



Secretary General Lamberto Zannier

*Opening Speech
Regional Conference and Consultations on
UNSCR 1325 Implementation in the OSCE Region*

20 April 2015, Vilnius

President Grybauskaite,
Ambassador Čekuolis,
Distinguished Colleagues,

I am very pleased to participate in this event on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, as the women, peace and security agenda lies at the very heart of the OSCE concept of comprehensive security.

Past and recent tragic developments in the OSCE region have showed us just how vulnerable women are in conflict. Women's experience of conflict is different from men's: men often become fighters, while women are left behind to care for the survival and protection of the family. In peace-building and post-conflict rehabilitation efforts it is vital to understand what these different roles and experiences entail, as they generate different perspectives on what security is as well as different related needs – ranging from the post-conflict collection of small arms to ensuring the prosecution of perpetrators of sexual violence. In this context the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security, connecting politico-military aspects with economic and environmental issues and the human dimension, has demonstrated its effectiveness in addressing cross-dimensional challenges such as the role of women in peace and security.

The importance and the potential of women for peace-building cannot be overstated. The clearest example in the OSCE region comes from the wars in the 1990s in the former Yugoslavia. Women's organizations supported each other across conflict lines, fostering peace and reconciliation. Another case in point is Kyrgyzstan, where women's organizations were able to mediate between conflict parties during the tragic events of 2010.

These examples underscore why women must be included in peace-building activities and that their needs must be taken into account in all efforts aimed at the implementation of UNSCR 1325.

I am pleased to report that 27 of the 57 OSCE participating States have already developed National Actions Plans for the implementation of the resolution. Some of them are already at the third revised version of their respective Plans. The Organization also strives to support the development of additional National Action Plans by issuing analyses and tools on best practices and lesson learnt in relation to their implementation and organizing expert roundtables and thematic conferences. Moreover, experience from the OSCE region shows the range of different needs for and approaches to the resolution's implementation: some participating States have been focusing on their personnel deployed to international peacekeeping operations, while others have strategies focusing more on domestic policies. There are also some that have experienced conflict and have included UNSCR 1325 as a red thread throughout their policy framework. As you can see, the OSCE region offers extensive experience and a number of valuable lessons that should be taken into account in the Global Study on the implementation of the resolution.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The OSCE has long acknowledged the need to develop a policy framework to assist participating States with implementing the women, peace and security agenda. In 2004, the Organization adopted a Gender Action Plan. In 2005, the OSCE Ministerial Council agreed to a decision on increasing *Women's Participation in Conflict Prevention, Crisis Management and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation*. More recently, the participating States integrated a gender perspective and a reference to UNSCR 1325 in a decision on the *Elements of the Conflict Cycle* taken at the 2011 Ministerial Council here in Vilnius.

Yet, the inclusion of UNSCR 1325 in the Organization's efforts is not limited to these fundamental documents adopted by its decision-making bodies. It is also reflected in the daily work carried out by all OSCE structures. For instance, the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine was the first OSCE field operation to have a full-time Gender Adviser right from the start, recognizing that women and men face different security challenges. The Gender Adviser plays a crucial role, ensuring that women's perspectives are included and UNSCR 1325 is implemented in all Mission activities.

Dear Colleagues,

The UN Secretary-General took a strategic decision when he commissioned a Global Study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325. The women, peace and security agenda should permeate not only security policies but most policies and their subsequent implementation, both at the national level as well as in the context of regional organizations such as the OSCE. However, despite our best efforts, reality shows that there is still much work to be done. We need to continue learning and take inspiration from each other's experiences.

We, as a global community, have been slow in fully understanding all the necessary implementation aspects of UNSCR 1325. Too often, we still face resistance in some quarters when considering the relevance of the resolution to hard security issues. There are debates

about the countries and settings in which the resolution should be applied. In some cases, the resolution's applicability itself is questioned because it is seen, wrongly, as a concept developed and pushed by some countries without regard for cultural and historical circumstances elsewhere.

All of these objections have one thing in common: they ignore the fact that women's rights are an undeniable part of globally recognized human rights, and that UNSCR 1325 is part of the international human rights framework. The resolution recognizes that women, who bear a heavy burden in conflict situations, play a key role in addressing security challenges and should have a say in developing democratic and stable societies that cater to the needs of both men and women.

That is why events such as this conference are important. We need them to evaluate what has been achieved so far and to identify what we must do better in the future.

Today, as we review what we have learnt in the 15 years since UNSCR 1325 was adopted, we should also be looking for ways to make the resolution an indispensable component of all our efforts. I am confident that these discussions will inspire us to enhance the implementation of UNSCR 1325, to better understand the mechanisms and tools needed to achieve its implementation, and to more effectively integrate them into domestic policy frameworks as well as into the peace-building activities of regional and international organizations, including the OSCE.

To this end, close co-operation between the OSCE and other organizations such as UN Women, the Council of Europe and the EU plays a very important role. The OSCE remains committed to constant information exchange with its international partners in this field, including through workshops on UNSCR 1325 such as those regularly organized by the EU as well as joint training initiatives such as the high-level gender-enhanced mediation seminar organized last year by the OSCE, UN Women and UN DPA.

Ultimately, the success of our efforts will not be measured by reports or even by legislation on women, peace and security. It will be measured by how effectively we protect the lives and well-being of women and girls and how we empower them to play their rightful role in peace-building.

Thank you.