



Security Council

Sixty-eighth year

7044th meeting

Friday, 18 October 2013, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Mehdiyev/Mr. Musayev (Azerbaijan)

Members:

Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
Australia	Mr. Quinlan
China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
France	Mr. Araud
Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
Morocco	Mr. Laassel
Pakistan	Mr. Masood Khan
Republic of Korea	Mr. Oh Joon
Russian Federation	Mr. Zagaynov
Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
Togo	Mr. Menan
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
United States of America	Ms. Power

Agenda

Women and peace and security

Women, rule of law and transitional justice in conflict-affected situations

Letter dated 3 October 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2013/587)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Women and peace and security

Women, rule of law and transitional justice in conflict-affected situations

Letter dated 3 October 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2013/587)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malaysia, the Marshall Islands, Mexico, Montenegro, Namibia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Turkey, Uruguay and Viet Nam to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Navanethem Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, to participate in this meeting. On behalf of the Council, I welcome Ms. Pillay, who is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Geneva.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Brigitte Balipou, of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Thomas Mayr-Harting, Head of the Delegation of

the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Mari Skåre, Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security of the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Miroslava Beham, Senior Gender Adviser on Gender Issues of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Tête António, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2013/614, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Namibia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Uruguay and Viet Nam.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2013/525, which contains the report of the Secretary General on women and peace and security.

I also wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2013/587, which contains a letter dated 3 October 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, China, France, Guatemala, Luxembourg, Morocco, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Togo, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2122 (2013).

The principal objectives of the debate are to review progress and address gaps in and challenges to the implementation of commitments on women, peace and security, as well as to discuss the specific measures that need to be adopted in order to foster transitional justice and rule of law actions.

I wish to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon. I now give him the floor.

The Secretary-General: I thank the Government of Azerbaijan for organizing this debate on the theme of women, the rule of law and transitional justice. I commend the Security Council for having adopted resolution 2122 (2013) today, underscoring the central importance of women's participation in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. I welcome the call for concrete actions not only to increase the number of women in peacemaking but also, crucially, to improve the way gender issues are addressed by peace and security institutions, including the Council itself. These priorities are also featured in my seven-point action plan on gender-responsive peacebuilding.

The rule of law, women's access to transitional justice and women's participation are deeply connected. Women must be involved at every stage of efforts to reassert the rule of law and rebuild societies through transitional justice. Their needs for security and justice must be addressed. Their voices must be heard. Their rights must be protected.

I urge the Council to deal with the full range of women's rights violations that occur during conflicts. The mandates of political and peacekeeping missions should support national prosecutions for serious international crimes against women, and special measures should be taken to provide women with opportunities to engage in the design and delivery of

transitional justice. Gender-responsive transitional justice measures can also help to redress historic gender-based injustices and combat the security threats and other obstacles that often restrict women's full engagement in public life.

The United Nations is developing good practices to embed gender dimensions in transitional justice and peacebuilding. We are working to ensure that women are represented on all United Nations mediation support teams. All United Nations-led or co-led peace processes are reaching out to women's civil society organizations. Our United Nations Global Focal Point on Police, Justice and Corrections is integrating gender perspectives into all aspects of our rule of law activities. We have significantly increased the percentage of female police peacekeepers and are helping local security sectors tackle sexual and gender-based violence. We have also completed a study on ways to enhance women's access to justice in conflict-affected settings.

Human rights mechanisms are also critical. I am pleased that the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is advancing a new general recommendation on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations.

Notwithstanding these advances, the fact remains that while we have seen a slow but steady increase in women leaders in business and politics, this progress has not been matched around the peace table. Gains in the representation of women are often achieved through the use of temporary special measures, including quotas. Similar special measures could help to increase the number of women at all levels of mediation, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

I am pleased that my report (S/2013/525) will be introduced today by Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women. This is her first such appearance before the Security Council. My report this year notes progress, but also calls for a more determined global effort to improve the protection of women and girls and enhance women's participation and leadership.

I have sought to lead by example by appointing more women to senior positions throughout the United Nations. For the first time in history, five United Nations peacekeeping operations — in South Sudan, Liberia, Cyprus, Haiti and Côte d'Ivoire — are led by women. Last year, Ms. Aïchatou Souleymane — who now heads our efforts in Côte d'Ivoire — served as

acting Joint Chief Mediator in Darfur. This year, I appointed Mary Robinson, my Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Region of Africa, as the United Nations first woman lead mediator in a peace process.

We have more distance to travel, but we have never been this far before. Women's participation in peace efforts is a matter of gender equality and universal human rights, and crucial to achieving sustainable peace, economic recovery, social cohesion and political legitimacy. Today's resolution makes that point loud and clear.

Societies emerging from conflict face a wealth of challenges unique to their circumstances, but all encounter a crucial moment at which they can begin again, draw lessons from the upheaval and gain a new path of stability and progress. Transitional justice, with its various mechanisms to promote reconciliation, redress and compensation, has proven to play a critical role. But the success of such processes depends fundamentally on their inclusiveness and the involvement of women, of minorities, of aggrieved parties, and of all stakeholders.

The year 2015 will mark the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. The Council has called for a high-level review meeting to mark that occasion. I am confident that with the Council's continued support, we can achieve concrete results and measurable change in the lives of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict settings.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka.

Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka: It is an honour to address the Security Council and to present this year's report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2013/525).

Like the Secretary-General, I thank the presidency of Azerbaijan for hosting this debate and for introducing the topic of women, the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict-affected situations. I thank the other speakers, especially the Secretary-General and Ms. Navi Pillay, High Commissioner on Human Rights. I also thank Ms. Brigitte Balipou, a trailblazing women's rights lawyer from the Central African Republic, who will be speaking today for civil society, which is very significant. I also join the

Secretary-General in welcoming the adoption of a new recommendation on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations by the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which is another important milestone.

Above all, I thank the entire Council membership for demonstrating its determination, by adopting resolution 2122 (2013) today, to put women's leadership at the centre of all efforts to resolve conflict and promote peace. The resolution is about the leadership of women as peacemakers. It puts the onus on all of us — the Security Council, the United Nations, regional organizations and Member States — to create the space and provide seats at the peace table for women. I know for sure that women are adequately trained for these roles. They are available and willing to be appointed at the highest levels. It is up to us — the United Nations, UN Women and Member States — to ensure that women are there at the peace table as mediators. Their teams must encourage negotiating parties to invite women to the table and address women's issues in ceasefire and peace accords. This is in the best interest of lasting peace.

It is critical that the Security Council members ask for briefings on the specific impacts of conflict on women, which the resolution facilitates, and that they ask that all conflict-related crimes perpetrated against women be reported by international commissions of inquiry, sanctions committees and other accountability bodies. Friends of peace processes and hosts of donor conferences are also urged to provide additional financing for the inclusion of women's groups and women leaders. Women's rights organizations must be supported in their efforts to build constituencies for peace and justice.

Of course, the inclusion of women alone will not solve all our problems. There is a need for much more to be done if peace processes are to be effective and inclusive. Gender analysis must be used to identify the impact on women's rights of all peace-related decisions.

The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda shows progress and good practice over the past year. Ninety-three percent of directives for police components in missions now include specific instructions to address women's security; this is already 40 per cent more than last year. International commissions of inquiry now routinely include gender crimes investigators.

I warmly welcome the appointment of Mary Robinson as the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to the Great Lakes Region, and thank Aïchatou Mindaoudou Souleymane for her work as Acting African Union-United Nations Joint Special Representative for Darfur. We are now seeing what could be described as a generation of gender-responsive mediation practice from these and other peace leaders. Elements of this practice include holding early and regular consultations with women leaders and women's rights groups; securing a gender advisor for the mediation team; and ensuring that crimes against women are addressed in ceasefire and peace negotiations. I include here the efforts this past year of a growing number of senior officials — including Margaret Vogt in the Central African Republic and Special Envoy Prodi in the Sahel region — to ensure more inclusive and gender-responsive practices.

This year, 3 out of 10 peace agreements in United Nations-supported processes included provisions on women's political participation or protection. That is an important improvement. The Council will agree with me that such provisions should be included in all peace accords.

We also see that post-conflict countries that are using temporary special measures, such as electoral gender quotas, have more women in parliament, well above the global average of 21 per cent. But the report of the Secretary-General also shows that we cannot be complacent, because gains made can also be lost. And we see that over the past years, the numbers of women at senior levels in the United Nations — for instance, in field missions — have remained relatively stagnant. While there has been some progress in political and peacebuilding missions, there has been a decrease in the share of women in top mission leadership positions. With the Council's help, I am determined that we make progress. As UN Women, we will be supporting that process.

Mass atrocities, including violence targeting women and girls, have occurred in the past year in the context of such diverse situations as those in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and Syria. That has to be a challenge that we face together. In other contexts, such as Afghanistan, there has been increased targeted killing of women leaders and human rights defenders. In some areas of peacebuilding there is an increase in spending on gender equality and women's

empowerment, which we must applaud. Therefore, we are seeing both progress and challenges.

At this point, the support recommended by the Secretary-General in his report has not been provided as foreseen, rarely reaching the 15 per cent minimum. I am therefore committed to reaching those targets. The Secretary-General's report also sets out strategic measures for all stakeholders to accelerate implementation, many of which are reflected in today's resolution. Those measures focus on removing obstacles to women's peace leadership and on building the capacities of the Security Council and the United Nations system to address gender issues across all peace and security work. There is also a call for a global study of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) to help us all prepare for the 2015 ministerial meeting of the Council on this topic.

Before I conclude, let me touch again on today's topic. In recent years, the Security Council has paid increased attention to transitional justice, recognizing that victims have a right to truth, justice and reparations. Respect for the rule of law is therefore connected to every aspect of peacebuilding. But the President of the Council is right in asking what the meaning of the rule of law is without respect for women's rights. In some contexts, the law itself is gender-biased. It fails to criminalize some forms of violence against women. Even where laws are consistent with international human rights standards, authorities may be inconsistent in their application. We know very well that there is a climate of impunity for crimes committed against women.

I welcome resolution 2106 (2013), adopted last June, to strengthen capacities to stop the use of sexual violence as a tactic of warfare. I stand shoulder to shoulder with my colleague Zainab Hawa Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, in the fight against impunity for such war crimes. Her support and collaboration are valued.

I want us to remember today that the public and visible forms of gender-based violence in wartime are based on the private violence against women in many homes, and on the serious inequalities between men and women.

Women's leadership and collective action have changed the world by combatting violence against women and building equality. Women's leadership is

central to reconciliation and conflict resolution, and to peacebuilding efforts that bring results for families and communities. That is why I wish members good progress in this area. I welcome today's resolution on women's peace leadership. When we next report to the Council, we would like to show that we have made even more progress and that, together with the Council, we have made the world a better place for women.

The President: I thank Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Pillay.

Ms. Pillay: I thank the Security Council for the opportunity to address this open debate on women and peace and security. I shall briefly address four main points: first, the situation of women's human rights in conflict; secondly, ensuring that gender considerations are taken into account during transitional justice processes, and making sure there is accountability for crimes suffered by women; thirdly, the value of comprehensive human rights-based approaches to transitional justice; and, lastly, much-needed efforts to create closer links between the peace and security, human rights and development agendas to fully seize the opportunity offered by transitional justice processes for women.

First, the protection of women's human rights in conflict remains a challenge. Let me provide just a couple of examples. In September, the International Commission of Inquiry on Syria submitted its most recent report to the Human Rights Council, which stressed the prominent role that the use and threat of sexual violence were playing in the conflict. The report also showed how vulnerable the women and girls in refugee camps were to sexual exploitation, forced marriage and trafficking.

Also in September, I reported to the Human Rights Council on the fact-finding mission of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Central African Republic, which reported a high rate of sexual violence against women. Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Ivan Šimonović visited the Central African Republic in August and confirmed those findings. The Human Rights Council has adopted a resolution establishing a Special Rapporteur on the Central African Republic. My Office will encourage close attention to the situation of women and girls in the work of that mandate.

Secondly, the establishment of the rule of law and transitional justice processes are crucial to ensuring accountability and delivering justice, truth and reparations for violations suffered by women. They are also crucial to deter the continuation of such violations in future. Today we observe considerable progress in several areas.

The full, free and informed participation of women in national consultations is increasingly regarded as instrumental for the design and implementation of comprehensive, context-specific, gender-sensitive transitional justice strategies. To give just one example, at the beginning of October, the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights visited Yemen and commended the authorities for conducting a national dialogue in which 30 per cent of the participants were women.

Increasingly, the mandates, compositions and operations of truth and reconciliation commissions and similar bodies are designed to ensure that women's and girls' experiences are taken into account. In his recent report to the Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparations and guarantees of non-recurrence highlighted the increased attention being paid by truth commissions to women's rights.

Similarly, there have been increasing efforts to systematically include gender considerations in the work of commissions of inquiry, including having experts on gender appointed to the secretariats of the ongoing commissions of inquiry working on Syria and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Given the role that those mechanisms can play in laying the ground for transitional justice processes, such expertise can make an important contribution to bringing about gender-sensitive justice and redress. We closely collaborate with UN Women in that area.

There is now much greater recognition of the need for and the potential of gender-sensitive reparations. My Office has undertaken consultations with survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, and Kosovo as per resolution 1244 (1999). We have produced reports that include recommendations to inform reparations efforts there. In the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, my Office is concluding a pilot project that consists of grants to five local organizations to provide support and assistance to survivors of sexual violence.

A guidance note on reparations for victims of conflict-related sexual violence is being prepared jointly by my Office and UN Women, which will be available shortly.

In several countries, there have been targeted efforts to encourage the prosecution of perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence. For example, the Joint Human Rights Office of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has supported legal clinics that represent victims of sexual violence. It has also trained police, prosecutors and magistrates to better handle sexual violence investigations and trials. As a result of those and other efforts, an increasing number of convictions has been registered. While all that progress is encouraging, we must also be aware that there is still a long, hard road ahead before we can claim to be providing justice, accountability and seizing the potential of transitional justice processes for women fully.

Thirdly, as we continue to advance along that road, we must focus our efforts within international human rights norms and standards, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). I join the Secretary-General and Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka in noting the importance of a resolution adopted this morning in Geneva by the CEDAW Committee, which is a general recommendation on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations. I support the Committee's view that efforts to ensure judicial accountability and to uncover the truth about past violations must take into account a whole range of violations, as well as the underlying structural sexual and gender-based discrimination that made them possible. I also believe that, according to the spirit and letter of CEDAW and other human rights instruments, efforts to halt violations must be framed around an obligation to address structural and systemic gender inequality and discrimination through comprehensive legislative, policy and institutional reforms.

Developments in the Middle East and North Africa region exemplify the need for transitional justice processes and institutional reforms that are mindful of the interdependence and interrelatedness of human rights. In some countries of that region, women parliamentarians face fierce opposition when they propose laws that address women's rights, while in others public spaces for women are shrinking due to threats and intimidation. It is crucial that while we look

into quotas and other mechanisms to support women's participation in political systems in countries emerging from conflict, we also need to consider how illiteracy, poverty, discrimination and violence conspire to prevent their effective participation.

My Office will raise awareness about CEDAW's new general recommendation and promote its implementation. My Office will also submit to the Human Rights Council at its September 2014 session an analytical study on gender-based and sexual violence in relation to transitional justice. Those are ongoing efforts to ensure that the human rights reports and briefings that reach this Council fully integrate women's rights, including through specialized capacity-building tools and activities for human rights officers. My Office, in cooperation with UN Women, is also undertaking an internal lessons-learned exercise on the provision of gender and sexual and gender-based violence expertise to commissions of inquiry in order to help further progress in ensuring that their work is gender-sensitive.

Finally, I fully support the Secretary-General's recommendation for closer links between the United Nations peace and security, human rights and development work. A human-rights-based approach is crucial to successfully address the root causes of conflict and threats to women's security. It is also crucial to seize the opportunity offered by transitions, which include transforming gender relations, dismantling negative gender stereotypes, reforming legislation that discriminates against women, supporting women's autonomy in private and public spaces and, eventually, building just and equal societies where peace and development can prosper.

The President: I thank Ms. Pillay for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Balipou.

Ms. Balipou (*spoke in French*): I would like to start by expressing my gratitude for the opportunity to address the Security Council. I speak today on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security. I am also here in my capacity as a magistrate in the Central African Republic, a board member of Femmes Africa Solidarité and a founding member of the Women Lawyers Association of the Central African Republic. The Working Group welcomes the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2013/525) on women and peace and security, which provides clear analysis and data on progress in implementing resolution 1325 (2000), while also identifying remaining gaps and challenges. We

would also like to welcome Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the new Executive Director of UN Women.

I wish to convey to the Council greetings from the Central African Republic, which over the past two decades has experienced a crisis that has undermined both its unity and national cohesion. Since 24 March, the situation on the ground has spiralled out of control and into a full-blown conflict, which has impacted the entire civilian population and especially women and girls, who have been subjected to rape and other forms of sexual violence on a large-scale. The recruitment of child soldiers has also taken on major dimensions. We live in fear. We are being killed indiscriminately in large numbers; we have been impacted by rampant looting; we lack food and supplies; our children have not been able to go to school since March; and our country is being destroyed. The Central African Republic needs urgent security and humanitarian intervention. Our human rights are being violated right before the eyes of the international community.

The Security Council has today taken significant steps to fully implement resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. The new resolution 2122 (2013) lays out key commitments regarding women's participation. It is quite clear to our colleagues from civil society who work on a daily basis to implement the framework resolutions on women and peace and security that the main challenges in terms of participation continue to be unmet, especially when it comes to the participation and inclusion of women in all conflict prevention, resolution and post-conflict reconstruction.

It is high time to dismantle the barriers to the full participation of women at all levels of decision-making. It is also high time, 13 years after the unanimous adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), for consistent resourcing and sustained political will to support the legitimate role of women in preventing and ending conflicts and in rebuilding countries following conflicts such as that currently plaguing my own country, the Central African Republic.

We women of the Central African Republic demand full involvement in peace negotiation processes. It is high time to ensure respect for women's fundamental rights and to guarantee effective responses to women's protection concerns. Such calls are echoed by women in Syria, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Colombia, Libya, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and every community affected by armed conflict.

In support of the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and of ensuring that its implementation reflects the full scope of framework resolutions on women, peace and security, today I will address the following key points regarding justice, conflict prevention, demilitarization and disarmament, security and comprehensive multisectoral responses.

First, on the issue of justice, the agenda for today's debate, "Women, rule of law and transitional justice in conflict-affected situations," is of great importance to my country. This vision of justice is rooted in peace efforts and requires that peace agreements not include amnesties for crimes against women. Such justice is achieved by ensuring gender parity in transitional justice systems, including reconciliation, and women's political participation as political candidates and voters. These efforts should guarantee reparations for crimes under international law, including those that seek to eliminate rather than perpetuate gender inequalities.

That in turn depends on non-discrimination, equal citizenship rights for women, access to safe public transportation, the effective delivery of basic services such as health care, water and electricity, and witness and victim protection programmes. Due to the conflict, our justice system in the Central African Republic has been almost completely destroyed, making it impossible for someone like me, a magistrate, to serve the people. It is currently impossible for women to access justice. The judicial infrastructure in the Central African Republic needs to be rebuilt, the perpetrators of violations must be held accountable before the law, and resources must be allocated to enable the documentation of crimes.

Secondly, conflict prevention lies at the core of the women, peace and security agenda and of the maintenance of international peace and security. It requires us to undertake an in-depth analysis of the causes of conflict, which includes the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, acute societal inequalities, and the inability of States to protect their population. The prevention of armed conflicts requires strengthened investment in ensuring women's rights, equal education, and a women-led civil society. These issues are critical to preventing wars and conflicts. In the Central African Republic, it is vital that the root causes of conflict be addressed and that rising religious tensions be assuaged through open dialogue. We call for the full participation of women's civil society organizations in the planning for the legislative and presidential elections to be held in 2015.

My third point concerns demilitarization, disarmament and security sector reform. Demilitarization must be an essential element in conflict prevention. Traditional security areas, such as disarmament, demobilization and security sector reform, must be made accessible to women. We ask that this be taken into consideration during the planned deployment of African Union peacekeeping troops to the Central African Republic and of any other additional forces.

Fourthly, with regard to multisectoral responses, the entire population of the Central African Republic is critically in need of humanitarian assistance, the delivery of which requires a secure environment. In communities ravaged by armed conflict, humanitarian responses must be mobilized in line with international humanitarian law and established good practices, taking special account of gender in the design, delivery and evaluation of programmes. This is key to ensuring the safety of girls and women through the implementation of effective protection and prevention measures so as to enable them to access necessary services and to advance women's leadership at all levels, including in situations of forced displacement. Securing additional comprehensive multisectoral responses through sufficient funding and by ensuring the availability of medical, legal, psychosocial and livelihood services is crucial for women's empowerment in conflict and post-conflict situations.

The implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) is too urgent to continue to wait. Women's civil society groups must be engaged as key partners and be deeply involved in peace, mediation, negotiation and governmental processes. Women's rights must be prioritized by implementing national and regional action plans pursuant to resolution 1325 (2000), as well as at the regional level by holding regular meetings with women's groups and women leaders, and by ensuring that women's priorities are substantively incorporated in all key negotiations. Political and financial resources must be allocated to women's civil society organizations, and the principles of resolution 1325 (2000) must be embedded in the post-2015 development goals and indicators.

I appeal to the Council to ensure that the conflict in the Central African Republic is not forgotten, and to take swift action in that regard. Each day of inaction is a day of too many lives lost needlessly. We call on members of the Security Council to be role models by

consistently and fully implementing resolution 1325 (2000).

The President: I thank Ms. Balipou for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the Members of the Security Council.

Mr. Wilson (United Kingdom): I join in the expressions of gratitude for the statements that we have heard today. I particularly want to thank you, Sir, for holding this debate, and the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN Women, Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka, High Commissioner Pillay and Ms. Balipou for their valuable briefings. I think it is right that we have applauded them. I would also like to thank everybody who has come to participate in and to bear witness to the debate today. For those who cannot see, the debate will also be recorded on camera. The Chamber is full and their presence adds weight to what we have decided and to what we will discuss in the Chamber throughout the day.

I want to welcome the adoption today of resolution 2122 (2013) on women, peace and security. The resolution reinstates and reiterates the central role of women in resolving conflict and helping to build a sustainable peace. I want in particular to highlight three aspects of the resolution.

First, it places women, peace and security front and centre in the Council's work. The Secretary-General has outlined what that means for the Council and his own personal commitment to this, but it also means in a very practical sense that the Council will now receive more regular briefings and more updates from United Nations bodies and officials on this subject. That means that it is central to our work.

Secondly, the resolution highlights the need for women's participation in areas affected by conflict. We have asked that special representatives and special envoys in all United Nations missions regularly consult women's organizations early on in their deployment. Their voices must be heard and needs taken into account in all conflict-resolution and peacebuilding processes.

Thirdly, the resolution makes clear the Council's commitment to a meaningful review of the implementation of this agenda in 2015, as the Secretary-General emphasized in his remarks earlier. The review must be based on clear data. We have therefore requested the Secretary-General to commission a global study on the remaining gaps and challenges. I

welcome the constructive work of all Council members on the resolution and hope that we will continue to work in a productive manner as we move towards the 2015 review.

I now turn to the theme of the debate, “Women, rule of law and transitional justice in conflict-affected situations”. Throughout the world, security and justice systems fail women time and time again. In conflict and post-conflict settings where institutions break down and violence is rampant, existing injustices are often exacerbated. However, transitions out of conflict provide opportunities to strengthen women’s leadership, empowerment and rights, while restoring the rule of law and governance systems. Rebuilding justice and the rule of law is fundamental to protecting women’s equal rights and creating a more stable, secure and just society.

As the Secretary-General has highlighted, women’s representation in the justice sector is crucial and helps increase the reporting of crimes. Barriers must be removed so that women can access justice in formal and traditional settings. For example, we have seen success through the use of mobile courts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and paralegal support groups in Nepal. In addition, the most basic needs must be provided for, from access to safe public transportation to the effective delivery of services, such as water and electricity, as Ms. Balipou so eloquently highlighted in her statement earlier.

The United Kingdom has established a team of experts on the rule of law. That team, which includes lawyers, gender advisers and experts in the protection of witnesses, provides training and mentoring to national authorities to help them develop appropriate laws and build their capabilities. The teams also worked on the front line with grass-roots organizations, local peacebuilders and human rights defenders. They have already been deployed to the Syrian borders, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Libya, Mali and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The United Kingdom welcomes the report of the Secretary-General (S/2013/525) and the important recommendations that it makes. We welcome the ongoing work of UN Women, and we recognize that the continuing challenges in implementing the agenda lie beyond the topic of today’s debate.

In conflict settings worldwide, women continue to be seen merely as victims of violence rather than as

the leaders of change, as those to be protected rather than respected and included as equal participants in all decision-making processes. As Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka said, women are central to leadership.

Since the end of the Cold War, women have represented only 4 per cent of signatories to peace agreements, less than 3 per cent of mediators of peace talks and less than 10 per cent of anyone sitting at the table to negotiate on behalf of a party to conflict. Excluding 50 per cent of society will never lead to stable and lasting peace. Peace can be achieved only with women’s active participation and leadership.

The United Kingdom welcomes the Council’s consultation with women’s organizations during its trip to the Democratic Republic of the Congo earlier this month. We also commend the recent work of Ms. Mary Robinson. I agree with the Secretary-General that hers was an excellent appointment on engaging with women’s civil society in the Great Lakes region. I hope others will follow by example.

We have two years before the Council’s high-level review, in 2015, to demonstrate our collective commitment to the agenda. Ahead of that, let us all, Member States, the Council and United Nations entities, invigorate our efforts and give the issue the attention it deserves and take the action that we have committed to at the Council today.

Ms. Power (United States of America): I welcome the chance to participate in this debate on issues that are central to the mission of the United Nations and to the future of us all. I thank the Secretary-General for his recent report (S/2013/525), his presence here today and the personal commitment he has made to women and peace and security.

I also would like to thank Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka for her testimony and for her tremendous leadership of UN Women. We know that the best is still ahead, and we are delighted to have her in that role. I would like to thank High Commissioner for Human Rights Pillay, who has spent her whole career pressing the agenda, with significant returns. I also thank Ms. Balipou, not only for her remarks and for undertaking an arduous journey to be with us here today but also for advocating with such eloquence on behalf of women’s participation and on behalf of the rule of law, which go very much together in the Central African Republic and beyond. What she does takes courage, and we commend her for it.

Resolution 1325 (2000) was a landmark measure. It affirmed the principle that women's participation in conflict prevention, mitigation and recovery was vital to the maintenance of international security and peace — not a sideshow, but vital. That reality is in turn linked to the achievement of all eight of the Millennium Development Goals, whether directly, as in women's empowerment, or as a logical consequence, as in the areas of universal education, maternal health, child mortality and environmental protection. Progress towards one of those essential Goals will make gains easier in the others. All are connected to women's participation in peace and security.

Today's debate, as we know, focuses on one particular aspect of that linkage, which is the rule of law. That focus is appropriate because the law is diminished in any country where half of the population is denied the chance to shape it. Years ago, I bore witness as a journalist to the brutal violence in the Balkans. There mass rape was used as a tactic of war, and the means of accountability had to be created through the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. However, it was created only after tens of thousands of people had already died. We have learned through hard experience that wars are increasingly carried out less by professional troops than by irregular forces, leading to more civilian casualties, economic disruption and displaced families. During the chaos of armed conflict, legal systems are often bypassed, and sexual predators, we found, do their worst.

