Summary of the Discussion

On 23 September 2009, the United Nations, the African Union Commission and the European Commission organized a High-Level meeting in New York under the title "Towards the 10th anniversary of UN Security Council resolution 1325: joining forces for bringing real progress in the area of women, peace and security”, which was attended by Ministers, Heads of UN Agencies, Heads of Regional Organizations and representatives of the civil society. The meeting, that took place immediately before the opening of the 64th session of the UN General Assembly, was opened by UN Deputy Secretary General Asha-Rose Migiro, followed by interventions of the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra and the European Commissioner for External Relations and Neighborhood Policy Benita Ferrero-Waldner. Both the AU and the EU highlighted progress that they had made individually and together to implement Security Council resolution 1325. Ambassador Lamamra reiterated that the AU was committed to mainstream a gender perspective in all its activities through the implementation of its Gender Policy, whose 8th commitment focuses on Resolution 1325. Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner recalled the adoption by the EU of a comprehensive approach for the implementation of UNSC Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security.

During the ensuing discussion, which was chaired by Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner, interventions were made by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Liberia, Austria, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, the Minister for International Development Cooperation of Sweden, the Secretary General of the Arab League, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt and the former High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson. The Special Adviser of the Secretary General for Gender Issues and the Empowerment of Women, Rachel Mayanja closed the meeting on behalf of Deputy Secretary-General Migiro.

Participants unanimously called for a focused effort in preparation of the 2010 review conference of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 to ensure real progress in its implementation and to identify mechanisms to sustain the political momentum to
empower and protect women affected by conflict situations. The importance of national action plans for the implementation of Resolution 1325 was underscored, with several participants informing about progress in that regard. At the same time, the importance of regional efforts, such as those deployed by the AU and the EU, were emphasized by participants. A few speakers underscored that, although some member States had not yet developed national action plans, they contributed to the implementation of Resolution 1325 through greater political representation of women in key positions or by increasing budget allocation to sectors of the economy that in their countries were dominated by women, like in certain countries, the agricultural sector. In that respect, some speakers emphasized the linkage between food security and peace and security. A strong call was made to the UN to continue strengthening its support to Member States regarding the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and the UN was invited to further consolidate the coherence and coordination of its work. In that regard, several participants expressed the hope that the creation of a new gender composite entity, as decided by the General Assembly during its 63rd session, would facilitate a more coordinated approach. The crucial importance of the work of civil society organizations, at the grass root level, was underlined by several speakers. In addition, the importance of the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women to empower and protect women in conflict situations was noted.

The announced Security Council resolution, scheduled to be adopted on 30 September, and which aims at strengthening UN Security Council Resolution 1820 in the fight against sexual violence in armed conflicts, was welcomed. Several speakers pleaded for taking extra measures to bring together the efforts under the UN Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820, some even suggesting a possible merger of the two resolutions. They argued that establishing a link between the two Resolutions would bear a great potential and would be the challenge for the years ahead. Speakers also addressed the need to build capacities and create opportunities to involve women in peacebuilding. A call was also made for the appointment of either a special representative, or a special envoy, on 1325.

The Special Adviser of the Secretary General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, Ms. Rachel Mayanja, in concluding the discussion, noted the clear call to the United Nations to continue strengthening its support to Member States on the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325. She noted that the UN was being called upon to increase the coherence of its work and encouraged to use the new composite gender entity to foster a more focused approach. She welcomed the expected follow-up resolution to 1820, and underlined the need to better link UN Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820. Looking ahead, she noted that as we move towards the tenth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), we must focus on what mechanisms will enable us to sustain the momentum we now have towards implementation.