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Ban spotlights 'indispensable' role of women in shoring up peace



9 September 2010 – Women are “indispensable partners” in all aspects of making and consolidating peace, ranging from reconciliation to economic recovery to social cohesion, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed today.

“When women are excluded from such partnerships due to inaction or fragmented efforts, we should be alarmed,” he said in a [message](#) to a conference in Brussels, Belgium, delivered by his Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, Rachel Mayanja.

In less than one month, the United Nations will mark the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the historic Security Council [resolution 1325](#), which stresses the importance of giving women equal participation and full involvement in peace and security matters.

The resolution, Mr. Ban said, heightened awareness of the issues women and girls face both during and after conflicts, as well as increasing global commitment to address these challenges.

“Nonetheless, we must lament our progress,” he said in his message to the gathering focusing on ensuring women’s participation in peace and security.

Women and girls, the Secretary-General noted, continue to face discrimination and gender-based conflict in the context of armed conflict, while impunity reigns for perpetrators of such crimes.

The recent mass rapes in the volatile far east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) “brutally” indicate that “the international community is still failing to protect the most vulnerable.”

Mr. Ban emphasized that “ultimately, women will never receive the protection and respect that is their right until they are empowered,” pointing to creation in July of the new UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, or [**UN Women**](#).

Merging four UN agencies and office – the UN Development Fund for Women ([**UNIFEM**](#)), the Division for the Advancement of Women ([**DAW**](#)), the [**Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues**](#), and the UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women ([**UN-INSTRAW**](#)) – the new entity will allow the world body to better assist Member States promote gender equality.

The UN Economic and Social Council ([**ECOSOC**](#)) today announced that inaugural elections for the 41 members of UN Women will be held by early November.

“Women must not just sit at the peace table, they must be heard,” the Secretary-General emphasized at the Brussels gathering today. “Not only should women serve in police forces and peacekeeping missions, they must influence decision-making.”

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