In the wake of such suffering, we understand that inadequate governance and limited resources may complicate the task of recovery and healing. There is, however, one standard that we can live up to regardless of the situation. That is the principle of inclusion. Whether a country is rich or poor, there is no excuse for denying women fair representation when negotiating the terms of the peace, when enacting laws or when forging a conflict-free future.

The United Nations should be a standard setter and, according to the Secretary-General's September report, some important progress is being made. In the past year, as we have heard, women were included in every formal peace-negotiating process led or co-led by the United Nations. Gender experts were present in 85 per cent of delegations. In each case, representatives of women's civil society groups were consulted. Women are playing a more prominent role in crisis prevention, most notably in Darfur and the Great Lakes region. Since

2009, gender crimes investigators have been a part of all United Nations commissions of inquiry, and as was said, this year 3 out of 10 peace agreements in United Nations-supported processes included provisions for women's political participation or protection. That is more than the year before.

An analysis of women and security is now included in most reports by peacekeeping and special political missions. The Secretary-General has established, and my Government and other Governments vigorously support, the policy of zero tolerance towards sexual-related abuses committed by United Nations personnel, something that still happens with alarming incidence.

Less impressive, however, is the level of women's participation in police and military deployments. The figures of 10 per cent and 3 per cent, respectively, remain well below the modest target of 20 per cent that had been set for next year. Just as disappointing, only 4 of the 27 peace-related field missions are led by women. Moreover, we have all deplored the horrific sexual crimes being carried out daily in Syria, where rape has again become a routine weapon of war.

The Council is just back from the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where we met with internally displaced persons, peacekeepers and civil society who described a near pandemic of sexual violence associated with the conflict there. Clearly, the involvement of women in peace and security is a goal that must be approached from many directions simultaneously. That is why the United States encourages every country to develop an action plan.

My Government announced its own blue print two years ago, after broad consultations with civil society. The plan lays out a comprehensive strategy for incorporating women in efforts to prevent conflict, provide humanitarian protection, foster food security and ensure fair treatment under the law. That plan is backed by leaders across the United States Government. President Obama is personally determined to change the DNA of the United States Government so that the inexorable link between women's inclusion and lasting peace is a premise, or an axiom, brought to every policy discussion. President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry have ordered its full integration into our diplomacy. The Defence Department is spreading the message of gender awareness to partners across the globe. Our Justice Department is working with police, prosecutors and judges to increase accountability for

sexual violence, and the Centers for Disease Control have launched a system for monitoring abuse against women and girls. As the Secretary-General's report acknowledges, there remain troubling gaps in what we know about women and security, but one thing we have learned is that there is a correlation between gender inequity and the potential for civil strife.

Let us consider, for example, the Central African Republic, which ranks 138th out of 146 on the United Nations Development Programme's Gender Inequality Index. Even before the explosion of violence, teen pregnancy was out of control and the rate of unhealthy births and maternal deaths was far too high. The situation is now a catastrophe as rebels have replaced law with anarchy and, as we have heard, a quarter of a million people have been driven from their homes. The depth of that crisis underlines the importance of Ms. Balipou's presence here today. It is vital that her message of inclusion be heeded.

The Secretary-General's report reminds us that the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) must go forward with both the short and long terms in mind. Our ultimate goal is a transformation in how people everywhere think about security. Our daily focus is on the incremental changes that will lead us in the right direction. Because of UN Women and its partners, numerous productive initiatives are under way. Those range from the peacebuilding efforts of women in Mali to new legal protection measures in Colombia to smoother access to justice in Haiti to the enhanced role for women in the police of Zimbabwe. Women are also playing an important part in preparing for elections in Sierra Leone and in harnessing new communications technology to monitor and report on violations in the Sudan and other areas of conflict.

There is cumulative power in the new voices being heard, and when opportunities arise some civil society leaders are making the leap from outside advocacy to positions of political power. We have seen in Kenya civil society deeply engaged in a five-year campaign, endorsed by the United Nations, to enshrine the rights of women to own land, live equally in marriage and be free from the threat of violence, and on the election day this past spring a record 87 women were chosen for Parliament — a number that, pursuant to the country's new Constitution, will increase further in the years ahead. We also commend Rwanda, 62 per cent of whose parliamentarians are now women, which is a remarkable statistic.

We know too that what begins as a single voice can sometimes become a mighty chorus. Like many here, I recently had the honour of meeting Malala Yousafzai, the young Pakistani with the soft smile and the steel spine, as well as a powerful message of inclusion. Whether discussing the right of a girl to sit in a classroom or the right of a woman to lead her country in the quest for security and peace, the principle is the same and the dividend for peace, for dignity and for prosperity of women's inclusion is obvious.

At least since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) 13 years ago, the international community has agreed on the direction in which we want to move. As we continue to go forward, let us confront honestly the obstacles that remain before us. Let us create a spin-free zone on resolution 1325 (2000) and its implementation and let us not conflate effort with results. They are different. Let us instead take concrete steps so that women share fully in efforts to avoid and contain conflict, just as they inevitably share in the suffering when such efforts are poorly designed or when they fail.

Make no mistake — the engagement of women in peace and security does not reflect a desire for disengagement by men. The principle that guides us is respect for the rights and dignity of all. To end and recover from strife we seek the leadership and participation of each gender and every nationality. Just as all benefit from peace, so all must help to create peace.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): Australia obviously welcomes Azerbaijan bringing the Council's focus to the critical intersection between the rule of law, transitional justice, and the women, peace and security agenda.

I thank the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for Human Rights for their determined efforts, and Ms. Balipou for her inspiring struggle on the front lines. I welcome Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka, the new Executive Director of UN Women. We look forward to receiving regular briefings from her and other senior United Nations officials on the gender dimensions of conflict and across the thematic work on our agenda. It is integral to our work that they regularly provide such input.

Thirteen years ago, resolution 1325 (2000) recognized the central role of women in the maintenance of international peace and security. But as the Secretary-General's report (S/2013/525) makes clear, while there

has been some progress, typically the linkages between women's participation and the work of the Council are not made. The consistent inclusion in mission mandates of women, peace and security objectives is fundamental to addressing that. Indeed, if the Council is to remain a responsive role model, it is critical that timely and relevant information and analysis be provided systematically by all United Nations actors deployed in conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts. Australia commends the adoption today of resolution 2122 (2013) for clearly articulating that.

It has long been recognized that women's engagement in conflict prevention and resolution and peacebuilding efforts is more likely to lead to sustainable peace and security. Of the over 2 million refugees from Syria today, 78 per cent are women and girls. Having fled the violence in Syria, they are now attempting to navigate a tidal wave of threats, including sexual violence, mass forced displacement, early and forced marriage, forced pregnancies and exploitation. Those circumstances must not prevent their vital contribution to reconstructing a safe and functioning Syrian society, and we must ensure that their leadership is harnessed as part of the solution.

For countries emerging from conflict, peace processes often lead to institutional reforms that establish new political, economic and social orders. Women's early participation in peace talks is critical not only to their effectiveness, but to underpinning women's longer-term empowerment. Formal peace processes must reflect the reality that women are already undertaking peace work in their communities and serving as agents of change as part of efforts to keep the fabric of conflict-affected societies together.

Local justice remains critical to the long-term healing and reconciliation of communities, and affected States must ensure accountability for conflict-related crimes. But to be effective, that must include justice for crimes of sexual violence. Fifteen years since the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court included sexual and gender-based offences as crimes against humanity and war crimes, the inclusion of such offences in transitional justice arrangements must be mainstreamed. From prosecutions to truth commissions to reparations programmes, effective transitional justice mechanisms must incorporate the situation of women.

Engaging women as leaders is critical to building sustainable peace. We must identify and address

impediments that prevent women from participating in decision-making. We commend Mary Robinson's appointment as Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Region and her long overdue approach to consulting early with women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We support the United Nations ongoing dialogue with women's civil society organizations as a barometer of progress and a critical source of knowledge on the effectiveness of missions.

In post-conflict settings, women's full and effective participation is fundamental to efforts to rebuild the justice sector and to security sector reform. In Solomon Islands, Australia supported, through the Participating Police Force, the post-conflict recruitment and retention of female officers to the local police force. The early involvement of women and the integration of a gender-perspective led directly to the establishment of critical domestic violence and sexual abuse services. Also, more fundamentally, it underwrote the broader processes of community rebuilding.

Of course, ensuring women and girls' safety and security in conflict is instrumental to laying the ground for gender equality initiatives. We look forward to the contribution that the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty can make to reducing gender-based violence in conflict settings, and we strongly encourage its ratification.

To conclude, the high-level review of resolution 1325 (2000) in 2015 will provide a necessary opportunity to take stock of our successes and to address the ongoing gaps in implementing our agenda. The Council's dedicated field mission ahead of that will be important in providing us with direct insights to help inform those discussions. But of course, for women in conflict situations, our review of the effective implementation of the women, peace and security agenda cannot wait. We must continue, across the whole breadth of the Council's work, to rigorously strengthen the Council's consideration of the gender dimensions of conflict.

Mr. Laassel (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset to convey to you, Sir, on behalf of the Moroccan delegation, our gratitude for the convening of this debate. I thank for their briefings Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon; Ms. Navanethem Pillay, High Commissioner for Human Rights; and Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women. I welcome Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka's appointment and assure her of our full cooperation and support as she discharges her mission. We also thank Ms. Brigitte

Balipou, Chair of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, for her constructive contribution.

My delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on women, peace and security (S/2013/525) and the adoption of resolution 2122 (2013) on the issue. The report takes stock of the actions and initiatives of Member States in the framework of implementation of the resolution, especially in strengthening women's participation in decision-making, integrating gender-specific issues in peacekeeping operations and training staff who participate in those operations. The report confirms that much work remains, despite the significant progress of women's participation in peacekeeping operations and their representation in the decision-making process.

The signing of peace agreements and ceasefire agreements and the implementation of national action plans and programmes for the protection of women in conflict-affected countries have made it possible to identify, in a more appropriate way, the ways and means likely to promote women's rights and to strengthen their participation in efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts and in post-conflict reconstruction.

My delegation supports the initiatives of the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict to assist States in strengthening the rule of law, transitional justice and security sector reform. My delegation also supports the elaboration by the Standing Committee on Women, Peace and Security of the strategic framework intended to assist Member States in achieving their interim objectives, in preparation for the meeting planned for 2015 on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) at national, regional and international levels.

Effective and optimal empowerment of women in the context of peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction involves the collective and coordinated action of the international community and the United Nations system, through strengthening protection and prevention measures adapted to specific contexts that will facilitate the implementation of the resolution.

The establishment of genuine peace requires the establishment of inclusive and durable political, economic and social structures. Within that framework, local women's entities are a driving force in empowering women and strengthening good governance. My delegation welcomes the work carried out in the framework of the United Nations system

to strengthen women's capacities and involvement in mediation and peacebuilding processes. Similarly, it supports the implementation of the Secretary-General's seven-point action plan (see S/2010/466), which enables greater consideration of gender issues in peacebuilding operations.

As for protection, my delegation notes with concern that refugee or displaced women continue to suffer most from generalized insecurity, difficult living conditions and limited access to humanitarian assistance. The same is true for refugee women who lack documents and often face gender-based discrimination, especially in accessing basic social services. In that connection, it is essential that Member States — especially the States parties to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees — comply with their obligations and register refugees in their territory. Registration and identification programmes can have a positive impact in empowering women refugees.

My delegation welcomes the efforts undertaken by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in the protection of women in armed conflict and the consideration of gender-specific issues in the framework of the maintenance of peace. We stress that it is important that DPKO strengthen its work on the ground, in coordination with the relevant parties.

While the responsibility to put an end to the tragic consequences of armed conflict for women and children lies with States, coordinated and sustained action among the various national and United Nations actors involved in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) is necessary to strengthen existing initiatives.

Firm political will and full commitment of Member States to the measures in resolution 1325 (2000) will guarantee the active participation of women in national, regional and international institutions for the prevention, protection and management of conflict situations.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Before delivering my statement, I would like to say that this morning, my delegation had requested the right to explain its vote. I would like to believe that an unintentional error caused that opportunity to be lost. Our motive was not to explain why we voted in favour of resolution 2122 (2013), but rather to explain why we did not sponsor it, which would have been our normal inclination, given our strong commitment to resolution 1325 (2000). The reason was that despite my delegation's

reiterated proposals for a slight nuance in the language of the eighth preambular paragraph, to accommodate it in our national legislation, our proposals were not heeded, and we merely wanted to have that recorded.

I now turn to my statement. I wish to thank you, Sir, for convening this open debate. Anecdotally, it brings back memories of my presidency of the Council exactly one year ago, when a presidential statement was adopted (S/PRST/2012/23) even before the debate was held, for it was postponed until November due to Hurricane Sandy, which caused so much damage to the city that it prevented the scheduled meeting. That is why we welcome the convening of the debate and the adoption of the new resolution, which strengthens the conceptual framework of the Council's groundbreaking resolution 1325 (2000) on the issue, as well as several subsequent resolutions and presidential statements.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2013/525) and for presenting it to the Council. We also thank the new Executive Director of UN Women, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, for her presentation. I thank Ms. Navanethem Pillay for her valuable contributions to the topic in the Council today, and I especially thank Ms. Brigitte Balipou for providing so eloquently a collective vision of civil society organizations, whose participation we have consistently supported. I also note that we value the concept paper prepared by the presidency (S/2013/587, annex).

Each year the Council has continued to build upon the core premise of resolution 1325 (2000), because we are convinced that without women's security, there can be no lasting peace. We think that the timely theme of today's debate, on women, rule of law and transitional justice in conflict-affected situations, will generate added value.

Although so far the Council has held seven debates on the issue of the rule of law, there is still a way to go to achieve overall accountability for crimes affecting women and girls. Nor have we made sufficient progress in achieving women's full participation in the processes of transitional justice. Similarly, there is room to improve the analysis of sex-differentiated effects on women and girls when the rule of law is violated during and after conflicts.

We have previously said that, based on our own experience, the boundaries between peacebuilding, peacekeeping and economic, social and legal transformations are not clear. Therefore, we think it is

of the utmost importance to advance the fight against impunity, improve access to justice for women and strengthen the justice system infrastructure to deal with such crimes, both nationally and internationally. With regard to our own country, we have adopted legislation on femicide and established courts for the prosecution of that crime, as well as justice centres for onsite legal, judicial and medical services, including psychosocial support for women and their children. We agree with the Secretary-General's recommendation that we must step up efforts to meet and fund the recovery needs of women and girls, especially those who have become heads of households.

Moreover, my country wishes to acknowledge the work of UN Women, whose establishment was a singularly important institutional step forward, among other things to promote the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). We support greater participation by women in peacebuilding and strengthening civil capacity after conflicts to be consistent with the issue of women and peace and security. We believe that it is necessary to recognize women as builders of peace and stability.

The resolution that we adopted today contributes to reducing the vulnerability of women and girls in armed conflict and post-conflict situations. We recognize the need to receive timely information in order to intervene early and save lives. In that sense, preventing conflicts is the best way to protect all civilians from the horrors that accompany armed conflicts, in particular women and girls.

Finally, we believe that the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), in 2015, will provide not only the Security Council but the entire United Nations system an opportunity to review the levels of implementation of that resolution and to renew commitments to combat violence, including sexual violence. We urge all Member States and the United Nations system to facilitate greater participation by women in that area.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I want to thank the Secretary-General and everyone who, based on their experience and commitment, has contributed to the need to make progress in realizing the full equality for women.

In that connection, I should like to recall what Patrick Cammaert, former Deputy Force Commander of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, said in 2008: it

is more dangerous to be a woman than a soldier in a modern conflict.

Argentina would like to emphasize the need for a gender perspective and for crimes against women to be incorporated into the agenda of peace negotiations. To that end, we need women in decision-making positions and at all stages of the peace process. We know that women are victims of widespread violence at the hands of all parties involved in a conflict. We also know that sexual violence in conflict is not a new phenomenon, rather it is a powerful weapon used to destroy not merely the life of a woman but also to destroy families, communities, ethnic groups or entire nations.

Although we still hear that violence is as old as war itself and that women's bodies have been a battlefield for centuries throughout the world, the experience in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda served to scuttle the cynical acceptance of sexual violence as a natural phenomenon in armed conflicts, and of rape as a weapon of war of devastating power. The atrocities documented at the time and the survivors' testimonies of massive violations — rapes in camps, mutilations, sexual slavery and forced pregnancies — moved humankind's ethical consciousness, while sexual violence in armed conflicts seized being an invisible crime or an immutable tradition. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the Special Court for Sierra Leone decisively made progress in classifying sexual violence, in particular rape in conflict situations, as torture, a war crime and a crime against humanity. With complete clarity, the International Criminal Court Statute would subsequently establish that acts of rape, sexual slavery, prostitution, forced pregnancy or sterilization or any other form of sexual violence of comparable severity constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity.

In accordance with that progressive increase in awareness, the Security Council's trajectory shows an awareness and increasing commitment to preventing and eradicating sexual and gender-based discrimination in situations of conflict and post-conflict situations, as well as a commitment to ensuring that when sexist crimes are committed, the perpetrators will not enjoy impunity, that there is justice and redress for the victims and that societies can achieve a lasting peace based on authentic reconciliation that is born of an understanding of the truth and a recognition of the fact that nobody has the right to deny another human

being of their life, their freedom or their dignity, nor can they impede their participation by way of any type of discrimination in any area of society.

From resolution 1208 (1998), on security for refugees, which underscores the special security needs of women in camps, to resolution 1314 (2000), which underscores the importance of prevention, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration policies including a gender perspective, it is clear we have made progress. However, it was particularly through resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions focused on the situation of women in conflict and post-conflict situations that the Council underscored, as priorities in achieving lasting peace, the promotion and protection of women's human rights and their equal participation in transitional justice and reconciliation processes, as well as a human rights perspective and a gender perspective in all the efforts and programmes for development, peace, security and the building and strengthening of the rule of law.

It is true that much remains to be done. Despite all the progress made — as we recently noted in our visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region — weak States, authoritarian Governments, corrupt systems and a widespread culture of impunity serve to perpetuate inequality and violence against women in conflict and post-conflict situations, and that enables other types of inequality, discrimination and violence to exist in society. We have worked very hard to put an end to rape as a weapon of war and to the wrongful response of impunity for its perpetrators. While those efforts have contributed to reducing impunity's negative effects, we are aware that the problem has still not been eradicated.

We cannot lock ourselves inside a laboratory to restore and recognize women's human rights or to build a genuine rule of law. In that connection, I would like to end with the testimony of women from various parts of the world. In this century, in one country in Africa, 1,152 women were raped every day — that is 48 every hour or four every five minutes. In another area of that continent, a woman reported that, when women tried to escape, their children were killed. She said that they raped lots of women and girls and were happy when they raped them. They even sang while they raped them and told them they had the right to do whatever they wish with women. In another country, a women's organization told us that the criminal code there still interprets rape as a form of adultery. If a woman cannot

prove that there was no consent and if there are not at least four witnesses who confirm her testimony, women are punished for adultery by whipping or stoning. In a country in Asia, we heard recently from a group of women who were subjected to sexual torture. Their genitals were burned, they said. They were forced into prostitution by security forces, rebel groups and members of peacekeeping missions. In Europe, a woman from the former Yugoslavia testified that in the camps the soldiers raped her all day long. She would fall asleep, but when she awoke a different soldier would be in her bed.

In the Middle East, many women do not turn to the justice system for the crimes they have been subjected to because they say that they are scared — scared of exclusion, of being victimized again, or of being victims of honour crimes. In my region of Latin America and the Caribbean, a woman in a conflict situation said that a woman can never report a rape to her national police; it would be like being raped all over again.

Finally, I would like to share the sentiments expressed in 2012 by a group of women Nobel Peace Prize laureates — Jody Williams, Shirin Ebadi, Mairead Maguire and Leymah Gbowee — that a world without war and violence against women is possible and that

“[o]ur collective efforts have brought gender violence to the forefront of policy and public discussions. Now, our united actions will stop rape in conflict”.

However, we still have much to do to achieve women’s effective equality as people with rights and to achieve equal representation in decision-making arenas, and for those reasons, we welcome the resolution adopted today (resolution 2122 (2013)).

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): We welcome the convening of this debate under your auspices, Mr. President. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his insightful briefing and for his strong leadership in advancing the agenda on women and peace and security. Pakistan welcomes the statements made this morning by Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the Executive Director of UN Women, and by Ms. Navanethem Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. We also appreciate the important civil-society perspective shared with us by Ms. Brigitte Balipou.

Appreciable progress has been made over the years in promoting the agenda on women and peace and security, but much remains to be done to fully translate

the objectives of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent decisions of the Council into more tangible results on the ground. We do have a solid and comprehensive normative framework in our hands; resolution 2122 (2013), adopted today, further consolidates it. We should now focus on its implementation, which is key to overcoming operational gaps and challenges, and to delivering on our promise of peace and security for women, who are the most vulnerable group in armed conflicts. In conflicts, violence against women is widely used as an instrument of war. Urgent steps must be taken to stop gender-based and sexual violence and end impunity for perpetrators of sexual crimes.

Pakistan fully supports the objectives of the agenda on women and peace and security. We have played an important role in advancing those goals as a major participant in United Nations peacekeeping operations. Pakistani women peacekeepers have served as police officers, doctors and nurses in missions in Asia, Africa and the Balkans. Gender sensitization is a mandatory part of our peacekeepers’ training.

We speak on the subject from experience, and our feedback to the Security Council is positive. The Council’s decisions and direction are helping women caught in situations of armed conflict. We believe that the Council should continue to address those issues in accordance with its primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. The mandate for women and peace and security pertains to conflict and post-conflict situations on the Council’s agenda. We should all adhere to the parameters of that mandate, which has set new standards, established new practices and raised expectations for improving the situation of women. Diverging from it would dissipate the consensus around the issue.

The rule of law is one of the key elements in the promotion of the agenda on women and peace and security. Gender-responsive transitional justice and reform of the justice and security sectors are prerequisites for promoting and protecting women’s rights in conflict and post-conflict situations. The rule of law and transitional justice should continue to be developed so as to protect the rights of women in such situations. The emphasis should be on addressing the root causes of conflicts. Chronic conflicts and relapses into conflict blight some societies, countries and regions and keep them in a state of perpetual instability. The resolution of conflicts is, therefore, the best way to promote and protect the rights and interests

of women in conflict situations. We must harness all our resources to prevent and resolve conflicts.

Given women's strong stake in peace and in how peace is negotiated, kept and consolidated, the role of women as peacemakers and peacebuilders must be integrated into the various stages of engagement, outreach and decision-making. Increased integration in pursuing the agenda on women and peace and security is useful for enhanced coordination and for avoiding duplication and the overlap of efforts and resources. However, too much integration can also carry the risk of losing the original focus on the primary objectives of that agenda. Including peripheral issues in the Council's work relating to women and peace and security would not only blur the focus but affect implementation.

The discourse on women and peace and security has followed two broad trends — women seen primarily as victims of conflict, on the one hand, and women as stakeholders and drivers of change, on the other hand. Both aspects are interrelated and require equal attention. As the Secretary-General said this morning, it is important that women's representation around the peace table be enhanced. But to enable women to act as agents of change, we need to invest more in capacity-building and training and in the economic and political empowerment of women.

We believe that the real value of thematic discussions in the Council is to help identify the related aspects in the Council's country-specific work in practical terms. It is there that the gaps in implementation lie and it is there that action is needed the most. As the Council saw first hand during its recent mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, there are continuing challenges in implementing the women and peace and security agenda on the ground. A proactive rather than a reactive approach is required to enhance implementation. Considering women as agents of change is an affirmation of such a proactive approach.

We hope that some of the practical recommendations contained in the resolution adopted today will infuse new momentum and vigour into our collective efforts to promote the women and peace and security agenda.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda): I would like to express my pleasure in participating in today's debate on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). I take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his most recent report on women and peace and security

(S/2013/525), which enlightens us with regard to the implementation of that resolution at all levels. I also thank the Executive Director of UN Women, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka; the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navanethem Pillay; and the representative of Femmes Africa Solidarité, Ms. Brigitte Balipou, for their informative briefings.

At the outset, the Government of Rwanda once again condemns all forms of violence against women and girls worldwide, especially in conflict and post-conflict zones. As previously stated in the Council, we believe that sexual violence in conflict should be qualified as sexual terrorism.

Our Government considers violence against women and girls as an assault on human dignity. Over the years, we have created a favourable environment for gender equality, women's empowerment and children's rights. We have demonstrated a strong political will to end the scourge by adopting supportive policies and legal frameworks, which include a gender-sensitive Constitution and laws on the prevention and punishment of gender-based violence and on the protection of children from violence. As Ambassador Power stated, our new parliament — our lower Chamber of Deputies — attests to the fruitfulness of the policies on our agenda, as recent elections raised women's representation in that body at 64 per cent.

At the institutional level, Rwanda's security organs, in collaboration with other Government agencies, local communities and civil society, have launched initiatives to prevent and respond to violence that targets women and girls. The one-stop centres run by the national police offer a wide range of free services for victims of gender-based violence, and we have set up gender desks in police stations and army posts nationwide, and at the national prosecution agency, for the purposes of offering gender-sensitive services to victims.

At the continental level, Rwanda is among the leading the police-contributing countries, with female police and correctional officers serving in the United Nations peacebuilding and peacekeeping missions in Liberia, Haiti, the Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire and Chad. Those officers actively contribute to combating and raising awareness on violence against women in the communities they serve. They also serve as advisers on gender-based violence and share best practices with other officers and local authorities.

For those reasons, we support the full implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1960 (2010), which insist that all peacekeeping mandates incorporate provisions that specifically identify steps to address sexual violence, including the clear identification of women's protection advisers alongside gender advisers and human rights protection units.

Let me also emphasize that, in our efforts to promote the women and peace and security agenda, in 2010, my country adopted a national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). To that end, we have adopted a range of policies to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls. One of the foremost priorities is to protect and rehabilitate the dignity of victims. We commend those countries that have also adopted national action plans and urge those that have not done so to make it a priority.

Let me also express my delegation's support for the principle of zero tolerance advocated by the United Nations and call for the principle to be more rigorously enforced. During the 1994 genocide perpetrated against the Tutsi in Rwanda, women and girls were forced to endure inhuman and degrading atrocities. Tens of thousands were raped and left for dead. That memory — that history — inspires Rwanda in its unyielding and heartfelt commitment to fight against impunity, especially when it comes to crimes against women and girls.

Rwandans have come to understand first hand the importance of strengthening internal justice mechanisms and building institutions that enhance accessibility to justice. We believe that the fight against impunity is primarily the responsibility of States. The international community, including the United Nations, should support national jurisdictions and help them to build capacity where gaps exist, by providing guidance and direction drawn from best practices in the field. That is not to suggest, however, that those international justice mechanisms are irrelevant; indeed, a political international mechanism or tribunal could complement the work of national jurisdictions in the fight against impunity and bring perpetrators of crimes against humanity and genocide, including crimes against women and girls, to justice.

