measures, and also which are the lacunae that need to be addressed through new policies.

The United Nations clearly has an important role to play in this matter, and we applaud the creation of UN-Women and an institutional advancement of singular importance. We should strengthen its capacity to offer leadership and to monitor accountability within the whole System regarding gender equity. As to the mandate stemming from resolution 1325, we support increased participation of women in peacebuilding and in assessing civil society capacity in post-conflict situations to be consistent with the topic of women, peace and security. We find it indispensable to acknowledge women as peace builders and contributors to stability. Precisely the fact of having suffered from the impact of conflicts in a disproportionate manner heightens the importance of their participating in peace processes.

Finally, and thinking now not only about the Security Council but of the wider United Nations System, we firmly support the greater participation of women in the work of the Organization, just as we support it within our own Government and our own society. More specifically, I urge the United Nations System to expand the participation of women at all hierarchical levels, and that this is done in an equitable manner. Here it is incumbent on us to recall that all member countries have something to contribute, especially in addressing the

topic of violence, where we have unfortunately suffered first-hand its consequences, and learned something from it.

Thank you.