

AUSTRIA



PERMANENT MISSION OF AUSTRIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

**Economic and Social Council
2010 High Level Segment**

General Debate

Statement delivered by

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AUSTRIA

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Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

At the outset, I would like to fully associate myself with the statement made by the European Union. In addition, allow me to highlight some additional points of particular importance to my delegation.

The current assessments of the implementation of the MDGs conclude on the need of a better inclusion of the most vulnerable into the development process. This means first of all the full participation of women and girls, and the full realization of their potential as agents for change. We will not be able to achieve the MDGs if we do not rapidly address this challenge. Even in countries where the MDG targets are on track, the most vulnerable, including women and girls, stay aside. Therefore we urgently need to focus our action on them.

Mr. President,

We are especially concerned about the increasing feminization of HIV/AIDS. All are familiar with the statistics: Over the past two years, the number of women and girls infected with HIV has increased in every region in the world. In Sub-Saharan Africa, women make up approximately 60% of adults living with HIV. The feminization of HIV is closely related to gender discrimination, social restrictions as well as with insufficient access to sexual and reproductive health. In our fight against HIV/AIDS, it is therefore of crucial importance to focus on gender aspects. International commitments on gender equality and women's rights clearly set out our strategic direction, and must be further translated into appropriate national legal frameworks and action plans.

Austria is committed to support international efforts to prevent HIV/AIDS with a special focus on gender-sensitive approaches. We are proud to host the eighteenth International Aids conference from 18 to 23 July 2010 in Vienna. Under the topic "Rights here, right now" relevant stakeholders will collectively evaluate recent scientific progress and policy evolutions and discuss future priorities. We strongly believe that this conference will contribute to highlight the critical connection between

women's rights and the pandemic, to better disseminate the good practices and to progress to achieve MDG 6 in our common global fight against HIV and Aids.

Mr. President,

The fate of women affected by armed conflicts and their role in peace building processes continues to be one of the priorities of Austrian foreign policy and development cooperation. Women are not only victims in armed conflicts, but also important actors to conduct prevention, conflict resolution and peace-building. Women are often systematically excluded from decision-making opportunities and peace building efforts. Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889 are important milestones, all aiming at strengthening the role of women in peace building and peace making measures. Austria has taken relevant initiatives at national, regional and international level in this regard.

Especially within our bilateral cooperation we have to face the reality that there are tremendous disparities at different local levels with reference to development results and the achievements in terms of poverty- and gender-relevant indicators. Within this context, the aims of gender equality are often very much favoured by respecting the categories of voice and accountability as independent goals of development as well as by increased decentralisation, local participatory governance and Community Driven Development.

Austria is committed to make this year's commemoration of the tenth anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325 a success. This anniversary represents a timely occasion to address existing challenges and define future priorities with regard to women, peace and security

Mr. President,

Gender issues cut across all eight MDGs. Addressing gender issues is therefore critical for achieving the MDGs by 2015. In this context Austria warmly welcomes the recent establishment of the new "UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women". We are looking forward to a swift appointment of a UoG

who will provide strong leadership for the critical strategic base for the new Entity. We are fully committed to working with the new HSG and to support the Entity in realizing its mandate. We trust that the Entity will give a strong impetus to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and will lead the way towards more effective coordination, coherence and gender mainstreaming across the United Nations system.

Thank you very much for your attention!