As we gather today, 13 years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), we believe that it is fair to make an assessment of how effective the implementation of the resolution has been, and possibly draw lessons for the way forward. Despite the improved practice in

the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), we note that there remains a deficit in opportunities for women to exercise leadership and that there is a continued underrepresentation of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, protection and peacebuilding processes. Both the international community and Member States will need to deploy greater efforts to address those issues and maintain previous gains with a view to reducing the inequalities observed at various levels in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

My delegation welcomes the adoption of resolution 2122 (2013) and hopes that it will help speed up the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda articulated in resolution 1325 (2000). Specifically, we are pleased that the resolution advocates for improving the quality of gender analysis by calling for gender expertise in all United Nations-led commissions of inquiry, transitional justice mechanisms, groups of experts of the relevant Sanctions Committees and mediation processes; by supporting special representatives, special envoys and mediation support teams and political and peacekeeping missions in that regard; and by deploying gender advisers and women protection advisers. We also welcome the Secretary-General's recommendations, including his call for an independent review of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in preparation for its high-level review in 2015. We hope that such a review will provide in-depth analysis and recommendations for the best way forward.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his statement. China welcomes the presence at today's debate of Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women; Ms. Pillay, High Commissioner for Human Rights; and the NGO representative, Ms. Balipou. We listened attentively to all of their briefings.

Respecting and protecting women's rights and interests is not only the epitome of the civilization and progress of human society, but is also closely related to world peace and development. The international community should not only be concerned with protecting women's safety and upholding their rights and interests in conflict and post-conflict situations; it should also devote attention to ensuring that women can play their unique roles in peace processes.

In order to promote women truly shouldering their peacekeeping roles and playing an important part in peacebuilding processes, the various United Nations

bodies and entities should work in accordance with their respective mandates, with a clear division of labour and as one. I wish to highlight the following four points.

First, it is national Governments that have the primary responsibility to protect women's safety and their rights and interests. The international community should support the countries concerned in their efforts to that end by providing constructive assistance. External support should fully respect national sovereignty and, in keeping with specific national conditions and needs, focus on capacity-building and stepping up assistance, with a view to helping the countries concerned overcome financial and technical difficulties.

Secondly, the Security Council should play its unique role fully, while strengthening its coordination and cooperation with related organizations and agencies. As the primary institution for maintaining international peace and security, the Council should focus on conflict prevention, dispute mediation and post-conflict reconstruction so as to foster an enabling political, security and rule-of-law environment for safeguarding women's security, rights and interests. The General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Human Rights Council, UN Women and other United Nations agencies should discharge their respective responsibilities while working closely with one another with a view to generating synergies.

Thirdly, strengthening the rule of law represents both an important link in post-conflict peacebuilding efforts and an important foundation for safeguarding and upholding women's rights and interests. To prevent women from once again falling prey to various atrocities, it is essential to ensure their equal participation in the process of reforming the security and justice sectors, while maintaining parallel progress on the tracks of the rule of law, political and economic development and national reconciliation, thus providing a comprehensive guarantee for the respect and protection of women's rights and interests.

Fourthly, the effective participation of women is an important foundation for realizing sustainable peace and social stability. Women should become important participants in conflict prevention and mediation, and they should enjoy adequate rights when it comes to decision-making and participation in post-conflict peacebuilding and national development. That is in the interests of changing their vulnerable status, while maintaining their rights and interests in practical terms.

Women's development is the foundation for truly realizing their empowerment. The international community should promote socioeconomic development and thereby effectively enhance the status of women and promote their positive contributions to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Menan (Togo) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for having convened today's debate on women and peace and security, with a focus on the rule of law and transitional justice in situations of armed conflicts. I should also like to thank the Secretary-General for his very constructive introductory statement. I also thank the other speakers — Ms. Pillay, High Commissioner for Human Rights; Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka, UN Women Executive Director; and Ms. Balipou, representing civil society — for their statements, which have made meaningful contributions to our debate.

The adoption by the Security Council of resolution 1325 (2000) and its subsequent resolutions demonstrates the Council's continuous concern at the violence against women in conflict and post-conflict situations. An assessment of the implementation of those resolutions shows that, while they have contributed to promoting gender equality in prevention, participation, protection, peacebuilding and restoring the rule of law, as noted in the report of the Secretary-General before us today (S/2013/525), much remains to be done. The goal of the United Nations in those resolutions is essentially that of freeing women and girls from acts of violence of all kinds and giving them the place that they deserve in society — a goal that has yet to be reached.

The events unfolding in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in the Central African Republic — as Ms. Balipou mentioned — in Syria and elsewhere around the world, where women continue to be the special target of violence committed by men, show that there is still a long way to go to protect women in situations of armed conflict. Togo nonetheless welcomes the fact that the United Nations, through its peacekeeping operations, has made the protection of civilians an essential element in the mandates of peace missions. The deployment on the ground of gender advisers arises from that determination to help the victims and guide them to the appropriate support services. My country would like to see the deployment of such advisers mainstreamed throughout all missions, with the staffing and resources that they need.

As we all know, violence against women will not end until those who commit and order it are found, arrested, tried and sentenced. The fight against impunity cannot be a matter of mere words; it must see be a commitment by all political actors and parties in a crisis to work to eradicate the culture of violence against women and girls, especially rape, which has for some time been a weapon of war.

This issue is at the centre of the majority of Security Council debates, but we are still far from a solution. The United Nations must stress the fight against violence by supporting, through appropriate mechanisms, the Governments of countries in conflict situations or emerging therefrom to address the issues of violence and impunity. We believe that restoring judicial institutions and providing them with more human and financial resources could contribute to deterring serious violations of human rights and to effectively punishing their perpetrators. The adoption of national laws to repress such acts is also necessary. Truth, justice and reconciliation commissions, which have had a positive impact in such processes, must serve as a framework for justice for all — justice that establishes truth and repairs the damage.

It goes without saying that the fight against impunity can be waged only in the context of a rule of law that establishes effective transitional justice and promotes the effective participation of victims, including women, in the country's reconstruction. Unfortunately, with regard to participation, the fact is that women have played a minor role, if they have not been totally sidelined, in peace talks and reconciliation and in political and economic activities. As an illustration, in 2012 women comprised fewer than 8 per cent of the members of negotiating delegations in peace processes.

The Secretary-General's report also indicates that in the context of economic recovery and access to resources during and after conflict, women have also played a very limited role. My country believes that women should enjoy, in peacetime and in conflict situations, all economic and social rights, inheritance and property rights, and access to basic services, especially in areas of health and education.

However, we acknowledge the efforts of some countries that have integrated gender issues into their national legislation by setting a quota for women in elected positions and high-level decision-making, as is the case in such post-conflict countries as Timor-Leste, Afghanistan, Liberia, Haiti and the Democratic

Republic of the Congo. Rwanda, of course, sets the most progressive example in that respect. Togo encourages the United Nations to assist countries that have not yet done so to integrate into their national systems the experience of those who have managed to increase the role of women in peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction.

Women will not be protected in any lasting way until in-depth legal and judicial reforms are undertaken by countries emerging from armed conflict. Fortunately, a number of countries have undertaken reforms in accordance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other relevant international legal instruments. Clearly, the best way to protect women and fight effectively against the effects of armed conflict on the lives of people in conflict is to take measures to prevent the outbreak of conflicts.

My delegation welcomes the fact that resolution 2122 (2013), which was adopted earlier today, focuses on various aspects of the fight against violence against women. We hope that it will have a positive impact on the ground, in particular through its implementation by all countries.

Mr. Zagaynov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to thank the Azerbaijani presidency for organizing this meeting. We are also grateful to the Secretary-General and others who spoke, for their assessments and very useful information.

For over a decade now, resolution 1325 (2000) has clearly confirmed its vital role and importance in strengthening the role of women in the prevention and settlement of armed conflicts and during post-conflict reconstruction, as well as in their protection during such conflicts. Unfortunately, despite numerous efforts, women continue to fall victim to various forms of violence. That is why we believe that more attention needs to be given to all categories of such crimes. Such a balanced approach is enshrined in resolution 1325 (2000). Cases of women and children being killed and getting injured are a cause for serious concern, including as a result of the indiscriminate or excessive use of force. We think it is unacceptable to simply turn a blind eye to such crimes or to justify them as so-called inevitable acts of collateral damage, which contradicts provisions in the Geneva Conventions.

One of the main characteristics of the world today is the significant number of crises in which women

suffer. At the same time, not all of those situations pose a threat to international peace and security that would require intervention by the Security Council. Let us recall that issues of gender violence fall within the framework of mandates tackled not only by the Security Council but also by the General Assembly, the Peacebuilding Commission, the Human Rights Council, and the Commission on the Status of Women. We must abide by the existing principles of the division of labour within our Organization, without duplicating the efforts and competencies of the various bodies.

We believe that the Council's effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) requires an unwavering focus on a decisive mandate that approaches women's issues in the context of international peace and security and other such issues within its agenda.

We have carefully familiarized ourselves with the report of the Secretary-General prepared for today's meeting (S/2013/525). We should like to point out that it is factually incomplete. We believe that in the future, such reports should consider the nature of violence against women in the context of the maintenance of international peace and security in a more balanced way, as stipulated by resolution 1325 (2000).

As far as facts in the report are concerned, they have been compiled on the basis of the first third of the assessment indicators on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), and we still have questions regarding the usefulness and relevance of individual indicators, as well as the scope for applying them. We believe that work on indicators, which is still undergoing approval, must be transparent and open in nature.

After all, issues of international peace and security are of interest to all States Members of the United Nations. We do not share the report's concept of using national plans of action for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) as an assessment tool for States' policies to improve the overall status of women. Relevant national plans ought to be prepared voluntarily by those States that find themselves in situations of armed conflict. If other States wish to elaborate similar national plans, that is clearly their right. However, the voluntary decision of individual States to do that should not mean that everyone is obliged to do so.

We are convinced of the significantly positive potential of women's participation in various aspects of the settlement of armed conflict and post-conflict reconstruction. Women must not only be seen as victims

of armed conflicts. That in itself is discriminatory. The direct involvement of women in preventing and settling armed conflicts is, in our opinion, an important prerequisite for overcoming violence against women. We wish to express our satisfaction that resolution 2122 (2013), adopted today, pays a significant amount of attention to ways of including women in such processes, in line with resolution 1325 (2000). Clearly, gender issues must be taken into account when mobilizing peacekeeping forces.

It is just as important to include such issues in the mandates of relevant missions. We urge States to tackle those issues not in a predetermined way, but by being mindful of individual situations. Such a differentiated approach must also be applied when giving the United Nations system instructions on how to integrate gender issues into their mandates. They have clear mandates, and for the majority of them, issues of women, peace and security are not an absolute priority but merely one of a number of factors within the framework of action aimed at preventing and resolving armed conflict and post-conflict situations. Let us not forget that the leading role in protecting women at all stages of armed conflict lies with national Governments, while measures taken by bodies of the United Nations system and by civil society must be aimed at backing and complimenting efforts made by States.

We do not share the point of view that establishing a specialized Security Council mechanism for gender issues would be useful. We believe that ensuring the effectiveness of the existing mechanisms for implementing resolution 1325 (2000) does not hinge on creating new bureaucratic procedures but rather on improving the coordination and accountability of existing mechanisms under the leadership of UN Women.

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): I would like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his briefing today as well as for his tireless efforts to promote the women, peace and security agenda. My delegation also thanks the Executive Director of UN Women, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, and Ms. Brigitte Bapilou for their informative and inspiring presentations today.

While there has been significant progress in implementing resolution 1325 (2000) over the years, persistent gaps and challenges remain. For far too many women in conflict-affected societies, the mere

protection of a woman's basic rights, let alone gender equality, remains a daunting challenge. In Syria, women account for the majority of the casualties and the displaced population. In the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, women continue to be victimized in the conflict. Given this shared concern, I would like to highlight the following four points.

First, the Council must continue to integrate women, peace and security issues into its work in a substantive way. As the Secretary-General's report (S/2013/525) elaborates, the Council increasingly incorporates gender perspectives into its resolutions, in particular through the mandates of United Nations peacekeeping missions. That is a welcome development. However, it must be done in a more systematic way if it is to be truly effective.

We also support the Secretary-General's call on the Council to include women, peace and security aspects in all thematic debates. If the Council's efforts in those areas are to be successful, they must be supported by the timely delivery of information. We would welcome more regular updates and briefings on the status of women and girls in armed conflict from all United Nations field missions. We also look forward to a high-level global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in preparation for the high-level review in 2015.

Secondly, greater attention should be paid to promoting women's representation in post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding processes. Women's experiences in conflict are fundamentally different from those of men. As such, women's needs and priorities should be reflected in peace and justice deliberations. Transitional justice mechanisms need to be more gender-sensitive. Women's efforts to recover from their experiences in conflict have often been hampered by a lack of fundamental rights, such as the right to citizenship. Such structural inequality should be addressed by transitional justice.

Thirdly, all cases of sexual violence in armed conflict and post-conflict situations must be adequately addressed. The suffering of women and girls, who often fall victim to sexual violence in times of war, has frequently gone unreported or unacknowledged. Transitional justice is therefore important in bringing perpetrators to account and ending impunity. We also recognize the important role of the International Criminal Court in ensuring accountability and justice for such crimes.

Fourthly, we would like to underline the crucial role played by women's civil society organizations in conflict-resolution and peacebuilding. In that regard, the Republic of Korea attaches great importance to the interactions between the Security Council and women's organizations. It is encouraging that the Council's recent field visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes included interactive meetings with local women's organizations.

Finally, we welcome the unanimous adoption today of resolution 2122 (2013). We believe that this seventh resolution on women, peace and security will be another milestone on the road towards gender equality.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Sir, for organizing this debate. I also thank all those who have spoken. I believe that the statements made by my colleagues have proven, 13 years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), what has become obvious to everyone, namely, that no conflict can be resolved and no transition sustained without the inclusion and participation of half of humankind.

First, that is obvious to the Council, which in two-thirds of its resolutions makes references to the women, peace and security agenda. It is also obvious to the United Nations, where the presence of women in mediation teams and field missions increases year after year, although efforts still need to be made regarding management positions. In that regard, I welcome the work of UN Women and its activities to strengthen the coherence of and coordinate efforts to promote women within the United Nations. We also welcome the zero-tolerance policy for United Nations personnel that is being implemented by the Secretary-General, and which has proven to be useful and should continue.

Such improvements have had normative consequences. The adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty revealed the link between the spread of small arms and light weapons and sexual violence. We have given strong support to this part of the Treaty, which France will soon ratify.

However, we all know that we only are half-way there. Much remains to be done. While women now have a place in most peace negotiations, their situation remains ignored in the ensuing agreements, which too often do not include specific provisions on women, peace and security. Women should be consulted as fully invested stakeholders. The United Nations must be exemplary in that regard. The special representatives

and special envoys of the Secretary-General must consult with civil society and women's organizations as soon as they arrive on the ground, and must continue to do so throughout their mandate.

In New York, the issue of the participation of women should be included more frequently in briefings made to the Council by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs, whose recommendations for better including women in conflict-resolution processes always prove to be valuable. Informal meetings of the Council with women working in the field should be continued and encouraged.

In that regard, we can refer to the example of Mary Robinson, who brought together women's organizations from the Great Lakes region in July in Bujumbura. We believe that hers is a model of inclusive and early consultation that can be useful to everyone. We saw to it that this good practice was continued during the recent visit of Security Council members to the Democratic Republic of the Congo when they met, in the eastern part of that country, with women's organizations working to defend and promote the rights of women.

That and other crises demonstrate the urgent need to act. This morning, we heard an eye-witness account on the Central African Republic. We have heard that the situation is tragic, encompassing sexual violence, forced disappearances, recruitment of child soldiers and, increasingly, religiously motivated violence. The precarious situation of women is shocking. The Council should remain apprised of the issue. Not only must we take the situation of women into account; beyond that, to the extent that the tragic situation of women in the Central African Republic is only part of the broader tragedy of the entire country, we must re-establish security, peace and the rule of law there. France voted in favour of resolution 2118 (2013) in that regard and will stay the course, including, if necessary, by proposing a peacekeeping operation in that country.

In Syria, women were the leading actors of the peaceful revolution against the regime of Bashar Al-Assad. Their vulnerability is today increasing everywhere, placing them at the forefront of the victims. They are the targets of both the fierce repression of the regime against its own people and, now, of extremist groups. In the refugee camps, their children are often born stateless as a result of unequal citizenship laws. We must listen to these Syrian women, who remain

committed to building the future of Syria, and involve them in the peace negotiations.

In that regard, I call the Council's attention to the letter by the representative of the Syrian National Coalition, which provides a very good description of the sufferings that the Al-Assad regime is inflicting on Syrian women. Those violent acts, I remind members, were reported by the Human Rights Council's Commission of Inquiry.

Justice remains the cornerstone of stabilization in post-conflict situations. National Governments of course have the primary responsibility for prosecuting and punishing those responsible for sexual violence. However, when States fail to live up to their responsibilities, the International Criminal Court should be able to play its full role. The Court is already at work in the Central African Republic, in Mali and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. France believes that the Court should be seized of the matter in Syria — as has now been amply justified. I should like to underscore here that all those responsible for violence against the Syrian people must one day be accountable before justice.

To make the fight against impunity tangible, access for women to the justice system is essential. Since 2011, in cooperation with UN Women, France has had in place a programme for strengthening women's access to justice in Afghanistan. In the framework of its plan of action, France has committed to a cooperation programme in Africa and in the Arab world, working in partnership with UN Women. We have recently specifically allocated support for programmes in Mali being implemented by local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), with a view to supporting the participation of women in political processes. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we have similarly allocated more than €2 million to support Congolese NGOs to fight against sexual violence, strengthen the participation of women in decision-making processes and help women integrate on the socioeconomic level. In that spirit, next December France will organize in Paris a summit on peace and security in Africa, which will provide an opportunity for all to express and reaffirm their commitment to bringing about support for resolutions on women and peace and security.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN Women and the High Commissioner

for Human Rights for their statements. I would also like to express my gratitude to Ms. Brigitte Balipou of Femmes Africa Solidarité for having given us the views of civil society with regard to women, the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict situations, which is the very pertinent topic chosen by the presidency of Azerbaijan for our public debate today. I would also like to assure Ms. Balipou that her call with regard to the tragic situation in the Central African Republic has been heard.

Luxembourg wishes to associate itself with the statement that will be made a later by the observer of the European Union.

Justice in times of armed conflict or in post-conflict situations does not fundamentally differ from justice in times of peace. The objective of justice is always to come to a decision with regard to a wrong committed by one individual to the detriment of another: to ascertain its severity, to impose punishment and, where necessary, to order reparations. However, in specific cases of conflict or post-conflict situations, justice often operates, but imperfectly. The victims must overcome additional and very different obstacles from those in peacetime. For women, those obstacles can be truly crippling. For them, justice is often beyond reach, whether for legal, security or social reasons — without taking into account the fact that in post-conflict situations the judiciary itself is often ill-prepared to face the specific situations of women who have suffered the violence of war.

In that context, one cannot but emphasize the importance of transitional justice. Not only does it allow the possibility to redress past wrongs, but it also affords an opportunity to transform women's situations, thereby guaranteeing lasting peace in a more egalitarian society. The participation of women at all levels and in a timely manner is indispensable to guarantee that the new society that emerges from the rubble of war will grant women their rightful place with the full enjoyment of all their rights.

It is therefore essential that women be heard during peace processes and that they be involved in security sector and justice sector reforms. In a word, women must be full-fledged stakeholders rather than just spectators of reconstruction and peacebuilding.

Of all violations afflicting women in conflict situations, sexual violence, which constitutes a direct attack against physical integrity, unavoidably comes to

mind when one speaks of transitional justice and the issue of reparations. It is indeed difficult to imagine a society claiming to be fair and respectful of women's rights when thousands of survivors of sexual violence are denied their rights to see the perpetrators of that violence brought to justice. However, in many cases, post-conflict justice ignores the case of those women, often because it does not possess either the necessary expertise or the necessary resources to tackle the task.

Luxembourg backs the partnership between the intergovernmental Justice Rapid Response and UN Women. In cooperation with the Institute for International Criminal Investigations, that partnership has made it possible to establish a list of specialized experts on the investigation of acts of sexual violence. In that way, experts can be rapidly deployed as required. UN Women has already resorted to using such experts to assist the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in numerous commissions of inquiry. Experts have also lent their assistance to the International Criminal Court. Luxembourg will continue to support that initiative, which reinforces both responsibility and the transitional justice process.

I would add that, in the past year, we supported a Department of Peacekeeping Operations project aimed at bolstering the role of women in the maintenance and building of peace, specifically by holding a regional workshop in Liberia to provide women leaders working for peace and security in West Africa an opportunity to share their experiences and to strengthen their networks.

The Security Council must play its full role in promoting the topic of women and peace and security. Unfortunately, there continues to be a clear gap between principled statements and the unanimous support of the Council for the issue of women, on the one hand, and the concrete implementation of those statements, on the other. We therefore support the recommendation by the Secretary-General's in his latest report that

“when establishing and renewing [United Nations] mission mandates, a more consistent approach with regard to the inclusion of gender-specific provisions could be sought.” (*S/2013/525, para. 73*).

By adopting resolution 1325 (2000), 13 years ago, the Security Council set itself bold objectives. Resolution 2122 (2013), which we have just adopted today — thanks in particular to the efforts of the United

Kingdom — allows us to make progress. It underscores in particular the need for the Security Council to receive information more regularly with regard to the issue of women and peace and security. The resolution will bring new impetus as we near the fifteenth anniversary of the flagship resolution 1325 (2000), which will be an opportunity to take stock — positively one hopes — of its implementation.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

At the outset, I would like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his statement and for presenting his report on women and peace and security (S/2013/525). We are also grateful to the Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director UN Women, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka; the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navi Pillay; and the board member of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, Ms. Brigitte Balipou, for their briefings.

We have proposed to focus our debate on women, the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict-affected situations. In recent times, the Security Council has paid increasing attention to the issue, acknowledging that combating impunity, addressing past violations, rebuilding the justice sector and asserting the principles of the rule of law underpin efforts to build peace and stability in the aftermath of conflict. However, less attention has been paid to the gender consequences of the breakdown of the rule of law during and after conflict. While genuine gains have been made in strengthening the political will and international legal framework to secure justice and deal with conflict-related sexual violence, little has been said of the full range of violations and serious crimes experienced by women, including enforced disappearances, foreign occupation, mass forced displacement, restrictions on humanitarian aid, conflict-related human trafficking and the destruction of civilian infrastructure. There can be no tolerance for such acts. Combating impunity and strengthening both international and national justice responses are critically important in that regard.

Governments bear the primary responsibility for the protection of civilians and for ensuring accountability for conflict-related criminal offenses. In resolution 2122 (2013), adopted today, the Security Council once again calls on Member States to comply with their relevant obligations to end impunity and to thoroughly investigate and prosecute persons responsible for

genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian law. At the same time, when national authorities fail to take action, the international community should play a more proactive role in ensuring an appropriate response. Such measures and appropriate protection and accountability efforts must obviously be free of selectively and politically motivated approaches and preferences. It is essential to address conflict-related violations and abuses of human rights through all available means, including, *inter alia*, by mandating international commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions, as well as by supporting the implementation of the recommendations of those bodies and missions.

As we have stated on a number of occasions, wrongs that have been left unpunished or unrecognized may impede progress in achieving long-awaited peace and reconciliation. Such wrongs can also play a key role in the eruption of new conflicts and the commission of new crimes. Our consistent focus on that particular aspect of the problem is based on my country's experience in addressing the tragic humanitarian consequences of the war unleashed against it, including mass atrocities committed by adverse armed forces, forced population displacement in Azerbaijan and the continuing military occupation of its territories.

It is important that the Security Council, Member States and regional organizations ensure that mediators and envoys in mediation, peace and preventive diplomacy process can contribute to ensuring accountability, including by encouraging the parties concerned to envisage transitional justice clauses in peace agreements. Those responsible for serious crimes committed during conflicts, including gender-based violence, must be excluded from all branches of Government, and the principle of no amnesty or any other form of indulgence for the perpetrators of such offenses must be applied. Such measures should be implemented comprehensively and should also envisage the full rights of victims to redress.

In resolution 2122 (2013), the Council recalls applicable provisions of international law on the right to reparations for violations of individual rights. It is essential that reparations programmes receive increased recognition and support as a tool for delivering justice and redress for victims and longer-term peace dividends within societies and communities. The contribution of transitional justice measures to rebuilding the rule of law, redress, justice and reconciliation makes

such measures equally important tools for furthering women's rights in post-conflict societies.

To conclude, I would like once again to thank all briefers for their contribution to our debate and reiterate my country's full support for more systematic and frequent discussions of the topic.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber. I wish to inform all concerned that we will be continuing this open debate right through the lunch hour, as we have a very large number of speakers.

I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. De Aguiar Patriota (Brazil): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this debate. I also thank the Secretary-General for his informative briefing and his thorough report on the situation of women and peace and security. Brazil is also grateful for the briefing by Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka as Executive Director of UN Women. She can count on our full support in dealing with the challenges ahead. We thank the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navi Pillay, for her presentation. Let me also thank the representative of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security for her intervention.

It is widely acknowledged that in situations of conflict, the most vulnerable, women included, are those who suffer the most. That makes prevention especially important. The tendency to rush to military solutions runs contrary to the idea of the protection of civilians, since the use of force aggravates the risks to the most vulnerable and further penalizes civilians, in particular women and children.

The Security Council's engagement with the issue of women and peace and security has greatly contributed to our common efforts to improve the lives of women in conflict situations around the world. The resolutions adopted by the Council have created a comprehensive body of norms and stimulated progress on the protection and promotion of women's rights.

The scourge of sexual violence in armed conflict has rightly been the subject of attention by the Council. It is warranted that we also focus on the importance of furthering the equal rights of women and their right to equal participation in decision-making processes.

The rule of law makes available to vulnerable groups, such as women, normative tools that promote their empowerment and emancipation. It is essential to uphold the equal rights of women by ensuring their full participation in governing institutions and the judicial system. We must reaffirm the need to establish a legislative framework that secures their full access to justice.

Brazil embraces a comprehensive notion of the rule of law that embodies a number of principles and experiences. We are convinced that the rule of law and development are strongly interrelated and mutually reinforcing. The rule of law is intimately connected to the realization of social and economic rights. In that regard, we are proud to celebrate, in 2013, the twenty-fifth year of the Brazilian Constitution, whereby we acknowledged the centrality of social and economic rights in the context of the rule of law and human rights.

The participation of women in conflict resolution and mediation processes not only contributes to the elaboration of balanced rules in post-conflict situations, but is also an important factor in achieving sustainable peace. Unfortunately, there is a long way to go before women are fully and duly integrated into national and multilateral peace efforts around the world. Viewed from different points of view, such as the number of women delegates and mediators; the numbers, substance and relative importance of provisions in peace agreements; and post-conflict strategies or policies, women's participation in peace and security is still insufficient.

Brazil believes that supporting and promoting women's participation in the maintenance of international peace and security is an increasingly important aspect of the Security Council's responsibility under the Charter. In that vein, we encourage further reflection and debates on the role of women in promoting the prevention and peaceful settlement of disputes.

In post-conflict situations, transitional justice can be an important tool to shape a better future for women. In many circumstances, knowing the truth about the violations committed against women is central to achieving national reconciliation. Transitional justice

also plays a significant role in ensuring that the permanent justice structure to be established will take the interests of women into account in its foundations.

Important structural gender asymmetries curb the options of women in most societies. Rural women, in particular, have their potential as agents of peace hindered, since they benefit less than men from the wealth created by rural employment and face new challenges owing to the impact of the still ongoing economic crisis. Yet, rural women are key contributors to global economies, playing a critical role in both developed and developing nations. They enhance agricultural and rural development, improve food security and help reduce poverty levels in their communities, thereby contributing to the promotion of sustainable development with social inclusion and food security, which are key to attaining sustainable peace.

When empowered, women can have an important positive impact on the lives of the individuals in their societies, particularly in countries emerging from conflict. The Security Council is called on to continue to make sure that such impact is fully felt in all relevant situations on its agenda.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Mayr-Harting.

Mr. Mayr-Harting: As this is the first time that I have had the chance to speak under your presidency, Sir, I would first like to congratulate you on having assumed the presidency of the Council and wish you the best of luck in that important task.

I am speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

We thank the Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General Mlambo-Ngcuka, High Commissioner Pillay and Ms. Brigitte Balipou for their statements here today. We also welcome the Council's adoption earlier today of resolution 2122 (2013), outlining further steps on women, peace and security.

We welcome the theme of today's debate, with its particular focus on the rule of law and transitional justice during and post-conflict, which have received

limited attention to date. Yet the breakdown of the rule of law in conflict leads to a broad range of violations of women's and girls' rights. To address that challenge, post-conflict reforms need to be gender-sensitive and women's access to justice in conflict and post-conflict settings needs to be secured. Women need to be represented in the justice sector.

The provision of fair, transparent, effective and accountable justice mechanisms for all is crucial to ensuring the benefits of the rule of law for everyone. Women's and girls' rights must be secured; they must also be ensured in informal justice systems. Given the broad range of conflict-related violations of women's rights — including enforced disappearance, early and forced marriage, human trafficking and violations of economic and social rights — transitional justice processes need to address them in full. The EU is now working on establishing its policy on transitional justice. The way justice related issues are addressed in peace negotiations has a strong impact on the pursuit of post-conflict justice and mediators can play an important role in that regard.

The EU Concept on Strengthening EU Mediation and Dialogue Capacities aims to promote the representation of women and the availability of adequate resources for dedicated gender expertise at an early stage of the mediation process. We call on the United Nations system to increase the participation of women in mediation activities, including as chief and lead mediators, and to include gender experts in the mediation teams. Supporting women's civil society groups is crucial to developing domestic constituencies for women's engagement in conflict resolution.

We call on the Department of Peacekeeping Operations Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions to ensure gender expertise in the planning of peacekeeping operations or special missions with rule of law mandates and the gathering of gender-aggregated data when making a baseline assessment of rule of law institutions.

We welcome the comprehensive approach of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2013/525) and particularly welcome the increasingly targeted and concrete recommendations for action. We underline the need for continued regular reporting and briefings to the Council. However, we note the need to further enhance the links between the information provided to the Council and the outcomes of the Council's work, particularly the mandates of the United Nations peace

operations. We would also welcome reporting on the rule of law action point of the seven-point action plan on gender-sensitive peacebuilding.

We note positively the Council's growing practice of including sexual and gender based violence in the designation criteria for targeted sanctions regimes.

The European Union supports the work aimed at increasing the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding, promoting women's equal participation in all efforts for the promotion of peace and security and providing an integrated approach to prevent and punish acts of sexual violence, as well as to bring justice, services and reparation to its victims.

In that regard, we acknowledge the important contribution of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court to expanding the scope of gender and sexual-based violence. We encourage States that have not yet done so to ratify the Statute, enact domestic criminal legislation of those atrocious crimes and to routinely and systematically prosecute them as the primary means of ensuring accountability.

We commend the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, and of the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law.

The increasing number of national and regional action plans for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) provides the opportunity to compare different experiences in order to further improve our work. To further map our actions and experiences, we support the call of the Secretary-General for an independent global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) to prepare for the 2015 high-level review. Finally, I again thank you, Sir, for organizing this important debate.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): Women and children continue to be disproportionately affected by armed conflicts and their aftermath. We have witnessed, in particular, an alarming increase in sexual violence, which is often used as a method of warfare. It has disastrous long-term consequences, not only for the victim, but also for the affected communities. Liechtenstein is proud to give its support to the sexual and gender-based violence work of the Justice Rapid

Response initiative and is among the 124 States that have endorsed the United Kingdom initiative to end sexual violence in conflict.

A pervasive culture of impunity continues to be a major challenge in the area of women, peace and security. Accountability, human rights and the rule of law are recognized preconditions for successful political transition and development, but women are too often denied full and equal access to justice. States must offer effective and universally accessible national judicial systems and provide all victims with support, protection and redress. The needs of vulnerable groups, such as women with disabilities and indigenous women, among others, require special attention.

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) has significantly contributed to ending impunity for gender-based crimes, and its Prosecutor has declared the issue of sexual violence to be one of the priorities of her work. Indeed, 18 of the persons currently accused in the Court's cases are charged with sexual crimes. Where national justice systems are unable to deliver justice, the ICC can play an important role pursuant to the principle of complementarity. It can also assist in domestic proceedings by providing information and evidence. The Court also provides direct assistance to victims on the ground through its Trust Fund for Victims, which Liechtenstein continues to support. Like other speakers before us in the debate, we remain of the view that the grave situation in Syria merits referral to the International Criminal Court by the Council.

The need to protect women and girls must not overshadow the participation pillar of the women, peace and security agenda. My delegation is therefore pleased to see that resolution 2122 (2013), adopted earlier today, builds on the core elements of resolution 1325 (2000) and contains key commitments for several stakeholders to the full participation of women.

Women's full participation — including in peacekeeping operations, national reconciliation processes and mediation — enhances the effectiveness and sustainability of development efforts and contributes to the prevention of conflict. But women continue to be underrepresented at all levels of decision-making. Their interests are often not, or insufficiently, reflected in peace agreements. Out of 10 peace agreements signed in 2012, only three included provisions on women and peace and security. Against that background, we welcome the Peacebuilding Commission's recent

declaration on women's economic empowerment for peacebuilding. We have noted with great interest the Mediation Support Unit's commitment to increasing its efforts to include more women in mediation processes and the increased female capacity in that respect.

We believe that it is important that the United Nations lead by example to advance this agenda. The appointment of Mary Robinson as the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region of Africa is therefore a very important step in that respect. We welcome the Special Envoy's active engagement to involve women and ensure their participation in mediation efforts.

As in other areas, we have noted a lack of consistency when it comes to the inclusion of concerns raised by the issue of women and peace and security in the Security Council's work. It is important that the Council consistently implement the provisions of resolution 1325 (2000) and the follow-up resolutions in all its resolutions on country situations.

The President: I now give the floor to Ms. Skåre.

Ms. Skåre: Thank you, Mr. President, for allowing me to give a brief presentation on NATO's contributions to the implementation of the Council's resolutions on women and peace and security. Allow me also to welcome today's adoption of resolution 2122 (2013), which is yet another significant resolution on women and peace and security, and to thank our briefers for their presentations at today's debate.

In the year that has passed since I last addressed the Security Council (see S/PV.6877), work by NATO and our partners on the issue of women, peace and security has continued to progress. Awareness is growing, and it is better understood that mainstreaming gender in the broader security context will strengthen our ability to meet today's security challenges. Furthermore, our policies on women and peace and security are becoming a more integral part of our everyday business.

In NATO's collaborations with partner nations on women and peace and security we focus on joint political leadership, as well as on practical cooperation in the security and defence fields. Reforms and the rebuilding of security institutions should be gender-sensitive and ensure women's participation in security, as in any other sector of our societies. I am happy to report that over the past year a number of partners have included or are considering including women and

peace and security-related goals in their cooperation programmes with NATO.

A review of the practical implications of resolution 1325 (2000) in the conduct of NATO-led operations and missions has been concluded together with our partners in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the International Security Force in Kosovo, and recommendations on the way ahead have been approved by the North Atlantic Council. That review and the ensuing discussions in the Alliance with our partners provided a good opportunity for us to learn from our experiences in Afghanistan and Kosovo.

A key lesson is that we need to strengthen our focus on the implementation of already existing policies, action plans and directives. We are therefore pursuing the continued integration of a gender perspective into all phases and activities related to conflict analysis, planning and the execution of crisis management operations, and we are strengthening the role of gender advisers in the field. Those activities contribute to the enhancement of operational effectiveness and to the improved implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and related resolutions in an operational context.

As documented by that review, training, education and exercises remain key tools for ensuring that our security institutions and armed forces have the necessary competencies. We have made strides in strengthening the gender training offered under the auspices of NATO. The Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations, situated in Sweden, has been appointed department head for NATO gender training in military operations. Strengthened curriculums for both troops and gender advisers have been developed. NATO is also currently developing an online gender course, in close collaboration with the United Nations. We encourage partners to make use of available gender-training opportunities offered by NATO and its allies.

NATO's overall purpose is to safeguard the freedom and security of all its members by political and military means. The Alliance is not defined by the threats we face, rather it is defined by the values we share. We are united by the principles of individual liberty, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

NATO fully recognizes the need to ensure access to justice for all, and we recognize the challenges that occur when the rule of law breaks down in a conflict situation and when there is no equality before the law. We do not have individual liberty if women cannot

decide for themselves; we do not have democracy if women cannot participate; we do not respect human rights if women's rights are not respected; and there is no rule of law if women do not have access to justice.

The overall responsibility for ensuring the rule of law and equality before the law rests with nations, but the role of international law in setting standards and ensuring accountability is also very important. Real gains have been made in developing the international legal frameworks and institutions to secure accountability and justice for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

NATO is exploring how we, as a politico-military regional organization, can best, within our role and responsibilities, prepare and assist in supporting the rule of law and gender equality through our activities. For example, under ISAF, we have been running a Rule of Law Field Support Mission to support and enable Afghan officials and international organizations in their rule of law efforts.

The heinous crimes, and in particular the sexual and gender-based violence, committed during conflicts have amplified the need to stand united in the struggle against impunity. Sexual and gender-based violence in conflict undermines freedom, security and stability, and, if unpunished, it undermines the credibility of any legal system, denying access to justice for all. Global prosecutions, civilian protection mechanisms, the contributions of the United Nations and other international organizations are there to complement national efforts.

In September, all NATO allies fully subscribed to the Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict. It is highlighted, both in that Declaration and in resolution 2106 (2013), that the collection of data and the documentation of sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict can be instrumental in bringing perpetrators to justice and in ensuring justice for survivors.

We should, however, not regard women as passive victims and recipients. Just as women need to be included in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts, women need to be included also in reconciliation and transitional justice. Women's participation is a matter of basic human rights and democratic principles. Those most affected by conflicts must be heard and enabled to contribute to the solutions that prevent conflicts. We cannot afford not to include

women. It is not simply a question of what benefits women, but of what benefits the whole society — men and women, boys and girls.

The President: I thank Ms. Skåre for her briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mr. Montaña (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico would like to thank Azerbaijan for its work in coordinating this debate. We are also grateful to the Secretary-General for presenting his recent report on the subject (S/2013/525), and we welcome the participation of the Executive Director of UN Women and civil society in today's dialogue.

My delegation commends the adoption today of resolution 2122 (2013), which continues building the institutional framework begun in 2000 with the historic resolution 1325 (2000).

The Secretary-General's report provides a road map for the action that all relevant stakeholders must take in order to continue to effectively include women in peace, development and in strengthening the state of development we all live in. Mexico welcomes the Secretary-General's recommendation to move up the holding of a high-level meeting in 2015 with the aim of reviewing the progress made regionally and nationally in implementing resolution 1325 (2000). We believe that from a preventive perspective of shared responsibility in the face of threats to international peace and security, the provisions of resolution 1325 (2000) continue to apply and to have relevance for the community of nations.

My country is currently moving forward with a review process of our legal and institutional framework with the aim of ensuring its confirmity with a plan of action for comprehensive implementation of the resolution. The process seeks to systematize some of the activities that are already being developed at the internal level, such as educating the armed forces on women's rights. In order to do so, we are in regular contact with various partners so as to learn the best practices already being used for similar action plans. Concerning political rights, our executive authorities recently proposed an initiative to the legislature aimed at ensuring women's equitable representation in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. With regard to the United Nations mandate, we are striving to increase the number of women on the lists of candidates for high-level posts, particularly those having to do with political operations and, of course, peacekeeping.

Mexico welcomes the adoption of the Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, and commends the initiative taken to formulate an international protocol for investigating and documenting sexual violence in conflict. We assure the Council that we will continue to support such efforts. Similarly, we consider it vital to continue to push for women's participation in mediation processes and peace agreement and ceasefire negotiations so as to encourage national reconciliation, based on respect for and enjoyment of the human, social and civil rights of the most vulnerable groups. We believe it essential to support national reconciliation and dialogue processes with judicial change that ensures that justice is impartially meted out, and including programmes for repairing and reconstructing the social fabric.

Strengthening inclusive and solid societies must be an essential part in re-establishing the rule of law, both in societies living with armed conflict and those that are undergoing the process of reconstruction and reconciliation. There can be no lasting peace without justice, and it is therefore vital to ensure that national dialogue and reconciliation processes contribute effectively to fighting impunity and ensuring not only that women take part in the processes of reform of the security and justice systems but that they are also full participants in those systems once they are reformed.

In that regard, we note the Declaration facilitated by Mexico and Denmark and adopted at the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels in September 2012. The text enshrines "the importance of ensuring that women...fully enjoy the benefits of the rule of law" (*General Assembly resolution 67/1, para. 16*), and we committed to ensuring their full participation in institutions of governance and the judicial system.

For my country, persistence continues to be the linchpin for decision-making and implementing action on the agenda for women and peace and security.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Austria.

Mr. Doujak (Austria): Austria is grateful to Azerbaijan for convening today's open debate on women and peace and security, and would like to thank all the briefers for their very interesting presentations. We appreciate the broad range of issues covered in the Secretary-General's report (S/2013/525), as well as the continuing use of indicators that allow for a more

accurate and precise assessment of the progress made in implementing resolution 1325 (2000).

Austria aligns itself with the statement made earlier on behalf of the European Union.

We agree that the nexus between the rule of law and women and peace and security needs our further attention. In the aftermath of conflict, transitional justice mechanisms must be victim-centred and gender-sensitive in order to ensure that the rights of victims, in particular women and children, are fully respected. Legal, institutional and social obstacles to women's access to formal and informal justice systems must be more energetically addressed, and in that context gender-sensitive reforms should receive more attention. Reparation programmes for gross human rights violations contribute to the reconciliation of divided societies, in which financial reparations potentially have an important impact on enhancing the economic security of women, including war widows, in the aftermath of conflict. Reparations should also be targeted to victims of sexual and gender-based violence.

The Security Council has clearly recognized its own role in ending impunity for serious violations of international humanitarian and human-rights law, and has acknowledged the full range of justice and reconciliation mechanisms, including in resolution 1894 (2009). In that context, we would like to stress the important role of the International Criminal Court and other international criminal tribunals in the fight against impunity, and we welcome the first investigations of cases of sexual violence before those courts.

A central element of our understanding of the rule of law is that it not only guarantees women's equal rights but necessarily implies women's equal participation in political and public life, as well as their economic empowerment. While the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding efforts is at the heart of resolution 1325 (2000) and should be self-evident 13 years after its adoption, there is no reason for complacency.

We call on the Security Council to make the best use of the time frame leading up to the high-level review of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in 2015 and to mainstream measures to enhance women's participation in its work, including in the mandates of peacekeeping and political missions. Our immediate concern must be to increase the number of

women in police and military contingents in United Nations peacekeeping operations. In that regard, we welcome today's adoption of resolution 2122 (2013) and its references to the deployment of women in United Nations peacekeeping operations as well as more regular briefings in the Security Council.

Austria appreciates the Security Council's increased attention to violence against journalists in situations of armed conflict. As the Secretary-General's report rightly points out, female journalists often face gender-specific risks of violence and intimidation. Our initiative on the safety of journalists in the Human Rights Council acknowledges those specific risks and calls for a gender-sensitive approach when considering measures to address the safety of journalists.

Also, I would like to take this opportunity to give a short update on our national measures to implement resolution 1325 (2000). On the basis of our revised national action plan adopted last year, we have continued our efforts to enhance the gender-expertise of civil and military staff in peacekeeping operations. Together with the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Austria has developed a training curriculum that fully incorporates both resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1894 (2009) on the protection of civilians. After a pilot course held last year, the first regular course with the new curriculum will be held in early December.

Austria has also continued its efforts to support the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in other forums, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Together with Finland, Turkey and Kazakhstan, we have proposed a draft text for an OSCE-wide action plan on women, peace and security to assist participating States in implementing resolution 1325 (2000). We hope that those efforts will soon lead to a positive result.

In concluding, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, all for your efforts in advancing the women and peace and security agenda and express the hope that we will see significant progress in that area in the lead-up to the 2015 review.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand.

Mr. McLay (New Zealand): I will give a somewhat shortened version of the distributed statement. We thank the delegation of Azerbaijan for organizing today's very important debate and we welcome the

Security Council's unanimous adoption of resolution 2122 (2013). New Zealand also associates itself with the statement to be delivered shortly by the representative of the Marshall Islands who will speak on behalf of Pacific Islands Forum.

In 2013 we have seen a very real focus by the Security Council on the protection aspect of the women and peace and security agenda. The Council's high-profile debate in June (S/PV.6984) and resolution 2106 (2013) demonstrated solid progress in that regard. The Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, endorsed by 113 States, including my own, was a landmark.

Hard tools, such as sanctions regimes that target perpetrators of sexual violence and appropriately mandated and trained peacekeeping missions, are effective instruments for the protection agenda, but the participation dimension of the women and peace and security agenda still requires targeted action by the Council. Indeed, the Council's role in addressing women's political participation in the peace and security agenda remains a challenge. That makes today's debate on the role of women in transitional justice even more important.

In June, when the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Mary Robinson, made her first statement to the United Nations family in her new role, she spoke of women not as victims but as stakeholders. She questioned the sustainability of any peace that half the population has had no role in building and she called for women to be put at the core of peacebuilding. New Zealand agrees. If it is going to deliver lasting and sustainable peace, then, as the representative of Austria just emphasized, transitional justice must incorporate the entire population. Women's perspectives must be included in the design, implementation and monitoring of transitional justice processes.

Beyond simply being a just democratic principle, there are many tangible reasons for that. It builds trust in post-conflict justice institutions, and UN Women's research shows that women are more likely to report sexual and gender-based crimes to transitional justice institutions that involve women judges and officials. The Council should also make clear that there must be prominent roles for women, both as leaders and as active participants in the consultative processes that establish transitional arrangements.

New Zealand's experience, in its own region and beyond is that credible, informal and tradition-based justice systems have a demonstrated role in establishing accountability. In post-conflict societies, it is often informal justice mechanisms that are the most accessible for justice, mediation and conflict resolution. While some informal and traditional systems struggle to adequately address women's needs due to inherent gender biases, examples from Africa show the value of local efforts to transform such institutions in a manner that allows for the full participation for women.

United Nations field presences must fully engage with women in civil society and the community. New Zealand thus encourages a consistent practice of deploying gender advisers to peacekeeping missions, with their role continuing through any transitional arrangements to assist in post-conflict processes.

In addition to the existing Pacific Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, which New Zealand is continuing to implement along with its regional partners, we are proceeding with the development of a comprehensive national action plan of our own. Looking ahead, we welcome the concept of an independent global study to assist in the preparations of the high-level review of resolution 1325 (2000) in 2015, and we believe our Pacific Regional Action Plan could provide a good example of regional action.

Women and peace and security is the agenda item that will not go away, and with very good reason. As long as that remains the reality, New Zealand will continue to participate actively in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mrs. Gatto (Italy): Mr. President, allow me to begin by thanking you for organizing today's open debate of the Security Council and the speakers for their valuable contributions.

Italy welcomes the adoption by the Security Council today's of resolution 2122 (2013), on women and peace and security, which is a further step towards the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

Italy aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union and wishes to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

We appreciate the focus of today's debate — women's rights must be an integral component of efforts to

rebuild justice and rule of law in conflict and post-conflict situations. I wish to address three areas. First, with regard to participation, we need to remove the obstacles blocking women's access to justice, which are often rooted in traditional and cultural attitudes, increase the number of women in national and international judiciary bodies and ensure that gender awareness informs their decisions. Secondly, with respect to protection, laws must be gender-sensitive, including by upholding the right of women to own land and by criminalizing sexual and gender-based violence; there should be no amnesty for such crimes. Thirdly, as to reparations, to be effective, they must have the strength to prevent the recurrence of violations and eliminate the root causes of gender inequality.

While Governments have the primary responsibility to steer such processes, the international community and other actors can provide critical support. In the fight against impunity for perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, where women are often the victims, the International Criminal Court has a unique role in complementing the efforts of national courts when these are unable to bring perpetrators to justice. The United Nations also has a key role to play in assistance and capacity-building. Former judges and the specialized staff of United Nations ad hoc tribunals are potentially resources, as is cooperation with civil society organizations, in particular women-led organizations.

In 2015, the Security Council will hold a high-level meeting to review the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The Secretary-General's report (S/2013/525) includes strategic measures to accelerate implementation, of which I would like to highlight three recommendations: increasing women's participation in United Nations peacekeeping and political missions, especially at the middle — and senior-management levels; reaching the target of 15 per cent spending for post-conflict peacebuilding projects on gender equality and women's empowerment; and systematically addressing all elements of resolution 1325 (2000) in the work of the Security Council.

Italy considers resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions to be key elements of its agenda for international peace and security. We are currently reviewing our national action plan with a view to accelerating its implementation over the next three years. Gender equality and women's empowerment are mainstreamed into development cooperation

programmes. Specific projects on resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions are currently being implemented in Afghanistan, Lebanon, Somalia and Palestine. Italy supported the creation of the first centre for women victims of violence in Bethlehem, Palestine. In Libya, we are supporting the approval of a bill that equates victims of sexual violence with victims of war.

To conclude, we have the tools to ensure that the vision enshrined in resolution 1325 (2000) becomes reality. It is high time we use them to turn a new page in the lives of many women and girls around the world.

The President: I now give the floor to Ms. Beham.

Ms. Beham: I thank you, Sir, for allowing me to participate on behalf of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in this important debate. I would also like to thank the briefers and other speakers for their thought-provoking presentations.

As the representative of the world's largest regional security organization, I would like at the outset to devote a few remarks to the role that regional organizations can and should play with respect to the implementation of the commitments resulting from the women, peace and security agenda. We have already heard a number of remarks in that regard.

While it is obvious that States have the primary responsibility to ensure that the resolutions on women, peace and security are translated into action, regional organizations working on the maintenance of international peace and security, such as the OSCE, also have a recognized role. Both the recent presidential statement on cooperation with regional organizations (S/PRST/2013/12), adopted in August, and several of the women, peace and security resolutions refer to the crucial contribution of regional organizations to affirming the participation of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution mechanisms and peacebuilding.

There is now a good window of opportunity to give women, peace and security issues a boost on the regional level as the United Nations is currently leading a process of strengthening the role of regional organizations under Chapter VIII of the Charter, dealing with conflict prevention, in particular early warning and early action. The OSCE Secretary General, in his recent round of consultations with senior United Nations interlocutors, including Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson, found strong support for the OSCE to play a central role

in this process. The OSCE welcomes the adoption of resolution 2122 (2013) today, which clearly recognizes the efforts of regional organizations in implementing women, peace and security commitments, including the development of action plans and implementation frameworks.

The OSCE participating States have acknowledged the importance of the women, peace and security agenda by adopting a number of Ministerial Council decisions, including one explicitly dedicated to increasing women's participation in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation and another dealing with the elements of the conflict cycle to include commitments under resolution 1325 (2000). As a result, the OSCE has taken a number of initiatives, both at the secretariat level and in its field operations, to implement these Ministerial Council decisions, in particular in conflict-affected contexts in the OSCE region.

Let me begin with our activities related to the theme of today's debate — women, the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict-affected contexts. The OSCE field operations, institutions and secretariat are implementing a variety of activities related to war crimes justice, trial monitoring, criminal justice reform, judicial independence and administrative justice. We undertake every effort to mainstream the participation of women into these activities and to integrate gender into our substantive approaches.

To take just one example, the OSCE promotes gender balance in its work with judicial personnel because we believe that diversity has a positive impact on women's access to justice and the perceived legitimacy of the judiciary. From a substantive perspective, our mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina supports the integration of a gender perspective into war crimes-trial monitoring by providing specific training for civil society on how to monitor conflict-related sexual violence cases and understand the specific challenges that witnesses and victims face in such processes. Trial monitors are then better prepared to gather data on how such cases progress through the judicial system and to advocate for policy improvements based on the data. This is one step in ensuring that justice and accountability are pursued equally for all violations and crimes, regardless of their nature or the sex of the victim.

Also, through a number of women's resource centre networks supported by the OSCE in Central Asia and the Caucasus, our organization helps to enhance

women's access to legal aid. But the judiciary is, of course, not the only actor involved in the rule of law, and the OSCE also works with participating States to increase the number of women in the police and to make law enforcement activities gender-sensitive as a part of comprehensive security sector reforms facilitated by our Organization in many countries.

Within the politico-military dimension, the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation promotes the inclusion of women in the military, including in combat positions, making sure that civilian oversight and human rights in the armed forces are guaranteed for men and women alike.

As I said, the OSCE is the world's largest regional security organization. It also plays an important role throughout the region in mediation, dialogue facilitation, good offices and quiet diplomacy. The organization has increased its efforts to ensure that those processes are inclusive. We are pleased to announce that on 24 October, in Istanbul, the OSCE will launch a guidance note on gender-responsive mediation. The purpose of the guidance note is not only to increase women's participation in mediation, dialogue and quiet diplomacy initiatives, but also to strengthen the capacity of mediators to understand how the substantive concerns of both men and women can be included in those processes and how that inclusion benefits the sustainability of conflict resolution and reconciliation. We are grateful to the Secretariat's Department of Political Affairs and the Mediation Support Unit for their inspiring cooperation in preparing this guidance note.

Allow me at this point to refer to one more issue that we believe is important, also in the framework of today's debate. The OSCE is a leader in a key peace and security issue that is not discussed enough from a perspective of women, peace and security: integrating a gender perspective in combating violent extremism and radicalization that leads to terrorism. This is an issue of serious concern to OSCE participating States. Both national authorities and international and regional organizations increasingly recognize that a better understanding of the dynamics of this issue is central to formulating and implementing effective strategies that will increase stability and security. In 2014, the OSCE will undertake a new initiative, in partnership with the Global Counterterrorism Forum, to promote gender-sensitive strategies, policies and measures to counter violent extremism and radicalization that

leads to terrorism, with an emphasis on empowering women to contribute to those efforts in different roles and capacities. I would like to conclude by drawing attention to the good cooperation between OSCE field operations and UN Women offices on women, peace and security issues. For example, next month we will be co-hosting a conference in Almaty, Kazakhstan for OSCE participating States to discuss with expert representatives and civil society organizations progress in drafting and implementing national action plans or other strategies on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). The results of this conference will be merged with the outcome of an OSCE study on good practices and lessons learned by OSCE participating States, which was undertaken with the Peace Research Institute in Oslo. We hope that events and research such as those will provide us with further insight on how to put into practice important goals in the resolutions on women, peace and security and, that Member States of the United Nations can benefit from the knowledge generated by the OSCE.

The President: I thank Ms. Beham for her briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Lithuania.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): My delegation thanks Azerbaijan, as President for the month of October, for convening an open debate on women, peace and security. Lithuania welcomes the adoption of resolution 2122 (2013) today, which aims to streamline action within the United Nations system to implement resolution 1325 (2000) and other related decisions. It is important that the resolution clearly underlines the role of regional organizations and civil society. We appreciate the recommendations of the Secretary-General that provide a strategic look at and guidance on the implementation of existing commitments. We would also like to commend the work of Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women, and her first briefing to the Council.

Lithuania associates itself with the statement made by the representative of the European Union. I will limit myself to a few points relating to the agenda on the rule of law and the participation of women.

Strengthening international and national justice responses to conflict-related violence against women is crucial. In the aftermath of conflict, it is vital to develop transitional justice mechanisms and institutions and to rebuild the rule of law to protect women's rights.

We must pay greater attention to providing better support for victims, including by ensuring protection for witnesses, victims and justice officials, providing reparation mechanisms and ensuring the systematic inclusion of women in all aspects of conflict resolution. United Nations special representatives, peacekeeping and political missions and United Nations agencies have a much greater role to play.

In recent years, the United Nations has augmented its involvement in establishing and supporting transitional justice measures, furthering women's rights in post-conflict societies. The United Nations-supported truth commissions in Mali, Kenya and Cote d'Ivoire have addressed gender-based crimes. Yet more must be done to ensure that transitional justice addresses a full range of gender-specific crimes, including human trafficking, early or forced marriages, the links between sexual violence and natural-resource extraction, withholding humanitarian assistance, enforced disappearances and forced displacement.

Transitional justice cannot be a substitute for accountability. It should not limit the access of victims to reparations. Blanket amnesties cannot be extended to conflict-related sexual violence. We must pay greater attention to delivering reparation programmes and funding. We continue to support the wider Council practice of including sexual violence in the designation criteria for targeted sanctions.

It is difficult to imagine tackling impunity without monitoring and reporting mechanisms. We welcome the Council's decision today that United Nations entities should do more systematic reporting to the Council, including analysis.

Lithuania sponsored Council resolution 2117 (2013), on small arms and light weapons, which links the illicit transfer and misuse of small arms to a disproportionate impact on violence against women and girls.

In previous statements my delegation has already spoken about the importance of ensuring the empowerment of women. Their participation at all levels of economic, political and social life is as crucial to sustainable peace as it is to poverty reduction, economic recovery and sustainable development. We welcome the the Peacebuilding Commission's declaration on women's economic empowerment for peacebuilding.

The recent decrease in women's share of senior positions in United Nations field operations should be

reversed. Efforts by the United Nations to retain, attract and support women staff should be complemented by efforts by Member States to consistently nominate more female candidates.

Notably greater involvement of women — from mediation, restoring the rule of law and governance to participation in post-conflict electoral processes — continues to require commitment and attention. It also requires greater dedicated resourcing, particularly for civil society groups working on the ground.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium.

Ms. Frankinet (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): My delegation thanks the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of UN Women, Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka; the representative of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, Ms. Balipou; and Ms. Pillay, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, for their contributions to this debate.

We fully align ourselves with the statement of the European Union. We would like to make a few additional remarks in our national capacity.

Belgium welcomes the theme chosen for today's debate. We also sponsored resolution 2122 (2013), adopted today. The rule of law and transitional justice in relation to gender have not yet received sufficient attention, despite the fact that they are key to the promotion and protection of women's rights in post-conflict situations. My country welcomes the fact that this debate is also focusing on the rebuilding of justice mechanisms that guarantee women non-discriminatory access to justice in post-conflict societies.

Indeed, improving the legal framework and the rules of procedure to ensure women better access to justice at both the national and the international levels is one of the aims of the second national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) that my country recently finalized for the period 2013-2016. To attain that goal, we believe that it is critical, on the one hand, to support the initiatives that facilitate access to justice for women and girls so as to ensure that their rights are protected, and, on the other, to incorporate the gender dimension into documents relating to the rule of law and transitional justice and to support transitional justice mechanisms that have a real impact on gender parity.

Belgium continues to give political and operational priority to the fight against all forms of violence against civilians during and after armed conflict, with particular focus on sexual violence. In that regard, my country encourages States to include the fight against sexual violence in their transitional justice mechanisms and penal law, and to consider the fight against sexual violence as their responsibility. We also reiterate our call on all countries to apply the broadest possible definition of the concept of sexual violence, as identified by the International Criminal Court.

In conclusion, I take this opportunity to welcome the publication by the Democratic Republic of the Congo of a report on sexual violence in that country. The report demonstrates the importance of the Human Rights Council's decision to convene at its twenty-fifth session a high-level dialogue on the lessons learned and the remaining challenges in the campaign against sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The report also reflects the need to allow countries in conflict and post-conflict situations to share their relevant experience.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Spain.

Mr. González de Linares Palou (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank Secretary-General for his commitment to this issue, for his report (S/2013/525) and for being present at this debate. I also thank Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka for her statement and congratulate her on her recent appointment as head of UN Women. Spain fully supports her in the performance of her duties.

Spain welcomes the fact that the Security Council has devoted three debates this year, with different approaches, to the women and peace and security agenda. The adoption of resolution 2122 (2013) today and of resolution 2106 (2013) in June consolidates a doctrinal and legal corpus that reflects the will of Member States to move from dialogue to action.

The approach chosen today for the current debate links two fundamental principles to which Spain is particularly committed: the first is the fight against impunity for crimes against women in armed conflict, and the second is women's participation in rebuilding the rule of law in post-conflict situations in order to put an end to the structures of inequality and discrimination in the context of which those crimes were committed.

Regarding accountability and the fight against impunity, the international community's efforts in that field should be recalled. That was highlighted during the Council debate of 24 June 2013 on impunity for crimes of sexual violence in conflicts (S/PV.6984) and the subsequent adoption of resolution 2106 (2013), which reiterates the importance of vigorously continuing to establish accountability for the most serious crimes committed against women and girls in conflict. On that issue, I would like to stress the need to address impunity for crimes committed against those who tend to be particularly discriminated against, such as women and girls with disabilities or indigenous women and girls.

Spain has actively contributed to such discussions in many forums in which such questions have been addressed and will continue to do so as long as the effective prosecution of those responsible for such crimes persists as a global challenge requiring urgent and priority attention.

With regard to full participation in establishing the rule of law, which means placing women at the centre of the decision-making processes in the post-conflict rebuilding phase, while giving particular attention to justice and security sector reform. Spain believes that that is the only way to end the discrimination that makes women suffer disproportionate violations of their rights during conflicts. It also enhances safeguards to ensure that such discrimination is not repeated.

The report of the Secretary-General clearly notes a positive trend in women's participation in mediation processes and the negotiation of peace agreements. However, the inclusion of matters that directly affect women and their rights in such agreements is still insufficient. That is what the United Nations Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice points out in its latest report. The Working Group expresses concern for the fact that the gender perspective is not sufficiently taken into account in transitional processes, which will result in a less inclusive peace.

On that count I would like to highlight the initiatives mentioned by the Secretary-General in his report that have promoted the involvement of women in crisis and conflict situations. I would like to highlight specific areas where Spain has participated. They are the High-level Conference on Women's Leadership in the Sahel Region, held in Brussels in April; the work

of UN Women through counselling many countries on incorporating women's rights and gender equality in measures being taken to restore peace and guarantee justice in the context of a transition; and the general recommendation that the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women has adopted today on women and conflict-prevention, conflicts and post-conflict.

As stated on many occasions, Spain devotes particular efforts to promoting a gender perspective in conflict situations and has had a plan of action on women, peace and security since 2007. Within that framework, our country carries out various actions within the scope of its foreign policy, cooperation and defence activities in order to guarantee the correct implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). In particular, I would like to refer to the International Seminar on Gender Perspective and Peace Operations, coordinated by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence of Spain and the Netherlands. The sixth edition of that seminar will take place next November in The Hague. The seminar includes a specific module on the role of women in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes, as well as on the processes regarding security sector reform. Spanish cooperation plays a leading role in that regard through the plan on gender-sensitive peacebuilding, with a chapter dedicated to gender-sensitive transitional justice and the rule of law. Furthermore, the Office for Humanitarian Action of the Spanish Agency for International Aid for Development has elaborated a guide to address sexual violence in humanitarian interventions.

I will conclude by quoting the words of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, who, on the occasion of an expert-level dialogue on the approach of the United Nations on transitional justice, pointed out that peace processes constitute historic opportunities for broadening the goals of post-conflict justice. Spain wants those opportunities effectively recognize women's rights, both in terms of guarantees of justice and conditions of peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Estonia.

Mr. Kolga (Estonia): At the outset, allow me to join others in expressing gratitude to the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN Women, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the representative of the Non-governmental Organization Working Group on Women, Peace and Security for

their statements. I would also like to thank the Council presidency for taking up the topic and organizing the open debate today.

Estonia aligns itself with the statement of the European Union delivered earlier. In addition, I would like to make the following remarks.

Estonia is dedicated to protecting and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms, both nationally and internationally. As a member of the Human Rights Council, our particular focus is on the rights of women and children, gender perspective in conflict settlements and the fight against impunity. Estonia firmly believes that the rule of law in conflict and post-conflict situations must promote justice and accountability in ways that further the rights of women, including through legal and institutional reforms that are gender sensitive. The equal right to decision-making and participation, along with women's empowerment, is crucial to ensure a functioning society and peace and justice in the aftermath of conflicts.

Additionally, as stated in the Secretary-General's report (S/2013/525), women's representation in the justice sector plays a significant role in increasing the reporting of crimes and enhancing public trust in the rule of law institutions. The importance of prevention must likewise be stressed. By enabling women to fully participate in judicial systems, we can better tackle the root causes of impunity for violence against women.

Estonia welcomes the call by the Security Council in today's resolution to Member States to comply with their relevant obligations to end impunity and to thoroughly investigate and prosecute persons responsible for atrocity crimes. Estonia further agrees with the Council that the fight against impunity for the most serious crimes of international concern against women and girls has been strengthened through the work of the International Criminal Court (ICC), the ad hoc and mixed tribunals, and the specialized chambers in national tribunals. ICC prosecutions will not, however, be sufficient to ensure complete accountability. Therefore, it is essential that the gender provisions of the Rome Statute are translated into national prosecutions.

Justice for victims of atrocity crimes, however, entails more than just punishing perpetrators. The Rome Statute further empowers victims by its broad victim-participation scheme and underlines its commitment to victims by its reparations provisions. Likewise, the ICC

Trust Fund for Victims has been doing important work to alleviate the suffering of victims in the countries where the Court is conducting investigations.

Estonia was honoured to join the Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict during the General Assembly's opening week. We were also glad to see how much interest there was in the topic of enhancing accountability for sexual violence in conflict, discussed at a side event during that week that focused on the role of the ICC and that was hosted by the Estonian Mission to the United Nations. We would like to commend the important work of the Team of Experts on Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, and I am glad to note that Estonia has made financial contributions to the activities of the Team.

Estonia would also like to take the opportunity to emphasize that in addition to conflict-related sexual violence, increased attention should be paid to the full range of violations and serious crimes experienced by women, including gendered impacts of enforced disappearances, foreign occupation, mass forced displacement, restrictions on humanitarian aid, conflict-related trafficking and the destruction of civilian infrastructure.

Let me also commend UN Women for their work targeted at raising the number of national action plans related to resolution 1325 (2000) or other relevant planning instruments, as outlined in the recently adopted UN Women Strategic Plan. Estonia developed its national action plan in 2010 and has advised a number of States on developing theirs. We would be ready to cooperate in that regard with other States in the future. We are looking forward to hearing the results of the global study, and to the high-level review in 2015.

In conclusion, we are glad to note that Estonia was among the sponsors of resolution 2106 (2013), which strengthens the monitoring and prevention of sexual violence in conflict, and we were happy to co-sponsor resolution 2122 (2013), adopted today.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia.

Mr. Raja Zaib Shah (Malaysia): At the outset, I wish to congratulate Azerbaijan on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I also express my thanks for convening today's open debate on the important issue of women, peace and security. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his

remarks and other invited speakers for their valuable briefings on the issue.

Malaysia remains concerned about sexual and gender-based crimes and strongly believes that ending impunity is crucial in our quest to put an end to sexual violence in times of conflict. We note that progress has been made over the years, and we welcome the continuing work of the United Nations and other stakeholders, including the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, which focuses its efforts on strengthening the capacity of the national rule of law and justice actors. We feel that the Team's engagement with relevant Governments would strengthen their capacity to effectively address sexual violence against women and girls.

In our effort to secure peace and security, we must move urgently to replace the prevailing culture of impunity with one that promotes the rule of law, justice and accountability. Underlining the importance of ending sexual violence, Malaysia is pleased to report that it has joined many others in endorsing the Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, which makes clear the collective view on the need of greater action to address the issue.

My delegation is concerned with the often inadequate legal frameworks on women's rights in post-conflict countries. In that matter, we could take a page from the lessons learned through established courts, such as the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Criminal Tribunal of the Former Yugoslavia, which offer insightful lessons from the prosecution of sexual and gender-based crimes. Those could be applied to future tribunals and domestic judicial processes. Furthermore, Governments that have experienced conflict could consider allocating greater financial resources to investigate cases of sexual violence. There is also a need to ensure that international and national courts have adequate expertise. In that regard, countries in a position to do so should render assistance to post-conflict societies.

In addressing the issues of women's empowerment after conflicts, attention should be given to strengthening the security of women through rules and regulations. That could be done through setting up institutional and administrative machinery to plan, coordinate, implement and monitor development programmes for women. My delegation cannot stress enough the importance of increased access for women to education and employment, as well as the development of policies

and services that offer equal livelihood opportunities to women. At the same time, we must also remember the importance of access to health care, especially for victims of sexual and gender-based violence.

Malaysia welcomes today's adoption of the resolution 2122 (2013) on the issue discussed. My delegation hopes that there will be sufficient impetus toward the actual realization of the resolution and the landmark resolution 1325 (2000). Malaysia therefore appreciates the ongoing update on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in the Secretary-General's report (S/2013/525) of 4 September. As mentioned in the report, there remains a deficit in opportunities for women to exercise leadership, and women are still underrepresented in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, protection and peacebuilding processes. My delegation believes that the greater active participation of women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding would go a long way towards including a gender perspective and allowing women to shape peace.

In that regard, there is a need to increase the number of women in high-level decision-making positions in peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations. Malaysia is also supportive of appointing more women protection advisers to monitor and report on sexual violence in all relevant situations. We appreciate the positive values they bring in creating greater awareness of sexual violence issues, reporting incidents of sexual violence and implementing Security Council resolutions on the ground.

We strongly believe that the subject of women, peace and security deserves the Security Council's sustained attention. Malaysia reaffirms its commitment to the efforts to address sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations. Nonetheless, we must insist that gender equality and efforts to encourage and instill a gender perspective be promoted during times of peace rather than solely during times of conflict. The respect and promotion of women's rights must become part of the culture of every society. In that regard, the Council can be assured of our continuous engagement and unrelenting support for the advancement of the issue in our pursuit of achieving peace and security at the national, regional and international levels.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Mr. Seger (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset, Mr. President, to thank you for

organizing this debate and for having made us give up our lunch for this good cause.

In the interests of time, I shall deliver an abbreviated version of my written statement, with a focus on four points to which my country attaches particular importance.

First, Switzerland puts particular stress on a gender-sensitive implementation of the transitional justice mechanisms. As Ms. Balipou pointed out earlier, women's perspectives and needs should be included in all four principles against impunity: the right to be informed, the right to justice, the right to reparations and the guarantee of non-recurrence. As we know from experience, violent conflict affects women and men differently, not only with respect to the types of violence suffered, especially sexually-based violence, but also based on their different biological and social roles and identities. Prosecutions for gender-based and sexist violence at the national and international levels are thus key to achieving reconciliation and reintegration in post-conflict societies. For example, when truth commissions investigate violations from a gender viewpoint, they identify the impact of those violations on women and men alike and can make recommendations that lead to specific gender-sensitive initiatives in terms of justice, reparation and institutional reform.

Secondly, archives are key to the fight against impunity, especially to the full realization of the right to be informed. Switzerland welcomes the work of the experts convoked at the initiative of the British Government on the prevention of gender-based violence, which makes good use of archives in order to expose sexual violence committed in conflict situations and to investigate crimes. Switzerland has seconded an expert to the working group and stands ready to contribute further expertise.

Thirdly, Switzerland welcomes the fact that the Secretary-General's report (S/2013/525) mentions the importance of access to safe abortion for women and girls who are victims of rape. Switzerland firmly believes that all women and girls have the right to control their own bodies and to be free from coercion and sexual violence. Given the increased exposure to sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict settings, those rights must be strictly guaranteed.

While Switzerland supports the Secretary-General's proposal to draft an independent study on

the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), the implementation of commitments made almost 15 years ago is one of our chief concerns, which leads to my final remark.

It is well known that Switzerland is one of the 22 States members of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group, a transregional initiative that seeks to improve the working methods of the Security Council. My country notes that when resolutions on specific crises are adopted by the Security Council, they do not always take into account all the commitments made with regard to women, peace and security. Furthermore, their implementation differs greatly from one context to another.

Our country therefore urges the Security Council, among other matters, to ensure that gender advisers are deployed in all peace missions and that effective mechanisms are introduced so that information concerning the situation of women and girls can be presented in a systematic manner in reports and transmitted in Security Council debates. In that regard, Switzerland welcomes resolution 2122 (2013), adopted earlier today, which broadly accommodates the concrete recommendations in that sense. Nonetheless, it would have been better yet to have adopted the resolution after this debate in order to more fully take into account the views expressed by the participants.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Chile.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile thanks Azerbaijani the presidency for convening this open debate on women and peace and security, and for the opportunity to reaffirm the role of women in transitional justice.

While our country has periodically taken part in these debates, our comments today are special significance since this is our first speech following Chile's election as a non-permanent member of the Council for the period 2014-2015. We reiterate our commitment to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) (2000), bearing in mind that 2015 will mark the fifteenth anniversary of that instrument, which has enabled us to progress, among other goals, in the promotion of women to positions of leadership, the prevention of gender-based violence in situations of conflict and post-conflict, and the creation of national plans in various countries, including Chile.

In the spirit of brevity, I shall limit my remarks to several issues raised in the Secretary-General's recent report (S/2013/525) that we consider particularly important.

We note the progress to date in the system as a whole and at the regional and national levels with regard to best practices, national plans, indicators and training. However, we are concerned by the persistent deficit in the number of women in leadership positions, as well as the lack of opportunities for them to rise to such positions. At the same time, we express our concern at the ongoing decline, as described in the report, in the number of women represented at the middle and high levels of mission leadership staff, the scarcity of data broken down by gender and age, and the gaps in financing.

Similarly, we support the convening of a high-level meeting on the matter in 2015 and share the Secretary-General's recommendation that an independent worldwide study of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) be undertaken to make a full diagnosis of its implementation status and detail priorities for further action. We hope that the study will be designed above all to seek the broadest participation of Member States and of civil society so that it will enjoy cross-cutting support.

We agree with the recommendations in the report about the need to promote sustainable budgets for the work, so as to strengthen women's organizations working at the national levels and to train women leaders of peace movements. While appreciating the work of the experts deployed in the field, we consider it essential to provide training at the system and national levels not only for those providing direct leadership in that area, but also to those performing management functions, whatever their role. My delegation agrees on the need to accelerate women's access to the political arena and to support transitional justice reform as a peacebuilding guarantee.

Chile signed the Arms Trade Treaty and urges other States to support that initiative, which we believe represents an important humanitarian instrument for the prevention of violence against women and girls.

It is my delegation's belief that the Security Council should use every means in its power to gather information on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions, particularly through briefings provided by the commissions of inquiry

established to investigate situations on the Council's agenda. We take this opportunity to urge the members of the Council to hold well-informed consultations on those issues.

I note that at the regional level, the Chilean Joint Centre for Peacekeeping Operations convened a seminar, jointly with the United States Naval Postgraduate School, entitled "Women, Peace and Security: Implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and new challenges", in Santiago, Chile from 1 to 12 July. It was attended by professionals from Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay as well as from our own country. The seminar concluded with the adoption of a document in the form of an action plan, agreed in group discussions, embodying initiatives fully reflecting the international norms discussed during the seminar.

Chile will continue promoting the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), convinced as it is of the important role played by women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and of the need to increase their participation in decision-making processes.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Greece.

Mr. Spinellis (Greece): We would like to express our appreciation to the presidency of Azerbaijan for convening this important open debate, as well as to the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN Women and the Under-Secretary-General for their important contributions. We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union and we welcome the adoption of resolution 2122 (2013) by the Council earlier today.

In a conflict-affected environment, violence against women is significantly intensified, indicating that in many cases, violence is an extension of existing gender inequality in society. Despite the continuous efforts of the international community to eradicate violence against women, sexual violence in armed conflicts remains a widespread phenomenon. It exacerbates and prolongs situations of armed conflict and is therefore directly linked to the maintenance of peace and security.

Among others, resolution 2106 (2013) underlines the importance of women's greater participation and leadership in decision-making processes in areas of conflict. In many cases, women are excluded from decision-making. Nevertheless, their full and equal participation in peacemaking and peacebuilding is

indispensable for the success of those processes, since it is the only way to ensure that the needs of women involved in conflict-related situations are effectively addressed. Women must be seen not solely as victims, but as active agents of change and of peacekeeping.

Prevention, rather than reaction, must be a priority. That requires the existence of early warning mechanisms based on accurate, objective and reliable information. The collection of data relating to sexual violence in areas of conflict is crucial and strongly encouraged, so that both national and international actors may be duly informed.

While it is crucial to address sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict contexts, it is equally important to combat impunity and strengthen both international and national justice responses to those crimes. Consequently, capacity-building related to the rule of law, that is wide in scope and goes beyond traditional areas of law reform and strengthening of justice and law enforcement institutions are necessary.

The rule of law should address justice, equality and equity with a strong focus on the empowerment of women and girls, gender equality, and preventing and combating violence against women as essential preconditions for equitable and inclusive sustainable development. In that context, we praise the work of the United Nations in assisting Member States to address rule of law issues in conflict contexts and we consider it vital that the United Nations continues to emphasize the importance of providing redress and assistance to victims in conflict, post-conflict and other crisis situations.

The prevention of and response to violence against children, in particular, including sexual violence and abuse, forced marriage and maltreatment, should continue to be an important focus area of United Nations assistance.

To ensure genuine rule of law, beyond the formal establishment of institutions, judicial systems need to be fully accessible to all individuals and groups. A major obstacle to access is the cost involved in legal advice and legal representation services. We support the work of the United Nations to implement a wide variety of projects focused on providing legal aid to address that obstacle.

In conclusion, Greece is of the view that genuine and inclusive participation in the elaboration of transitional

justice mechanisms ensures that they not only respond to the needs and expectations of victims, but provide transformative change for sustainable transition to peace and reconciliation, which is the ultimate goal of all of our efforts.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Thailand.

Mr. Sinhaseni (Thailand): At the outset, I would like to thank Azerbaijan for convening this open debate on women and peace and security, the Secretary-General for his informative report (S/2013/525), and the briefers who spoke this morning.

We are pleased that the Council has convened an open debate on this issue for the third time, which signals the importance the Council attaches to the issue of women. Women account for more than half of the world's population. Women's participation and the recognition of their special needs are essential. The issue of women and peace and security is multifaceted. We welcome today's discussion, which focuses on the role of women in transitional justice and the rule of law.

A situation of conflict creates particular challenges in terms of human rights and upholding the rule of law. As is rightly mentioned by the Secretary-General in his report, rebuilding justice and the rule of law and enhancing gender-sensitive legal and institutional reform, in conformity with international standards, is crucial to protecting women's equal and inviolable rights in the aftermath of conflict. Measures to protect women victims and to redress wrongs against them and bring perpetrators to justice deserve particular attention from the Security Council and the cooperation of the international community.

My delegation is pleased to learn from UN Women that transitional justice mechanisms are increasingly responding to war crimes against women by providing specific arrangements to protect women witnesses. We also welcome the adoption of resolution 2106 (2013), in June, which focuses on accountability for perpetrators of sexual violence in conflict and stresses women's political and economic empowerment. Those mechanisms need to be effectively utilized. The Council's resolutions and presidential statements also need to be translated into actions if we are to be successful in our attempt to protect women.

Just last month, Thailand joined other like-minded countries in endorsing the Declaration of Commitment

to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, initiated by the United Kingdom. We will continue to cooperate with all partners to eliminate sexual violence in conflict and bring the perpetrators to justice.

Although we do not have a situation of armed conflict in Thailand, the Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security have been applied as domestic guidelines on how to best protect women in our country. A Subcommittee on Women and the Promotion of Peace and Security has been established by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. The Subcommittee is currently drafting policies and strategies as a basis for our national action plan, which hopefully will be adopted in the near future.

Enhancing women's access to justice is also one of Thailand's main priorities. Our Independent National Rule of Law Commission helps ensure that all State organs perform their duties based on the rule of law, without discrimination. The Council may be interested to know that on 15 November Thailand will host the Bangkok Dialogue on the Rule of Law: Investing in the Rule of Law, Justice and Security for the Post-2015 Development Agenda. This meeting is yet another example of Thailand's commitment to help promote the rule of law, justice and security. Our decision to co-sponsor resolution 2122 (2013) and all our efforts are based on our strong belief that the rule of law at the national and international levels is an indispensable foundation for a more peaceful, prosperous and just world.

Let me once again congratulate the Security Council, UN Women and other bodies with regard to women and peace and security and commend them for their ongoing work. The Council and the international community can count on Thailand's active engagement in and contribution to that important issue.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Belarus.

Ms. Velichko (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Allow me to congratulate the delegation of Azerbaijan on holding this open debate on the role of women and the rule of law and ensuring justice in conflict and post-conflict situations.

We are grateful to the Secretary-General and his Special Representative on Sexual Violence for their personal commitment and leadership in the fight against violence against women. We also believe that

UN Women and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights should play an important role in combating violence against women and protecting women's rights.

Belarus condemns all forms of violence, including in conflict situations, particularly against the most vulnerable segments of society — women and children. As with any other country, Belarus has zero tolerance for that scourge. Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2106 (2013) adopted in June, have created a clear legal framework for responding to sexual violence in conflict and prohibited its use as a weapon of war.

We believe that a thorough investigation of all acts of sexual violence and the immediate punishment of perpetrators are crucial in combatting this scourge. That violence can be eliminated only through coherent collective efforts by the international community — Member States, international organizations and civil society. Such efforts can and should be carried out through a genuine partnership based on a unified approach, respect for each other's views and agreement on the steps to be taken.

Today, it is clear that there is no State in the world that would not endeavour to put an end to violence against women. The question is not who is right, who is for, who is against violence. Today, the question is how and in what way can come together through our collective efforts.

In that context, we are seriously concerned about recent incidents — be they deliberate or unintentional — that replace the painstaking and time-consuming work on the formation of such a partnership with vociferous media campaigns based on documents drawn up by an inner circle and hastily gathered expressions of support for them. We are willing to believe in the sincere intentions of the proponents of that approach to combating violence against women. At the same time, we cannot but disagree with an approach that puts those States with the wisdom and strength of will to consider every word in the international documents that they sign in an awkward position.

We also consider it inadmissible that members of the international community that have done a great deal, including specifically in combatting violence against women and children, have been placed in an artificially created situation and forced to justify themselves for failing to appear on a list of countries who combat sexual violence. Every State plays an

important role in combating sexual violence, and no vociferous media campaign should alienate or disregard even one Member.

We pay tribute to reasonable initiatives to strengthen international support to combat sexual violence in conflict. Belarus calls for us not to replace real partnerships with unity that is merely on paper, and to avoid hasty and irresponsible actions that may devalue the noble idea of combatting this scourge.

Our shared responsibility, affirmed as a moral imperative of policy, is to steadfastly abide by partnerships based on respect, even if that goes against our short-term interests and plans. Only that approach can guarantee a genuine implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, resolution 2106 (2013), and resolution 2122 (2013), adopted today.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Slovenia.

Mr. Logar (Slovenia): Let me begin by stating Slovenia's full alignment with the statement delivered by the European Union earlier today. We also join others in welcoming the adoption of resolution 2122 (2013).

As stated by some briefers and several speakers before me, women and girls are particularly vulnerable in conflict and post-conflict situations. It is therefore also extremely important to discuss the gender aspects of the rule of law and transitional justice in the light of the three elements of resolution 1325 (2000) — participation, prevention and protection.

Rebuilding justice and the rule of law is critical to any post-conflict transitional process burdened by the legacies of mass atrocities, serious human-rights violations and a weakened judicial infrastructure. A gender perspective, as well as the participation of women, should be injected into those processes. Transitional justice processes should address the full range of conflict-related violations of women's rights. As particularly vulnerable victims in conflict-affected situations, women experience grave consequences from breakdowns in the rule of law, in the form of a range of violations including, but not limited to, sexual and gender-based violence. In that context, Slovenia particularly welcomes the reference to the need for access to a full range of sexual and reproductive health services in the resolution adopted today (2122 (2013)).

Addressing abhorrent violations by ensuring access to justice, formal and informal, as well as full rights of redress, is essential to the process of reconciliation and lasting peace. Importantly, preventing impunity for the perpetrators of such crimes decreases the chance that they will recur in the future. Furthermore, the representation of women should be ensured in the justice sector. Eliminating violence against women and violations of their social and economic rights is a prerequisite for ensuring their full participation in recovery. Gender-sensitive legal and institutional reforms that conform with international standards are therefore needed.

The primary responsibility for the prosecution of conflict-related crimes, including violations of women's rights, belongs to States. However, while the principle of complementarity enhances national capabilities to prosecute such crimes effectively, more efforts must be made to improve criminal justice at the national level. The international legal framework for judicial assistance to countries should be strengthened. That includes extradition between States in order to support the effective prosecution of international crimes at the national level. Having recognized that legal gap, Slovenia has been working together with the Netherlands and Belgium on an initiative to consider the possibility of adopting a new international instrument for mutual legal assistance and extradition for the effective investigation and prosecution of the most serious crimes of international concern by domestic jurisdictions. We intend to continue our activities in that regard in the framework of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and invite other States to join the initiative.

The role of international criminal courts and tribunals, in particular the International Criminal Court (ICC), remains crucial to the establishment of the rule of law, especially in cases where States are unable or unwilling to pursue accountability for serious crimes. Moreover, the contribution of international criminal justice, including the ICC, to the field of gender discrimination and crimes of sexual violence has been and will continue to be momentous. As stressed by ICC Prosecutor Bensouda in a panel on international criminal justice at a strategic forum held last month in Bled, Slovenia, the ICC should also be seen as an investment in the future of women and humankind as a whole. To that end, Slovenia will continue to firmly support the International Criminal Court and

international instruments regarding individual criminal responsibility, and calls on States to accede to or ratify the Rome Statute and its amendments.

We also consider it important that the topic under discussion today be addressed by regional organizations as well, as important stakeholders in the task of ensuring peace and security.

With regard to the issue of women and girls and the justice sector, Slovenia is supporting a project aimed at improving the status of juvenile offenders, particularly girls, and strengthening the juvenile justice sector in the Afghan province of Herat. Activities envisaged for 2013 and 2014 will include the psychological rehabilitation of underage girls in prison and their reintegration into society, and awareness-raising campaigns for the general public on the situation of imprisoned minors, as well as expert training for officials in the judiciary.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Qatar.

Sheikha Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would first like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for October, and to thank the Permanent Representative of Australia for his leadership of the Council last month. I am also grateful the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of UN Women for their contributions this morning.

Thirteen years after the adoption of the historic resolution 1325 (2000), the culmination of a long process concerning women and international peace and security, the Security Council is still considering the issue. Our debates, however, reveal shortcomings in the area of the rights of women, which are being terribly violated, particularly in the Arab world. The Security Council has established several criteria for women's contributions to settling conflicts and their role in conflict and post-conflict situations. Those criteria should be implemented, in conformity with Security Council provisions, in order to achieve the goals of women's participation in conflict resolution and the reconstruction of society in the aftermath of conflict. Women should be integrated into peace negotiations and into social reconstruction. Their participation at every level is still incomplete. Their access to transitional justice systems must be facilitated, including in relation to crimes committed in conflict, especially since women and children are victims of particular types of crime and subject to discrimination, and they

face social and cultural impediments that hinder their access to justice mechanisms.

The State of Qatar understands the importance of the rule of law and of strengthening women's participation and promoting women's and girls' rights in post-conflict reconstruction and conflict resolution. Their participation should be strengthened in order to enable them to function in the political arena, particularly through a collection of initiatives enabling their comprehensive inclusion.

We cannot talk about women and peace and security without discussing the causes of their vulnerability. There are several aspects of this that should be strengthened, first and foremost through laws that protect women in conflict without discrimination. We should call on all parties concerned to take measures to protect women and girls against gender-based and sexual violence in times of conflict.

We are very concerned about the situation of women in armed conflict. Because of violations of their human rights, women shoulder the heaviest burden of conflict. In Palestine, they suffer the unjust effects of the Israeli occupation, which affects the entire population in the occupied territories, particularly in Gaza. It is women who have to deal with the difficulties resulting from Israeli practices and the blockade. The mobility of Palestinian women continues to be hindered by checkpoints, and women are subjected to practices that contravene all international and moral principles.

In Syria, women are being targeted for violence more than others. Under orders from the regime, acts of physical and psychological violence, rape, sexual violence, degradation and torture have been committed by members of the Syrian armed forces against their own families. Those are all war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Syrian regime bears full responsibility for sexual exploitation and trafficking in women; it is a regime that has killed thousands, making women into widows and children into orphans, and displacing people within the country and beyond its borders.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland.

Mr. Donaghue (Ireland): Ireland aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union.

We warmly welcome today's landmark resolution of the Security Council (resolution 2122 (2013)), a

resolution that can fairly be described as representing the high water mark so far in terms of advancing the agenda relating to women and peace and security. Although — or maybe because — the links between women and peace and security are so well established and that set of issues is now a well-developed part of the Security Council's broader work programme, there is a clear need for a more consistent and systematic application of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on the subject.

Ireland is a founding member of the ACT (accountability, coherence and transparency) group, which is pressing for the Security Council to be more accountable, more coherent and more transparent in its working methods. I assume that the enhanced focus on women and peace and security in today's resolution will mean improvements in both the quantity and quality of briefing that will be provided to the Council on those issues.

What distinguishes today's resolution from others is that it represents a pivot away from a narrow focus on women as victims and towards the more positive and liberating agenda of women's participation and women's leadership. Welcome attention is paid to the active role that women and women's groups can play in transforming conflict, insecurity and fragility. That aspect has been insufficiently highlighted. It is often overshadowed by the appalling suffering inflicted on women through, for example, sexual violence in conflict.

We should, however, recognize the profoundly positive contribution to be made to conflict resolution by the empowerment of women, allied to the treatment of women and men on equal terms. Peace is more effectively secured when women are involved. Peace initiatives that have strong participation by women tend to be more resilient than those that do not. There is no denying the moral imperative for equal treatment between women and men.

At its core, the women and peace and security agenda presents an ambitious, even a radical, challenge. It calls on us to fundamentally revise the role of women within society. It requires men to reflect on their own roles and abandon traditional mindsets.

Fortunately, as the report of the Secretary-General of 4 September (S/2013/525) acknowledges, times of transition and flux can present opportunities to strengthen women's leadership, empowerment

and rights in the process of restoring the rule of law and governance systems. As his report indicates, the participation of women in peace negotiations and donor conferences has increased over the past year. Active support for such participation, which is being provided by gender experts and women's civil society organizations, is growing, and some peace agreements have included gender-sensitive language. That is encouraging. Yet the progress being made is hard fought and uneven.

One of the most eloquent champions of women's rights in the world today is Mary Robinson, a former President of Ireland and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region. The "Framework of Hope" that she has set out for progress in that region highlights the empowerment of women as a factor of critical importance. It is based on a vision of reaching beyond traditional political leaders to energize civil society, especially women's groups. The Bujumbura declaration of 11 July 2013 was a product of that approach.

It is clear that real transformative progress will be possible only when national political leaders in conflict-affected societies, almost all of the them men at present, adopt the women and peace and security agenda as their own, and when more male voices are heard and more male champions stand up. We need to expand understanding of the enormous contribution that women can make in meeting peace and security challenges. We need to incentivize national and local male leaders so that they commit to making the concrete progress needed to realize that potential.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Ms. Čolaković (Bosnia and Herzegovina): Bosnia and Herzegovina appreciates the convening of the Security Council's semi-annual debate on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). We would like to thank the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of UN Women for their comprehensive briefings. And we extend a warm welcome and our gratitude to the representatives of civil society for their presentations today.

We believe that the Security Council, UN Women and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict will ensure that the United Nations works in a concerted and coordinated manner that will strengthen the capacity

of the United Nations system to match its commitment to gender equality with the leadership, resources and expertise needed to advance achievements on the ground. The development of additional indicators to track the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) is a significant step in broadening the women and peace and security agenda.

We also recognize the positive contribution of the Security Council to the rule of law, which is one of the key aspects of conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. We fully agree with the prevailing position that justice, including transitional justice, is a fundamental building block of sustainable peace in countries in conflict or post-conflict situations. Delivering justice and security in respect of the rule of law mitigates conflict, helps reduce the risk of relapse into further conflict and creates conditions conducive to sustainable development.

With regard to the most recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2013/525), we note with satisfaction that the attention from the international community to the issue of sexual violence in conflict has increased. We therefore call upon all stakeholders to continue their efforts to reduce and eliminate the high incidence of threats faced by women and girls in contemporary armed conflicts. However, we realize that despite the urgency with which practices in implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) have improved, there remains a deficit in opportunities for women on both the national and international levels. To exercise leadership, there remains an ongoing underrepresentation of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, protection and peacebuilding processes and efforts.

Conflicts create situations in which women and children are the ones most affected by the deterioration of living conditions and fundamental rights. Violence and the deprivation of rights often go hand in hand with conflict. Efforts to fight impunity, provide assistance to victims and hold perpetrators accountable must be intensified and better coordinated. Regrettably, sexual and gender-based violence often continue after peace deals are reached, due to insufficient investment in protection and prevention strategies, or weak security and justice institutions. We are aware of the fact that peace cannot be sustained unless women play a critical role in the process. We therefore underscore the importance of the full and effective involvement of women at all stages of peace processes and of giving

them an equal role in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, as well as in early peacebuilding.

We affirm our commitment to the rule of law as an imperative for political dialogue and cooperation. In that regard, with the aim of improving the overall situation of women victims of rape, we are making efforts to finalize the drafting of a programme for victims of rape, sexual abuse and torture in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2013-2016. At the State level, a draft transitional justice strategy has been developed to create an acceptable platform for efficient and realistic mechanisms and activities to correct the injustices and heal the traumas resulting from the armed conflict in the 1990s.

We also emphasize that Bosnia and Herzegovina fully supports the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), the provisions of which have been incorporated into the Bosnia and Herzegovina gender action plan and the action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Besides defining goals and activities, the action plan includes an introduction, an analysis of the de facto situations, and eight goals with strictly defined activities, deadlines, the definition of responsibility and partners. In this regard, through the action plan, we have shown our dedication to increasing the representation of women in decision-making positions at all levels of power in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition, we are undertaking efforts to increase the number of women in military and police forces and to ensure their inclusion in executive positions within such forces.

Increasing the number of women in peacekeeping missions and introducing gender perspectives into the training of participants in peace missions are further priorities for us. We are also making additional efforts to strengthen capacities in fighting trafficking, decreasing the danger of mined areas, improving support networks for women and girls who were victimized during the war, and increasing the knowledge and capacities of civil society. Furthermore, the gender equality agency started a project on the implementation of the resolution 1325 (2000) action plan at the local level in cooperation with the non-governmental organization Women BH and with the financial support of UN Women. This project represents an innovation not only in Bosnia and Herzegovina but also at the regional level.

While much has indeed been accomplished, a great deal remains to be done to obtain real results for women on the ground. To that end, it is of vital importance for all United Nations stakeholders, and especially the

Security Council, to continue to use appropriate tools at their disposal for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). At the same time, Member States need to take decisive action accompanied by clear goals, baselines and indicators to monitor and assess its implementation. The goals for the future have already been identified. We must now find the will and persistence to achieve them. I assure the Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina's full cooperation in this endeavour.

In conclusion, I wish to underscore that we support the Council's adoption today of resolution 2122 (2013), which we were pleased to sponsor.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Armenia.

Mr. Nazarian (Armenia): We thank the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN Women, High Commissioner Pillay and Ms. Brigitte Balipou, the representative of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, for their active involvement and valuable contributions. We also welcome the unanimous adoption of resolution 2122 (2013) by the Council earlier today, calling for higher levels of women's involvement in peacekeeping and peacebuilding. It is undeniable that the role, views and leadership of women are essential if we are to truly make and sustain peace.

As a country that hosts tens of thousands of refugees as a result of aggression and war imposed on Armenia, we attach particular importance to this debate. It is nothing new to say that the costs of conflicts are borne disproportionately by women and girls and, since it is primarily women who pay the price when peace is absent, they are important stakeholders in peacebuilding. As such, the inclusion of women in all stages of peace processes guarantees a more lasting and representative settlement.

We view this open debate as an opportunity to highlight the policies and programmes aimed at supporting national ownership and reform of justice systems that place women's rights and access to justice for women at their heart. As the recent declaration of the Peacebuilding Commission on women's economic empowerment for peacebuilding underscores, societies that invest in women see exponential dividends from such investments. We believe that justice sector reform must start with the reform of laws to ensure that women have equal rights in all spheres. It must include reforms to strengthen women's access to the justice system and to promote and protect their rights and to protect

women from the violence and insecurity that too often accompany transitions from conflict.

Transitional justice mechanisms and reparations programmes in particular have an important role in and impact on societies recovering from conflict. When linked to development efforts, such measures can have sustainable and transformative impacts for victims, and for women victims in particular. The transitions that follow conflicts present important opportunities not only to address the injustices faced by women during times of conflict, but also to transform underlying inequalities and gender-based discrimination.

Having had the privilege to chair previous sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women, I would like to emphasize that the United Nations has made significant gains in securing commitments to gender equality and women's post-conflict empowerment. Specifically, the Secretary-General's seven-point action plan on gender-responsive peacebuilding is a well-conceived and realistic set of targets for the United Nations system.

Armenia also commends the efforts of the newly appointed United Nations Special Envoy Mary Robinson and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Margaret Vogt and others in establishing the gender-responsive mediation practices, in particular over the past year, which saw the appointment of gender advisers, early and regular consultations with women, the establishment of women's advisory bodies, and the implementation of the commitment to secure women a place at peace talks.

Recently, the United Nations has developed an increasingly sophisticated network for specialized gender experts for deployment to mediation, transitional justice and prosecutorial processes. Member States should avail themselves of these important resources. For example, the regular deployments of UN Women to commissions of enquiry over the past three years have produced a steady improvement in the extent to which human rights abuses against women are reported and acted upon. This is a direct result of the quality of expertise and the regular deployment of experts to those bodies.

To further promote the application of the women, peace and security agenda, Armenia encourages the Council to continue its efforts and to ensure the consistent and regular application of the agenda across all areas. The Security Council should recognize its own

role to create opportunities for women to participate and exercise leadership.

We also believe that without women's civil society strength and women's leadership, there will be no effective prevention. Women's experiences of violence during and after conflict are much broader, and effective protection from all forms of violence and violations will be possible only through their empowerment and participation.

In conclusion, let me express our readiness to work closely with the Council, the United Nations bodies and the non-governmental organizations concerned to expand and implement the women, peace and security agenda by improving the situation of women around the world, including women affected by armed conflicts.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Krishnasswamy (India): I would like to thank you, Sir, for organizing this open debate on the agenda item "Women and peace and security". I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN Women and the other briefers for their detailed remarks.

The resolution of armed conflict situations requires a holistic and sustainable approach. The participation of women in peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction efforts is necessary to lay the foundation for lasting peace. In that regard, resolution 1325 (2000) and successive Council resolutions on this issue have provided a framework for effective institutional arrangements. As the Secretary-General's report (S/2013/525) points out, significant progress has been made but much more needs to be done.

India is one of the leading contributors to United Nations peacekeeping operations. Based on our broad experience, we believe that the Security Council must make resources available to implement the greater scope of peacekeeping mandates, including by providing more women protection advisers. India was the first State to successfully deploy an all-women police force as part of United Nations peacekeeping operations. We hope that more Member States will contribute a greater number of women military and police personnel to United Nations peacekeeping operations.

We have taken note of the indicators proposed in the Secretary-General's report. Indicators can be useful in assessing situations as countries move from

situations of armed conflict to conflict resolution and from peacebuilding to post-conflict reconstruction. We must recognize, however, the difficulties in obtaining credible and verifiable information from armed conflict zones. It would be useful to have further discussions before adopting such indicators to ensure their relevance and efficiency.

We firmly believe that capacity-building should be a main focus of United Nations efforts. In order to ensure sustainable peace and stability, State institutions, including in the area of security, the rule of law and justice, need to be strengthened. National Governments have the primary responsibility for prosecuting and deterring violence against women, including sexual violence. As affected States re-embark on the process of rebuilding their countries, including by consolidating democratic ideals and practices and making effective improvements to socioeconomic conditions, the United Nations and the international community must step up and sustain their support to them.

We would urge caution in going beyond the mandates given by the Security Council in the reports submitted to it. It will be useful to remind ourselves that the women, peace and security agenda evolved from the imperative to address the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women, including the abhorrent practice of sexual violence against women as an instrument of war.

The general recommendation in the report of the Secretary-General to incorporate into that agenda other thematic areas — such as countering terrorism, transnational organized crime, natural resources and others — not only has implications for the division of work and responsibilities between the Security Council and the General Assembly, but also has the potential to dilute significant United Nations work being done in the area of women, peace and security and in other thematic areas.

In conclusion, let me reaffirm India's commitment to contributing positively to the consolidation of United Nations efforts in the area of women, peace and security.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Çevik (Turkey): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on Azerbaijan's accession to the presidency of the Security Council this month. Turkey welcomes the adoption of resolution 2122 (2013) on women, peace and security by the Council earlier today.

I would like to commend the United Nations team of experts on the rule of law and sexual violence for their valuable work.

Sexual violence in armed conflicts, from the early stages of conflict to its aftermath, is one of the gravest human rights abuses committed against women and girls. In situations of conflict, sexual violence is often used as a weapon of war — a strategy to deprive human beings of their most basic rights, their safety, security and dignity. Sexual violence can exacerbate and prolong armed conflicts and may impede the restoration of international peace and security, as posited in many relevant Security Council resolutions to date.

We welcome the fact that the international community has been paying increasing attention to the crime of sexual violence in conflict. The Security Council has hosted many debates on the issue and addressed the crucial issues of transitional justice, capacity-building and the rule of law. International and regional organizations are devoting more attention to this topic.

The draft decision of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Ministerial Council on the OSCE action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), which Turkey is sponsoring together with Austria, Finland and Kazakhstan, is a recent example of this. Turkey was also glad to join in the launch of the Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict at the ministerial level on the sidelines of the General Assembly's general debate.

However, despite all those efforts, sexual violence in armed conflict remains one of the most neglected crimes. Sadly, the situation in Syria, just across our border, is a vivid example of that. Turkey echoes the condemnation voiced very recently by the Council of the acts of sexual and gender-based violence and abuse taking place in Syria. However, as we most regretfully know, a culture of impunity tends to prevail in conflicts and in post-conflict situations. Violators are not adequately punished, if punished at all. Victims lack sufficient access to justice, physical and psychological treatment or support. Those suffering sexual violence often find it difficult to speak out, especially in situations of prolonged conflict.

Today's debate serves to highlight the strong will power of the international community to combat sexual violence in conflict. Now is time to focus on the ways and means to do so by sharing best practices and talking

about specific measures that can be adopted. In that sense, we find the focus of today's debate on the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict situations extremely useful, and would like to thank the Azerbaijani presidency for convening it.

The elimination of the root causes of conflict is the best way to prevent sexual violence and to address impunity. Combating impunity is possible only by building transparent, effective, non-discriminatory and functioning institutions and justice systems. It is vital to ensure that women and girls have access to judicial institutions and proper representation. We in the international community should pursue our efforts to support gender-sensitive judicial reform and capacity-building. It is important to provide gender expertise in peacekeeping operations and peacebuilding efforts, as well as to ensure the participation of women in those efforts.

The health sector is another area that should be strengthened to deal with sexual violence in armed conflict. Rehabilitation to address the mental, physical and psychological trauma suffered by women and girls should not be delayed, so that they can move on and rebuild their lives.

Combating sexual violence is an issue that should also be dealt with on a broader societal scale. As individuals and groups from all sectors of society raise their voices higher against this atrocity, we will all be able to stand stronger in our struggle. That requires a need for stronger interaction with civil society, grass-roots institutions and women's organizations, as well as the private sector and the media.

A significant number of peace agreements fail within the first five years of signature. Among the various reasons for this outcome, the lack of inclusiveness is evident. The full, equal and meaningful participation of women at the decision-making level is crucial for assuring that the political, social and economic outcomes of peace talks and mediation efforts address their specific issues and concerns.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Security Council, member States and all relevant United Nations bodies, in addition to all relevant stakeholders at the local, national, regional and global levels that have made the issue of sexual violence against women in conflict a priority.

Our special thanks goes to the Special Representative Bangura, whose exemplary dedication

in fighting against sexual violence in conflicts, including combating impunity, we continue to admire and strongly support.

The President: I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations.

Mr. António: On behalf of the African Union Commission, I wish to first congratulate you, Mr. President, on your country's accession to the Presidency of the Security Council for October, and to express the African Union's (AU) gratitude for the opportunity to take part in this open debate on a theme of critical importance to Africa, a continent plagued by pockets of conflicts, including a number of post-conflict situations.

Experience has shown that addressing issues of rule of law and transitional justice in those conflict and post-conflict situations has become an urgent and indispensable prerequisite for achieving sustainable peace and stability. Equally important is the need to address the gender dimension and to find ways to tackle issues of rule of law and transitional justice from a gender perspective. In that regard, I wish to join previous speakers in their recommendation of the importance and the content of the resolution 2122 (2013) adopted by the Council today. I wish to thank the Secretary-General for the report (S/2013/525) before us today. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women; Ms. Navanethem Pillay, United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights; and Ms. Brigitte Balipou of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.

The African Union reaffirms its support for the advancement of holistic justice for women in situations of conflict, post-conflict, political violence and gross human rights violations. African Union documents, such as the Constitutive Act, enshrine a commitment to the advancement of gender equality and the protection of women from gender-based and other forms of violence. Furthermore, the prevention, protection and promotion of women's rights have been aptly addressed in the 2003 Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women, the 2004 Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, and the 2009 African Union Gender Policy, which contains provisions on mainstreaming gender equality.

The African Union takes cognizance of its member States' international commitments in respect

of women's rights, most notably Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, and thus acknowledges and supports the efforts of those African States and regional bodies that have taken concrete steps towards implementing those resolutions. Some notable examples are Liberia, which has developed an action plan and indicators for implementing resolution 1325 (2000), and the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region, which is in the process of developing a regional protocol on sexual and gender-based violence.

Despite those notable advances, much more remains to be done on the continent to ensure that justice and accountability for violations, particularly against women, are brought to bear and that redress for the victims is provided in order to ensure that crimes perpetrated against them during conflicts are never repeated.

While transitional justice mechanisms and processes are entrenched at the national level, the African Union and subregional bodies continue to play a pivotal role in influencing the adoption and implementation of transitional justice processes on the continent. Indeed, the AU organs have become increasingly involved in negotiating transition in States emerging from conflict and in fashioning approaches to address past human rights atrocities.

To that end, the African Union Commission, with the technical support of civil society partners, are leading in the development of the African Union Transitional Justice Policy Framework. The Transitional Justice Policy Framework emerged from the report by the AU Panel of the Wise entitled *Non-impunity, truth, peace, justice and reconciliation in Africa: opportunities and constraints*. The report interrogates the polarized peace-versus-justice debate that seems to be the focus of international justice discourse in Africa, while seeking to offer a middle ground and an African regional perspective that takes into account the complexities and nuances within the African context, including continental approaches to non-impunity, truth, peace, justice and reconciliation in Africa. The report of the Panel of Wise also concludes that the AU has a sound track record of pronouncements and engagement related to addressing impunity in Africa, in spite of some challenges of coherence and coordination in implementation.

The proposed policy framework is intended to serve as a guide that is adaptable and applicable to individual countries or subregions emerging from

conflicts and/or repressive rule to assist in the pursuit of accountability, sustainable peace, justice and reconciliation. The African Union Commission has therefore held several consultative meetings, with the technical support of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, South Africa and other stakeholders. The consultation in Lomé, for example, focused specifically on mainstreaming gender into the policy framework and was undertaken with the support of UN Women. During the meeting, specific language on women and gender considerations for the policy framework was developed.

The African Union looks forward to the adoption of the policy framework and remains convinced that this document will make a significant contribution to

“comprehensively promote justice and accountability in ways that further the equal rights of women and the right to equal participation in decision-making” (S/2013/587, annex, p. 2).

Let me conclude by reiterating the African Union's appreciation for this opportunity to contribute to this open debate.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. Thoms (Germany): I would like to thank Azerbaijan, which holds the presidency of the Security Council this month, for organizing today's open debate. My thanks also go to the Secretary-General, Ms. Pillay and Ms. Balipou for their very insightful briefings. I congratulate Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka on her appointment, and I thank her for her first briefing to the Council.

Germany aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union.

Germany welcomes the detailed analysis of the Secretary-General's report (S/2013/525), which identifies many achievements in the women, peace and security agenda in the past years. We also share the concerns addressed in the report, such as an increasing focus of the international community on women as victims of armed conflict, instead of on their role as actors in peace processes and agents of change in all spheres of society.

We therefore welcome the fact that resolution 2122 (2013), adopted earlier today, emphasizes the positive role that women can and will play if they are fully included in all aspects of conflict-prevention and peacebuilding. The potential of women in building a

sustainable peace cannot be underestimated, nor can the imminent problems for post-conflict societies if those who bear the burden of reconstruction on the ground are not fully included in decision-making.

We should ask ourselves what more Member States and the United Nations itself could do to ensure an implementation of the full agenda as laid out in resolution 1325 (2000).

Transitional justice and the rule of law are crucial elements for the prevention and solution of conflicts. We therefore very much welcome the theme of today's debate, which emphasizes the importance of gender-sensitive systems. Women need to be part of all truth and justice commissions, and women's concerns need to be addressed in those fact-finding bodies. At the same time, perpetrators of violence, crimes and human rights violations need to be held accountable for their actions. That is the most promising way to promote lasting reconciliation. Germany has supported several projects in Rwanda and Burundi to train female police officers on the prevention and investigation of sexual and gender-based violence. In Cambodia and Uganda, Germany has supported the access of women to the justice system through legal and psychosocial counseling.

Secondly, 43 countries have adopted national action plans on women, peace and security. That is an important first step. However, any progress on the ground depends on the political will to abide by those commitments. The German national action plan, which was adopted last year, covers the four focus areas set out in resolution 1325 (2000) and additionally includes the areas of preparation for peace missions and the prosecution of crimes. The implementation of the action plan is monitored by an inter-ministerial working group in collaboration with representatives from civil society. German diplomatic missions abroad have been instructed to support the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), for example by advocating for the inclusion of women in local crisis prevention, conflict management and post-conflict peacebuilding or by supporting gender-sensitive projects on the ground.

Thirdly, the Security Council, for its part, should start to systematically mainstream women's issues in all relevant spheres of its work. Whenever the Security Council mandates or renews United Nations missions or requests briefings from envoys and special representatives, women, peace and security should

be a central part of all considerations. We welcome that the resolution adopted today contains provisions addressing that.

Fourthly, women protection advisers play a central role in monitoring and reporting to the Council, training mission personnel on preventing and responding to sexual violence, and engaging in dialogue with conflict parties. Although we welcome the deployment of women protection advisers to the missions in South Sudan and Mali, the remaining women's protection advisers in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, which were already mandated by the Council, should also be deployed as rapidly as possible and, where necessary, be included in mission budgets.

Germany will continue its support to UN Women and all other relevant actors, including civil society organizations, to ensure that women's roles and their important contribution in conflict resolution and peacebuilding are adequately taken into account.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Grant (Canada): I would like to thank the delegation of Azerbaijan for convening today's important debate. Canada welcomes the opportunity to participate in the Security Council's open debate on the role of women in international peace and security. Canada also welcomes the participation for the first time of Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka in her important new role as Executive Director of UN Women.

(spoke in French)

Canada firmly believes that the participation of women in all decision-making processes, particularly those related to the prevention and resolution of conflict and the transition to democracy, is a necessary precondition to securing sustainable peace, as is their access to justice and their inclusion in the economic and social lives of their countries and communities. As the Honourable John Baird, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada, said in his address to the General Assembly last month:

“We must invest in opportunities for women and young girls. We must ensure that women participate fully in all parts of our society and in all the countries of the United Nations. That will help us

build a stronger, more secure, more prosperous and more peaceful world” (A/68/PV.21, p. 2)

(spoke in English)

Particularly egregious is the practice of child, early and forced marriage, which puts the very lives of young girls at risk. That practice denies girls’ rights, disrupts their access to education, severely jeopardizes their health and limits the development of their community as a whole. Conflict situations exacerbate that practice among displaced and refugee populations, such as we know to be the case in Syria. Canada encourages the Security Council to continue to provide political leadership and to take action to ensure the meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention, mediation and resolution processes.

Much work is being done by Member States, including by Canada, to advance the empowerment of women and girls. For example, Canada played an active role in the development of resolution 24/23, addressing child, early and forced marriage at the twenty-fourth session of the Human Rights Council, and co-hosted a side event at the General Assembly in September. Canada is leading the first stand-alone draft resolution on the important issue at the General Assembly later this year.

Prime Minister Harper and other leaders in New York recently reviewed progress on the 2010 Muskoka summit of the Group of Eight and the United Nations initiatives to improve to improve global maternal and child health. Under Canada’s leadership, the Human Rights Council adopted the robust resolution 23/25 this past June on the elimination of violence against women. The resolution lays out actions to be undertaken by Member States and the United Nations to prevent sexual violence, including in conflict-related situations, and calls on States to ensure that women are active participants in decision-making processes.

Canada joined 112 other Member States in September in launching the Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict. Endorsements of the Declaration have now grown to an impressive 134 States. Canada and others are working with partners in the field to assist in the empowerment of women in conflict-related situations, to prevent and respond to sexual violence and to hold perpetrators to account. For example, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Canada assists survivors of sexual violence in bringing those responsible to justice.

Canada looks forward to working with others to strengthen our collective efforts to empower women and girls as active decision-makers. We look forward to the Security Council high-level review in 2015 to assess what progress we are making in enhancing the role of women in international peace and security.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Ja’afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (spoke in Arabic): At the outset, allow me to express my gratitude to Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka for introducing the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2013/525), which we read and followed attentively. We wish Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka success in her new post as Executive Director of UN Women.

I also would like to congratulate Azerbaijan on assuming the presidency of the Council for the month of October. We wish its delegation every success.

My country, Syria, has long been among the fairest countries in the Arab and Islamic world in securing all the necessary provisions and environment for enabling women to enjoy equal rights with men, free from the ignorance, blindness and social and intellectual shortcomings that prevail elsewhere. A woman serves as a Vice-President in my country at a time when other countries ban women from driving cars.

Regrettably, the current crisis in Syria has evoked a strange and inhumane phenomenon that runs contrary to the values of the Syrian people and all the legal instruments that Syria has signed and acceded to in its efforts to support the rights of women and children. The current situation runs contrary to the principles of the Islamic religion and Arab chivalry. That change came about with the arrival of mercenaries and *takfiris* who are openly recruited from all parts of the world to impose unjust *Wahhabi* ideas that degrade women and turn them into concubines.

All this has taken place with arming, support and financing from Qatar, Saudi Arabia and France. Those States have spent countless sums on influential media and invidious sectarian incitement to halt Syria’s socioeconomic, security and judicial development. They work to undermine its independence, its national decision-making and its rejection of those who exploit religion. Most prominent among the fatwas that affect women is the fatwa of sex as struggle, which allows fornication under the guise of jihad. Published by some irresponsible minds and financed by the Gulf regimes,

the fatwa encourages Islamic women to commit adultery in the name of religion. My delegation has sent a detailed letter on that diseased fatwa and the mentalities that promote it to the Secretary-General (A/68/487, annex). We urge all those present and those who are concerned for human rights to study it.

The Syrian authorities are eager to bring to justice all those who commit such crimes, and we are documenting those grave violations. Syria arrests the perpetrators and subjects them to accountability under Syrian national law. On the other hand, we must work together to remove the root causes of crimes against women and girls and to combat impunity by immediately putting pressure on the regimes that seek to promote terrorism in Syria to halt their financial support and the provision of arms, as well as to end the media coverage they give to terrorist groups that violate women's basic rights. We call for the accountability of the regimes of both Qatar and Saudi Arabia for their support for and the media coverage they provide to the crazy, irresponsible minds that encourage the rape of innocent Syrian women.

We cannot but express our deep concern about the deterioration of the situation in the refugee camps of our Syrian brothers, where Syrian women and girls face insecurity and are being trafficked, raped and subjected to forced marriage, all of which has been documented in international reports. Although slow and delayed, Western media reports, most recently that of Germany's RTL television, have documented the tragedy of Syrian refugees younger than 14 who have ended up in slave markets, where petrodollars turn them into concubines in the name of religion. Those who exploit the tragedy of the Syrian refugees do so deliberately in order to create a ghetto of Syrian victims and exploit them in a manner that degrades Syria and its people.

Syria has notified all the specialized organs of the United Nations system, especially the Security Council and the General Assembly, through a number of official communications and reports. Regrettably, the United Nations remains less engaged than expected, despite the important role it could play to achieve justice, to hold perpetrators accountable and to put an end to such an inhuman and immoral phenomenon.

We hope that Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngucuka will actively seek to put an end to that phenomenon and that she will pressure those foreign Powers that seek to intensify the bloodshed in Syria to cease their interference in my country and their violations

of international law and the United Nations charter. We also look forward to her active participation in protecting the rights of Syrian women under the Israeli occupation in the occupied Golan Heights and in improving their living conditions.

The permanent representative of France spoke about my country in a manner that lacks the diplomatic finesse expected from the representative of a permanent member of the Council. It would seem that the French regime — through its extremism and its continued disregard for its responsibilities as a permanent member of the Council, along with its bloody interference in the affairs of several member States, including my country — has lost the legitimacy to maintain its status in the Council. By encouraging, arming and protecting regimes that refuse to attend the Geneva conference and that continue to kill Syrians from Paris and elsewhere, the French regime, through its irresponsible and childish interference, has become a threat to international peace and security and is no longer a member to be trusted with maintaining international peace and security.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the Marshall Islands.

Ms. Kabua (Marshall Islands): This is the first time I have spoken on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum States in this Chamber. On their behalf, I want to first offer our sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on assuming the presidency, as well as to thank you and the members around the table for convening and holding this important meeting.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum States represented at the United Nations: Australia, the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and my small atoll nation, the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The Pacific Islands Forum members stand on the leading edge of evolving security issues — situations in which women play a critical role to play in working towards stability. At the same time, despite some very positive overall gains, progress in the region towards gender equality is slow, with only mixed results since the Forum issued the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration last year.

Despite some positive steps, including the number of women serving in important and very senior Government positions, women's parliamentary representation in the Pacific is the lowest of any region in the world. The region

has recently witnessed and continues to be affected by armed conflict, civil unrest and local-level conflicts over resources, as well as increasingly violent crimes and political crises. Women and children constitute a disproportionate number of those affected. Women face a variety of security challenges in the Pacific, including water and food security, loss of land, violence, and economic empowerment. A range of potential drivers is apparent, ranging from economic inequalities, land, governance, alienated youth, urban migration and inter-group tensions, with results that inevitably disrupt the lives of women and their families and increase the risk of sexual and gender-based violence.

More recently, the Forum leaders have recognized climate change as the greatest threat to the livelihood and well-being of the peoples of the Pacific. Climate impacts can lead to forced displacement, with clear implications for women, and raise security questions that have no simple solutions or easy precedents. In times of natural disaster, which are increasing in the Pacific region, women and girls are more prone to sexual violence in the context of displacement due to the loss of their homes or traditional protection mechanisms though their family or clan structures.

In many violent situations in the Pacific region, women have demonstrated their capacity to contribute to solutions as mediators, providers of safe havens, or in working to improve local communities. Women and young women have also played an important part in conflict prevention, management and recovery in the region. Women have generally been first to actively work across ethnic divides, despite considerable risks.

The Pacific region is working to achieve better participation in formal conflict prevention and management and post-conflict recovery efforts, as well as oversight and accountability mechanisms for the security sector. The region recognizes the value of having women at the negotiating table in leadership roles and the need to provide sufficient recognition and resources to ensure that they are able to do their work.

In December 2010, as part of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), a Pacific regional working group on women, peace and security was established. In June 2011, the Forum Regional Security Committee gave the group the policy task of developing a regional action plan, which has been formally recognized by our leaders. Earlier this year, a

regional reference group was established to oversee the regional action plan's implementation.

The action plan provides a detailed regional framework to enhance women's and young women's leadership in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, mainstream gender and ensure the protection of women's and girls' human rights in humanitarian crises and in transitioning from conflict, disaster or post-conflict situations — all with a mechanism to accelerate the implementation of existing international, regional and national commitments on women, peace and security.

The action plan assists in addressing gaps and advancing solutions. A range of further means may be considered, including the United Nations regional gender architecture, United Nations in-country assistance — which is highly lacking — and resource allocation decisions. The Biketawa Declaration sets out the framework for regional conflict prevention and management of political crises. Our regional action plan is a key platform to better integrate gender into that security framework and thus represents a specific response to relevant Security Council resolutions.

In conclusion, the countries of the Pacific Islands Forum are committed to work with like-minded countries to ensure that our necessary local efforts and our contributions to the United Nations will always encourage and support resolution 1325 (2000).

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the Czech Republic.

Mrs. Hrdá (Czech Republic): Let me thank the Azerbaijan presidency of the Security Council for scheduling this important debate and the Secretary-General for his report (S/2013/525), as well as today's briefers for their updates.

We highly welcome the adoption today of resolution 2122 (2013) and align ourselves with the statement made earlier by the observer of the European Union.

The protection of human rights, including the rights of women, belongs to our foreign policy priorities. The Czech Republic takes an active stance in promoting the strengthening and effective realization of the rights of women and in preventing gender-based violence in various multilateral forums. We also raise the issue within the universal periodic review mechanism.

The Czech Republic fully endorses the relevant rules of international criminal law regarding “rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, enforced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity”. The Rome Statute qualifies these as a war crime, both in the context of international and non-international armed conflicts and — when it forms part of a widespread attack against a civilian population — as a crime against humanity.

It is our conviction that the international community should put particular focus on preventive efforts, namely in the case of those violations of international law that belong to the core crimes included under the concept of the responsibility to protect. The rich jurisprudence of the international criminal tribunals has recognized rape as a powerful tool of war used to intimidate, persecute and terrorize the enemy. The Czech Republic believes that the effective prosecution of the perpetrators of such crimes is an important element of lasting peace and justice.

As part of its human rights promotion activities, the Czech Republic takes into consideration gender aspects and the protection of women in post-conflict situations, as well as in countries in transition, including by supporting projects of Czech and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Since 2005, the transition promotion programme of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs — a unique financial instrument aimed at democracy assistance — has supported projects of civil society organizations that are working to strengthen democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights by empowering civil society, including women’s organizations, throughout the world.

For example, a recent project has been implemented by the Czech NGO ADRA — which deals with the capacity-building of civil society in the protection of women’s rights — in Georgia. Its aim is to achieve the highest standard of protection in the context of providing services to victims of domestic violence. Through the project, the Czech Republic has shared its experience with its Georgian partners, particularly concerning the legal counseling to victims of domestic violence and, importantly, in the broader context of assistance.

The Czech Republic also provides long-term support to women victims of sexual violence in the eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The support — amounting to over 32 million

Czech koruny today — ranges from providing first aid and comprehensive medical, psychological and legal assistance, to providing shelter and livelihood support for women and their unwanted children who have been excluded from local society, as well as organizing awareness campaigns for medical personnel and the public in the affected areas. Awareness-raising aimed at the public sphere, as well as the judiciary, is a key prerequisite in ensuring effective protection of the rights of women in countries in transition or post-conflict situations.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Govender (South Africa): My delegation expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report (S/2013/525). We thank the Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka; the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navanethem Pillay; and the representative of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, Ms. Brigitte Balipou, respectively, for their statements. My delegation also wishes to thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting today.

The report of the Secretary-General reflects the measurable advances that have been made across all areas of the women, peace and security agenda since the adoption of landmark resolution 1325 (2000) 13 years ago, and its implementation. It has provided for the establishment of an enabling framework placing women at the centre of processes impacting on their safety, security and development, in equal partnership with men. The report highlights the remaining significant protection, prevention and participation deficits in the areas of peacekeeping, peacebuilding and post-conflict economic recovery, impeding the full and effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

However, we must recognize the limitation that comes with that approach and the underlying expectations of the mechanisms to deliver on these areas in a sustainable manner. Such an approach, we must appreciate, brings with it short-term relief and impact and therefore cannot be considered a panacea for the full and effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The host State has to eventually play its rightful role in addressing the specific challenges in the long term.

My delegation welcomes the recommendations elaborated in the report of the Secretary-General on

how to close these implementation gaps. A renewed commitment is also required of Member States and the United Nations system to effectively implement the seven-point action plan.

We welcome the Security Council's adoption of resolution 2122 (2013), especially as it seeks to place women at the table for negotiations and peace talks. Women generally represent a majority constituency in societies, and as such should not be excluded from the negotiation table in conflict-affected States. South Africa is supportive of such an approach, especially as our own history has taught us about the powerful role that women play in bringing about peace and stability. We also believe that women should play a role beyond that, one that includes securing a larger stake in political leadership and policy- and decision-making positions, both in the public and private sectors.

The report of the Secretary-General correctly points out the need for increased participation by women in United Nations peacekeeping missions. South Africa has played its role in that regard by contributing through its police deployment, a contingent made up of 16 per cent women, which, according to the Secretary-General's report, is the highest percentage of female deployment by a troop-contributing country.

While the host State needs to demonstrate the political will to fully implement resolution 1325 (2000), greater commitment and support by the United Nations and the international community is needed to capacitate countries in conflict and post-conflict situations. In the South African context, where women have been historically disadvantaged by apartheid and the patriarchal nature of South African society, men traditionally dominated the political and economic space. During the past 18 years of democratic rule, the Government instituted specific measures that included electoral and candidature quotas for women at the national, provincial and local levels of Government, including at the executive and legislature branches of Government.

Our history has not only demonstrated, but has taught us, about the powerful role that women play in a post-conflict setting. South African women represent a powerful constituency and have been at the forefront of driving reform and developing and advancing responsive policies and legislation across all sectors of Government and the public and private sectors. At the level of women's participation in political

decision-making, today South Africa has 44 per cent women representation in Parliament and 43 per cent women at the level of Cabinet ministers. At the provincial level, five of the nine provincial premiers are women.

We recognize the importance of women having unfettered access to justice in conflict and post-conflict settings, including through gender-responsive legal, judicial and security-sector reform and other mechanisms. Access to justice for women in conflict and post-conflict settings through conscious policies of inclusion is essential to building fair, equitable and just societies. Women suffer disproportionately from poverty, and the risks they face are heightened in armed conflict and post-conflict settings.

Women's legal status and rights must be ensured in post-conflict situations. Strengthening the legal framework to address issues of discrimination against women with respect to land ownership, access to economic opportunity and employment, education and health care is an essential component of gender-responsive peacebuilding architecture.

Justice for victims of serious violations of international law is an essential requirement for sustainable peace, security and the development for States emerging from armed conflict, where the rule of law must enjoy primacy and be unscrupulously upheld. My delegation therefore supports efforts by the Council to continue fighting impunity for the most serious crimes committed against women and girls, through the work of the International Criminal Court, ad hoc and mixed tribunals, as well as specialized chambers in national tribunals.

My delegation appreciates the commendable work undertaken by the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict. However, we remain of the view that significantly more needs to be done by Member States, the United Nations system and the relevant entities in supporting national efforts by States to increase women's participation, leadership and expertise in the rule of law and transitional justice, as well as in advancing accountability measures for serious offences committed against women and children.

In conclusion, my delegation welcomes resolution 2122 (2013) and its reinforcement of preceding resolutions. We also welcome the announcement by the Secretary-General of a high-level review in 2015

to assess progress at the global, regional and national levels on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Umemoto (Japan): First of all, I would like to thank the Secretary-General, the new Executive Director of UN Women and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for their informative briefings. I also thank and welcome the participation of the representative from civil society. I would also like to welcome today's adoption of resolution 2122 (2013).

As Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe announced in his statement to the General Assembly last month (see A/68/PV.12), Japan is actively committed to engaging in the international agenda concerning women and to making every effort to create a society where women shine. We are planning to extend official development aid amounting to more than \$3 billion over the next three years in the areas of women's social advancement and capacity-building; women's health care; and women's participation and protection in the field of peace and security.

In order to protect women's rights and ensure women's participation in conflict-affected situations, security for those who serve to uphold the rule of law, such as police officers and judges, is a basic necessity. In that regard, gender-responsive transitional justice measures and justice system reforms need to be addressed. In particular, women's access to the justice system must be strengthened so as to protect their rights, as well as to protect them from the violence that too often accompanies the transition from conflict. To that end, Japan has, for example, supported various efforts to assist victims of sexual violence in refugee camps located in such countries as the Sudan, Somalia and Iraq, by providing legal advice, representation and awareness-raising campaigns, as well as establishing relief and recovery systems that include mental health care.

In order for Member States and the United Nations system to be able to take effective actions, it is important that we highlight good practices and share lessons learned. Today's open debate is an excellent opportunity to that end.

In order to realize a more peaceful society, Japan intends to make its utmost effort to ensure women's participation and incorporate a women's perspective into each and every phase of conflict prevention,

conflict settlement and peacebuilding, including election processes. Such women's participation will also contribute to better protecting the rights and the physical well-being of women, including female human rights defenders, female political leaders and female war correspondents, who are particularly exposed to danger in times of conflict.

From that perspective, Japan has been earnestly developing a national action plan based on resolution 1325 (2000). In that action plan, Japan, in collaboration with UN Women and civil society, will articulate measures to be taken for the sake of promoting women's participation in such efforts as conflict prevention, the protection of victims of sexual violence, and peacebuilding and restoration processes.

In July, in collaboration with the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, our Mission held a special event entitled "Resolution 1325 (2000) in action: lessons learned and reflections". The summary of the discussion held at that event has been included in the Secretary-General's report. We hope that it will further serve as an input to the global review of resolution 1325 (2000) in November.

Increasing investment in the capacity and resources of women's civil society organizations that are active in conflict-affected countries should also be considered. In that regard, Japan was one of the initial supporters, and continues to be one of the main contributors, of the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women, which directly supports such civil society organizations. We will continue our contribution to the Fund. Furthermore, Japan co-hosted a special event in July with the Fund to expand its donor base, including private-sector donors.

In addition, I would like to share with the Council our experience of making use of an area of Japan's official development assistance schemes that we call grant assistance for grassroots projects, which we believe is a positive example of a good practice that could be emulated elsewhere. Grant assistance for grassroots projects is intended to provide rapid and direct support to both international and local non-governmental organizations active on the ground. Through such assistance, we have been implementing numerous projects on this basis all over the world, including in Afghanistan and several African countries, providing useful synergies for both donor and recipient countries.

In conclusion, Japan will continue to make every possible efforts to contribute to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) as we approach the fifteenth anniversary of its adoption, and will actively participate in its high-level review in 2015.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Solomon Islands.

Mr. Beck (Solomon Islands): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate on women, the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict-affected situations. I would also like to welcome the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2013/525).

At the outset, the Solomon Islands aligns its statement with that delivered by the representative of the Marshall Islands on behalf of the members of the Pacific Islands Forum. I would also like to make some additional comments in my national capacity.

Resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009) and 1960 (2010) provide a framework for improving the situation of women in conflict, as articulated in the President's concept note (S/2013/587, annex). The impact of conflict on society as a whole exposes the vulnerability and dignity of women and children even more.

The Solomon Islands went through a conflict situation beginning late in 1998. I would like to use this occasion to speak on some lessons learned from it. We saw both the vulnerability of women and their strength. During the conflict, women organized themselves into various groups, identifying themselves as women for peace, acting as mediators, providing bridges and bringing communities together. Cultural peace and reconciliation traditions continued to be used to unify and heal communities even after the conflict. The role of women is recognized by the Solomon Islands, which appointed women to be two of its five truth and reconciliation commissioners. They have since presented their reports to the Government.

At one of the open debates in the Council during the previous session, we discussed cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations (see S/PV.7015). Looking at the experience of the Solomon Islands relating to women and peace and security, we cannot help making the connection to the contribution of regional organizations to the maintenance of international peace and security, given its role in our national situation. At the request

of the Government of the Solomon Islands, under the auspices of the Pacific Islands Forum in 2003, a Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands, led by Australia and supported by New Zealand and all the Pacific small island developing States, was deployed to my country to restore the rule of law, rebuild core public institutions and allow the country to recover from the conflict. The Regional Assistance Mission, made up of military, police and civilian components, restored the rule of law and carried out peacekeeping, peacebuilding and peacemaking activities.

To date, our economy is growing, State institutions are functioning and the country is open for business. Accordingly, the Regional Assistance Mission, in partnership with the Government, has now undergone a transitional phase. It is now a police-only mission; its success belongs to the people of the Solomon Islands as well as the Pacific. The Regional Mission was flexible in adapting to a changing environment, allowing the partnership to conduct the transition at a pace suited to the conditions in the receiving State, the Solomon Islands. It is an example of South-South cooperation, and triangular cooperation with the Solomon Islands' regional neighbours. While each example of transitional justice is unique and has its own national context, my delegation feels that the Pacific has found a model that addresses peacekeeping, peacebuilding and peacemaking, all rolled into a single mission. As a nation, we still have much to do in serving our people, scattered over our country of 900 islands.

The Solomon Islands is one of the few countries that have a ministry of peace and reconciliation. We also have a ministry of women's, youth's and children's affairs. We have come a long way in implementing elements of the five resolutions on women and peace and security. In 2009 we reviewed our national policy on gender equity and women's development. In partnership with Australia, we have also undertaken a Solomon Islands family health and safety study, which has found that two out of three women in our country suffer from gender-based violence. A recent commission on the status of women found that 7 out of 10 women around the world suffer from gender-based violence. In response to that, we adopted a national policy on eliminating violence against women. Our national police have responded, adopting a no-drop policy of victim protection that deals with both victims and perpetrators. Our public solicitor's office has established a family protection unit that provides specialized services to women and

children. Also, working with other non-State actors and faith-based institutions, we continue to provide shelter, counselling and support for victims of gender-based violence.

We have come a long way, but we are determined to keep going, focusing on the economic empowerment of women and greater investment in rural areas, which is where the bulk of populations are located in least developed countries (LDCs) as well as in Pacific nations. These are conflict-resolution measures as well as conflict-prevention measures. It is for that reason that putting peace at the heart of sustainable development, with peace — and state—building goals, is something that we, as a member of the Group of 77 and China, would like to see on the post-2015 development agenda. We would like to see more investment in high-value, game-changing investments that can transform economies within the Pacific and in LDCs to allow us to build resilience against warm, cold and hot security threats.

For us, as a small island developing State, climate change remains a threat multiplier, with impacts on food and water security. Threats of sea-level rise continue to disempower women as land is swallowed up by sea. Relocating populations to higher islands also poses threats of conflict, as one language group moves from its ancestral land to another land-tenure system. It was for that reason that the General Assembly adopted resolution 63/281, on climate change and its possible security implications. We see this as an issue that all United Nations principal organs, including the Security Council, should be seized of.

I would like to conclude by assuring you once again, Mr. President, of the support and cooperation of the Solomon Islands in protecting women's safety and their contribution to nation-building and world peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Colombia.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, and to say how pleased we are to have you presiding over the Security Council. I would also like to thank you for organizing this open debate on women, the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict-affected situations. We are grateful for the report presented this morning by the Secretary-General (S/2013/525) and the briefings by the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the representative of the NGO Working Group on

Women, Peace and Security, who have given us a clear idea of the situation under discussion.

In our country, Colombia, we are aware that the participation of women in decision-making processes in situations that affect them, especially in conflict and post-conflict situations, is of great importance for peace and security, and that States have the primary responsibility to protect their populations with a differential approach and a gender perspective.

My delegation recognizes the important results that the Security Council has achieved in the field. It is necessary, however, to make a distinction between the Council's treatment of States that are making efforts to comply with their international obligations in the area but are not on the Council's agenda and its treatment of those States that are on its agenda. We would therefore suggest that the issues generated in that context should not only be guided by assessments and follow-up processes, but they should also place an emphasis on promoting successful experiences in the field of cooperation and exchange of know-how and best practices, giving priority constructive elements.

In considering this issue, the Council and United Nations bodies should strictly adhere to the agreed terms of mandates in the resolutions on women and peace and security that are aimed at protecting women in situations of violence, particularly sexual violence, as well as decision-making in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Focusing on the issue before us, with respect to the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict-affected situations, I would like to share the experience of our country, which is currently debating the subject, while striving to overcome armed conflict through a process of dialogue that we hope will lead to peace.

On 12 March, the Government of Colombia approved the national policy on gender equity and a comprehensive plan to guarantee a life free of violence, which constitute reference points for the design and implementation of sustainable actions for the protection of women and to ensure the effective enjoyment of women's rights, with a focus on peacebuilding, cultural transformation and the promotion of the participation of women in positions of power and decision-making. The budget approved by the Colombian Government, which is a sign of its political commitment, is approximately \$1.75 billion.

Taking into account that 50 per cent of the total number of victims of conflict are women, the law on victims and land restitution has made significant gains. The law established a comprehensive reparations administration programme that enables major access to victims, including measures to fully compensate them for forced displacement and sexual violence in the context of armed conflict.

In order to know the truth of what happened, understand the structures of criminal organizations and determine degrees of responsibility for illegal armed groups and their collaborators, cases of sexual violence have been given priority, resulting in the joining of legal actions and guidelines in the Colombian Attorney General's Office.

As part of the plan of assistance, support and reparation, 339,000 persons have received compensation, 57 per cent of whom are women. Significant progress has been made. To meet those commitments, the Government invested an additional \$750 million dollars through August 2013.

Nonetheless, it should be noted that reparations are not limited to the payouts of resources and money. Additional actions are being developed, such as setting up institutions for the exclusive purpose of guaranteeing the rights of the victims and implementing an emotional recovery strategy, in which more than 3,000 women are taking part.

Colombia understands that the role of women in a post-conflict situation is critical from the moment that an agreement to achieve peace is sought. In that regard, my Government has actively encouraged the participation of women in the ongoing peace process. For example, the first phase of the process, known as exploratory talks, was led by a group of five persons working on behalf of the national Government, two of whom were women. Furthermore, 60 per cent of the staff of the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace are women, which ensures that the cases being considered are treated with particular sensitivity to issues of gender and women's rights.

Finally, I would like to stress that the strategies I have mentioned are a sample of the efforts being made by Colombian Government to protect women in the context of conflict, while working for their improvement, in accordance with the guidelines proposed by the Security Council and with an increasingly modern and

strengthened institutional system operating within a framework of respect for the rule of law.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): My Government welcomes today's debate and the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2013/525). We celebrate this year the thirteenth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), and we welcome today's important resolution 2122 (2013), which we sponsored. The resolution will advance today's agenda relating to women and peace and security.

We take this opportunity to make a few remarks in our national capacity, while we fully endorse the statement made by the observer of the European Union earlier.

We attach great importance to today's theme, which is close to our mission statement — "The Kingdom of the Netherlands, your partner for peace, justice and development". Let me highlight five points.

First of all, the Government of the Netherlands sees women as leaders. In our national action plan based on guidelines set forth in resolution 1325 (2000), as well as in our wider human rights and gender equality policies, we have chosen to focus on the role of women as political actors in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and recovery. We believe in the power of women as agents for peace and as representatives of communities living in conflict. During the recent opening week of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly, the Netherlands Minister of Foreign Affairs, Franciscus Timmermans, hosted an event with a group of Syrian women. He heard their recommendations and opened doors for them here in New York. Their stories inspired many and offered new hope for a solution to the horrific conflict in Syria. We stand ready to further support Syrian women's contributions to that end.

We encourage the Security Council to remain committed to the full agenda of resolution 1325 (2000), including the meaningful participation of women in all peace negotiations, security sector reform and decision-making related to conflict resolution and post-conflict rebuilding. We call upon the Security Council to more systematically implement the women and peace and security agenda.

Secondly, we support the women's agenda in countries in conflict or transition. In his report,

the Secretary-General finds that deficits remain in opportunities for women to exercise leadership, with shortfalls existing in the resources provided to support women and strengthen their organizational capacities. Recognizing that fact, the Netherlands has therefore established a funding mechanism called “Women on the Frontline” for women’s organizations in countries in transition in the Middle East and North Africa. We aim to support them with organizational and capacity development. Our aim is clear — women should be in a position to make their voices heard, demand their rights and contribute to the development of their countries.

We also welcome efforts by United Nations mediators to include women in peace and transition processes. Yemen is an inspiring example, where, against all odds, women are participating in the National Dialogue and are claiming their role in the next phases of transition. We also pay tribute to Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Mary Robinson’s outreach to women early on in her mandate, as our Irish colleague briefly mentioned a moment ago.

Thirdly, we support legal systems based on equality. We need a gender-sensitive approach to the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict situations. Women and girls should have equal access to fair and transparent justice services and they should be able to influence justice policies and institutions in their country. In that respect, we also acknowledge the important contribution of the International Criminal Court and other special courts and tribunals in addressing gender-based and sexual violence in specific.

As the focus of today’s debate is on the importance of the rule of law and justice, let me highlight an example. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, my Government is helping to establish a gender-sensitive judicial system, including by training women to become lawyers themselves.

Fourthly, we care about prevention and the protection of victims of sexual violence in conflict. The Netherlands welcomes the continued high-level attention to the role of women in conflict situations. In June, the Council adopted resolution 2106 (2013); other international actors, such as the Group of Eight, have also shown real commitment to the prevention and prosecution of sexual violence in conflict. For my Government, that is a crucial part of the 1325 agenda.

We welcome and support the recommendation of the Secretary-General to ensure the full range of services to victims of rape, including access to services for the safe termination of pregnancies resulting from rape, without discrimination and in accordance with international human rights and humanitarian law.

The prevention of, and protection from, sexual violence is an issue that continues to demand our full attention. I am proud to announce that the Netherlands recently increased its contribution to the United Nations Trust Fund for the Elimination of Violence against Women by \$2 million, bringing it to a total of more than \$8 million.

Fifthly and lastly, we stand ready to share experiences and improve on our joint implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. We offer our full support and cooperation to the global review on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) that UN Women is currently undertaking. In that context, we are pleased to announce that, in late 2014, the Netherlands will host an international conference on lessons learned.

As I have said, the Kingdom of the Netherlands wants to be a partner for peace, justice and development. The role of women is crucial in all three dimensions.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Nigeria.

Mrs. Smaila (Nigeria): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open date, which places in the proper context the issue of women and the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict-affected situations. We also thank Azerbaijan for the concept note (S/2013/587, annex), which has provided direction to our discussion.

Nigeria shares the Secretary-General’s view that there has been measurable progress in all areas of the women and peace and security agenda, especially as it relates to the increased provision of expertise and training. We are pleased to note that, under the rubric of prevention and protection, there has been a significant increase in focus on policy and operational focus on the monitoring, prevention and prosecution of violence against women. The international community must sustain that momentum.

In spite of those accomplishments, we believe that considerable work still needs to be done to overcome the challenges posed by a lack of implementation of

commitments on women and peace and security. A nexus must be created among women's participation, security and the core work of United Nations peacekeeping operations — often overlooked when gender-specific information is provided to the Council. Indeed, the lack of sex-disaggregated data on security threats prevents action that could contribute to greater security for women. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's recommendation to explore options for providing guidance that would facilitate reporting to the Security Council to include information on the situation of women and girls. The Council requires such information to work in concert with other intergovernmental bodies such as the Human Rights Council.

Sexual violence against women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations should remain a matter of high priority to the international community. More needs to be done to hold accountable the perpetrators of such heinous acts. Indeed, the adoption of resolution 2016 (2013), in June, underscored the need for more systematic monitoring of sexual violence in armed conflict. It is therefore imperative that the Council develop the appropriate mechanisms to ensure women's participation in all aspects of mediation, post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding to address sexual violence in conflict.

The gender dimensions of transitional justice are critical in assessing crimes committed against women in conflict. The lack of access to justice occasioned by the deterioration of an already weakened criminal justice system amplifies their vulnerabilities. Indeed, UN Women notes that securing justice for women entails engaging with the processes that shape future justice mechanisms, including constitution-making and peace processes. That ultimately accentuates the need for greater women's participation in post-conflict nation-building, where frameworks are instituted to enable them seek redress.

Nigeria is committed to the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions on women and peace and security. Strident steps have been taken at the national level to ensure the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). In the same vein, Nigeria stresses the importance of compliance with resolution 1820 (2008), on ending acts of sexual violence against women in conflict situations.

It is essential for Member States to adopt and implement comprehensive legislation on violence against women as a concrete step to increase women's

access to justice. Special courts designed to reduce delays in rendering justice should be established where necessary to facilitate access to justice for victims. Strong advocacy to break the culture of silence and promote zero tolerance across the globe is fundamental to the restoration of the rights and dignity of women in all circumstances.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Croatia.

Mr. Medan (Croatia): Croatia thanks Azerbaijan for convening this important debate on women, the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict-affected situations, an issue to which Croatia attaches great importance in the context of further advancing the women and peace and security agenda at the global, regional and national levels.

We welcome the report and recommendations of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2013/525), as well as resolution 2122 (2013), adopted today by the Council.

Croatia endorses the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and would like to add a few points in its national capacity.

In our view, ensuring gender equality is one of the basic principles with regard to respect for human rights. Transitions can present opportunities to strengthen women's rights, leadership and empowerment. It is crucial to put in place gender-responsive transitional justice measures as a key element in the processes of restoring the rule of law and governance systems in any conflict-affected situation.

Women ought to be placed at the heart of ongoing political, social and economic developments. Even though women are widely recognized as effective agents of peace, the number of women participating in decision-making in the area of peace and security remains unacceptably low. Ensuring their equal participation in decision-making is therefore essential for achieving sustainable peace and stability. In that context, we stress in particular the need to increase women's and girls' access to education. There can be no development and stability in any society, in particular war-affected and post-conflict ones, if girls and women have no access to education.

Owing to discriminatory legal frameworks and practices, women and girls are more vulnerable to conflict-related violations of their rights, including

sexual violence. It is of vital importance that the culture of impunity that still prevails with regard to such crimes be addressed. Based on our own tragic experiences of the aggression on Croatia in the 1990s, during which rape was used as a method of intimidation and terror, we are convinced that the issue of sexual violence in conflict can be adequately addressed only through a comprehensive approach. In our view, victims' rights and access to reparations is one of the most gender-responsive transitional justice measures. The Croatian Government is currently preparing comprehensive legislation by which the survivors of sexual violence from the 1990s will be entitled to the status of civilian victims of war.

We also welcome the adoption of the resolution 2106 (2013), on strengthening of the prevention and prosecution of conflict-related sexual violence, and support the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. As a member of the group of global champions of the prevention of sexual violence initiative, Croatia will spare no effort to take a more prominent role in preventing and combating sexual violence in conflicts.

Despite all efforts, violence against women and girls still poses serious threats and has no borders or nationality. The recent adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty, with a binding criterion on gender-based violence, contributes to preventing the potential negative impact of international arms transfers on women and their rights. Croatia signed the Treaty in June, and is currently in the process of its ratification.

We believe that greater coordination and synergy among international partners would further improve the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) on the ground.

Domestically, through its national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), Croatia has integrated a gender perspective into its foreign and security policy as well as its actions. We attach particular importance to the involvement of women in peacekeeping operations. Their presence reinforces women's perspectives, giving their initiatives more added value.

Female members of the Croatian Armed Forces involved in international assignments actively work as commanders, military observers and staff officers. We are particularly proud to state that, in coordination with NATO, in December we will deploy our first female

general as gender adviser to the Commander of the International Security Assistance Force in Kabul. At the regional level, we strongly support the adoption of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe action plan on women, peace and security at the forthcoming ministerial meeting in Kiev.

In September, Croatia, as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, organized a high-level ministerial event with UN Women on women's economic empowerment for peacebuilding. The main rationale behind this event was to renew commitment and to sharpen the global focus on the role of women as agents of positive change and transformation in countries emerging from conflicts. We also wanted to invite the broader United Nations to boost women's economic rights as an essential contribution to peacebuilding.

In conclusion, Croatia will continue to give its full support to all aspects of the women, peace and security agenda.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden.

Mr. Grunditz (Sweden): I am pleased to address the Council on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. I would like to begin by expressing my appreciation to the Azerbaijani presidency for organizing this open debate, and to thank the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN Women, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and in particular Ms. Brigitte Balipou of the NGO Working Group on Women Peace and Security for their valuable statements.

The Nordic countries strongly welcome the Secretary-General's report (S/2013/525) and the adoption of resolution 2122 (2013) on women, peace and security. We commend the Council for the progress made and trust that the new resolution will enhance a more rapid, complete and systematic implementation of all the resolutions on this matter.

We welcome the focus of this debate on the rights, perspectives and participation of women in the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict-affected situations. The rule of law is an integral part of the engagement for peace and security. The Nordic countries have a strong commitment to the rule of law and to its main principles of legality, equality, accountability and participation.

We firmly believe that the rule of law must encompass the whole population — women and men, boys and girls — if it is to be worthy of its name. Nevertheless, women's perspectives, capacities and needs continue to be overlooked in efforts to establish the rule of law in conflict or post-conflict contexts. To promote the rule of law while excluding women is not only a paradox; it undermines the achievement of sustainable peace and security.

Safeguarding women's access to justice, applying a gender-sensitive approach to transitional justice mechanisms and including women in post-conflict reparations programmes are paramount steps in the establishment of the rule of law, and thus paramount to peace and security. The campaign to improve women's access to justice must therefore include a scrutiny of the systemic barriers of gender inequality, including economic empowerment, women's citizenship rights, their legal capacity, property rights, as well as safe transportation and safe access to witnesses and victim protection programmes. In order to play a role, women must also have access to their basic rights in all phases of conflict. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's call for expanded access to sexual and reproductive health services.

Conflict-related gender-based crimes must be investigated. Resolution 2106 (2013) and the recent Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict are two vital steps towards fulfilling our obligations. We fully support the work of Justice Rapid Response and its partnership with UN Women in addressing sexual and gender-based violence. However, let us underline that gender justice is not merely about women's needs as victims, but also about women's valuable contributions to bringing about peace and their participation at the forefront of transitional justice and in rule of law measures, such as justice system reform.

At the strategic level, gender awareness in the rule of law and transitional justice is crucial for women's access to justice and for the enjoyment of rights. It has a direct impact on their political and economic empowerment. A systematic follow-up to ensure the inclusion of the women, peace and security agenda in the day to day work of the Council is therefore necessary. The number, influence and leadership of women in conflict-resolution and in post-conflict governance and peacekeeping must increase.

The Nordic countries support and encourage the findings in the progress report by UN Women to be

moved forward, alongside the Secretary-General's recommendations in his report. We applaud the efforts of the regional and subregional organizations to implement resolution 1325 (2000), and we commend the ongoing work of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) membership to adopt an OSCE-wide action plan.

We welcome the fact that the recently concluded Arms Trade Treaty includes a legally-binding provision on gender-based violence and a call for a full implementation of the Treaty's provision on preventing gender-based violence and violence against women and girls when assessing arms transfers.

We pay tribute to the work of civil society to promote gender equality and women's role in conflict resolution and in conflict prevention. Let us not forget that the very origin of resolution 1325 (2000) derives from the tireless and courageous efforts of women's NGOs. We must continue to support and encourage the women-led civil society in peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

Finally, we welcome the Secretary-General's call for a 2015 high-level review of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and his call for new and ambitious targets.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Uruguay.

Mrs. Carrion (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation thanks you, Sir, for convening this debate on women, the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict situations, which focuses on an important aspect of the women, peace and security agenda.

Since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the women, peace and security agenda has clearly advanced in terms of scope and depth, and now occupies an important place in the realm of legal instruments, policies and specific actions of the Organization in defending the importance of including a gender perspective in addressing the needs of women and girls in all conflict situations, and particularly in post-conflict reconstruction and recovery.

The natural synergy between participation and protection is probably the central aspect of resolution 1325 (2000). The role of women in bringing peace and security to conflict situations and their greater participation in post-conflict processes and in transitional justice is crucial to laying the groundwork

for sustainable peace. We welcome the progress identified in the recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2013/525), which reports on improvements in various national justice systems and the existence of more resources in international efforts, while recognizing that there is still a need for the greater participation of women in all mechanisms related to peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction.

We welcome the adoption of resolution 2122 (2013) today, which joins other efforts of the Security Council to carry out a systematic follow up to the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda and to move towards the full participation of women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

We value the efforts of UN WOMEN and the United Nations Development Programme and their initiatives to improve women's access to justice during and after conflicts, as reflected in the report before us today. We also value the critical role of civil society, particularly that of local women's groups that assist victims in various aspects of recovery, from health services to access to justice.

We believe that full accountability is crucial and requires a broad, multisectoral response that, apart from medical and psychological aspects and reparations, should also include a focus on social and economic reintegration for victims.

The United Nations system must continue to fight against the impunity of those responsible for such violations and promote national capacity-building, along with regional efforts, as well as international justice mechanisms and the work of organizations that defend women's human rights.

Peacekeeping operations are one of the most important aspects of the women and peace and security agenda. In recent years, such operations have gradually incorporated protection-of-civilian mandates, with special attention to women and girls. The progress has been significant, but there are still limitations in meeting the expectations of both local populations and the international community.

In that context, we would like to point out that Uruguay has been in the vanguard when it comes to including women into the armed forces, as reflected in the number of women deployed by the armed forces and by the national police in Uruguayan contingents to peacekeeping missions. Those professionals, always acting as volunteers, have performed remarkably

and demonstrated significant levels of re-enlistment, thereby illustrating their commitment to the goals of the missions. That is why we would like to stress the importance of continuing to promote greater participation by women in the different areas and functions that are linked to peace processes, as they provide an undeniable qualitative contribution.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Portugal.

Mr. Moura (Portugal): I would like to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate on women and peace and security, an issue to which Portugal attaches great importance. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General; the Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka; the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navanethem Pillay; and Ms. Brigitte Balipou for their very enlightening statements.

Portugal of course shares the views that have been expressed by the observer of the European Union regarding the matter of the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict-affected situations. However, allow me to expand on some aspects of political significance for my country.

It is increasingly evident that the rule of law is all too often the second victim of conflict, the first victims being women and girls. Portugal reaffirms the view that women and girls are disproportionately affected by armed conflicts and remain particularly vulnerable in post-conflict situations. Sexual and gender-based violence, child and forced marriages and disruption in education, to name but a few of the facts of conflict, are magnified when it comes to women and girls. The Security Council has repeatedly acknowledged that fact and must continue to act on such a basis. On the other hand, there is a tendency to consider transitional justice as the second-to-last concern of peace agreements, the last being the participation of women in peace agreements.

It is our firm belief that only through the systematic and active participation of women in peace processes can transitional justice truly assume a national dimension and lay the foundations for rebuilding the rule of law and reconciliation. We have been witnessing the very important role women can play in reconciliation processes when they are included from the outset.

Portugal feels particularly encouraged by the rising awareness regarding those issues, and by the efforts made at the United Nations and national levels to increase expertise in several areas, such as mediation and capacity-building for the political participation of women, whether as candidates, electoral observers or office holders.

With regard to peacekeeping and peacebuilding, we also find encouraging examples of clearer political will and adequate allocation of resources aimed at increasing the proportion of women in uniformed components in operations and in national security sector institutions.

The Council has heard, on a regular basis and directly from the ground, requests for further strengthening the implementation of protection mandates. We hope that the targets set by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of 20 per cent for female police participation in peacekeeping operations by 2014 will be attained. Portugal continues to develop policies to promote the recruitment and retention of women in the military and in the police forces, and looks forward to cooperate further in training and in sharing good practices with other troop and police-contributing countries.

Let me conclude by stressing the role of the economic, social and cultural rights of women as a central component of protection. Portugal strongly supports the inclusion of this subject in the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2013/525). These issues belong at the forefront of our discussions on women and peace and security and we commend his effort to do so. Further analysis of the relationship between the stability of livelihoods and the safety of women and girls is therefore, from our point of view, crucial. We encourage the United Nations to continue to give it due attention.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt): The Council's semi-annual open debate to review the implementation of Council resolution 1325 (2000)m, on women and peace and security, is a good opportunity to review the progress made over the past year, share good practices and identify the persistent barriers to the full implementation of the resolution.

Egypt has considered with interest the Secretary-General's report on women and peace and security (S/2013/525). We would like to express our appreciation

for the efforts made in the drafting of the report, which highlights the progress made, including the significant policy and operational focus on the monitoring, prevention and prosecution of violence against women in conflicts. In that context, I would like to make the following remarks.

First, Egypt reaffirms the pivotal role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding, as outlined in the resolution 1325 (2000). We also stress the importance of promoting the education and economic empowerment of women as effective tools to achieving sustainable peace and security.

Secondly, Egypt is deeply concerned about the increasing rates and patterns of violence against women and girls around the world, particularly sexual violence in armed conflicts and post-conflict situations. We stress the indispensable role of transitional justice and the rule of the law for the protection of women's rights and for ensuring accountability and non-impunity for perpetrators, as a key element of conflict-prevention, peacekeeping, conflict-resolution and peacebuilding. Transitional justice measures must address the full range of violations and abuses of women's human rights, including crimes committed by United Nations peacekeeping forces and personnel.

In that context, we highlight the significance of the initiative taken in April by the Group of Eight on preventing sexual violence in conflict, assisting victims of sexual violence in war and preventing further attacks and holding perpetrators accountable for their crimes. Last month, Egypt joined the international declaration of commitment to end sexual violence in conflict that was launched during the high-level segment of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session.

Thirdly, we support the inclusion of the theme of women and peace and security as a crosscutting issue in the post-2015 development agenda.

Fourthly, the Security Council will hold a high-level meeting in 2015 to mark the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). It will assess progress in implementing that resolution, renew commitments and address obstacles and constraints. In that regard, there is a need to address the existing gap related to quality data collection and analysis in conflict settings. Egypt supports conducting a global study to highlight good practices, implementation gaps and challenges, as well as emerging trends and

priorities for action. The outcome of that study should be available to all Member States.

The practices of the Israeli occupation in the Arab occupied territories are a clear manifestation of violations of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Arab women and girls under foreign occupation. Egypt stresses the responsibility of the United Nations system, as well as all international organizations concerned with women's issues, towards women under foreign occupation. There is definitely a need to pay greater attention to their suffering in order to ensure their full rights, in accordance with the relevant provisions of international law, international humanitarian law and human rights law. We request all senior officials and field-based entities responsible for reporting to the Council, particularly UN Women and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, to systematically include information on the situation of women and girls in Arab-occupied territories in their reports and briefings.

Egypt reiterates its commitment to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), in line with its international obligations, as well as its conviction of the critical and indispensable role that could be played by women in resolving armed conflicts and in post-conflict situations.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia.

Mr. Percaya (Indonesia): I wish to express my appreciation to you, Mr. President, for organizing today's important open debate. Your well-rounded concept note (S/2013/587, annex) is indeed very useful in providing us with the clear objective of our debate on the issue. We also express our gratitude to the Secretary-General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Executive Director of UN Women and the representative of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, whose remarks serve as a good basis for our focus at today's meeting. The theme of the meeting is well-chosen and timely, particularly as we continue to advance the agenda to strengthen the role and engagement of women in peace processes.

The resolution 2122 (2013), adopted this morning, is another clear reflection of the strong resolve of the Council concerning the critical role of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peacebuilding and peacekeeping. We are particularly appreciative of the fact that the resolution provides a good reference on

supporting the development and strengthening of the capacities of national institutions in order to provide sustainable assistance to women and girls affected by armed conflict and post-conflict situations.

The critical role of women in all stages of and throughout any peace process has been reaffirmed in various United Nations resolutions and documents — not the least, of course, in resolution 1325 (2000) and its subsequent texts. The recent declaration adopted by the Peacebuilding Commission on women's economic empowerment in peacekeeping showcases yet another unyielding commitment from Member States to support the participation of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peacebuilding and post-conflict economic recovery. The declaration also reaffirms the primary responsibility of national authorities in identifying their priorities and strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding.

In that context, Indonesia wishes to emphasize the critical importance of sustaining political momentum behind ongoing peacebuilding processes, promoting gender equality and promoting and protecting the human rights of women. We are fully convinced that the involvement of women in all aspects of society unleashes a vast and dynamic pool of ideas, creativity and skills, which inspire society to move on and gain prosperity. Therefore, the promotion and protection of human rights for all, including women in conflict-affected countries, is evidently crucial. Furthermore, the ability of women to exercise their rights and responsibilities will define a successful transition to peace and stability based on the rule of law.

As stated in the Secretary-General's report on women's participation in peacebuilding (S/2010/466), it is essential to improve the approach of the United Nations in combating sexual and gender-based violence, particularly through the training for United Nations peacekeepers. In the context of peacekeeping, the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and other related resolutions has paved the way for a gender perspective mechanism in United Nations peacekeeping operations. Increasing the number of female peacekeepers on the ground would also be a positive step in support of resolution 1325 (2000). On our part, we are happy to point out that Indonesia has deployed female peacekeepers as well as military and police observers in several missions, including the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, the

United Nations Mission in South Sudan and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti.

It is a matter of regret that respecting the rule of law in conflict situations continues to be a significant challenge for the international community. In our view, that is a strong reason for inclusive peace negotiations that produce peace that is durable, sustainable and long-lasting. It is also reason for including the participation and engagement of women in that process. We also believe that national reconciliation, as one tool of transitional justice, must benefit from the active participation of women. Indonesia, in that regard, agrees with the call made by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations last year that lasting progress on security, national reconciliation, human rights, the rule of law and sustainable development needs to occur in parallel, given the interconnected nature of those challenges in countries emerging from conflict.

In that regard, any assistance from the United Nations, including that undertaken through the Peacebuilding Commission, must be carried out in a concerted manner and include a gender perspective. In addition, it must also be in accordance with the principle of national ownership, taking into account the unique and specific needs and situations present in each country.

Indonesia is steadfast in its commitment to ensuring women's participation at all levels of conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding, and it has been undertaking various measures at home to that effect, in close partnership with civil society, including women's organizations.

Finally, Indonesia reiterates the importance of the international community working in a concerted manner to improve women's participation during all stages of peace processes, particularly in conflict resolution, post-conflict planning and peacebuilding, including by enhancing their engagement in political and economic decision-making at the early stages of recovery processes.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Botswana.

Mr. Nkoloi (Botswana): We join other delegations in congratulating your country, Mr. President, on its assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month, and we extend our gratitude to you, Sir, for convening this important debate. Today's deliberations

reaffirms the great importance that we, individually and collectively, attach to the promotion and protection of the rights of women and their role in the prevention of conflict.

As the year 2013 marks the thirteenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, it is of the utmost importance that we strive to ensure gender equality, to address violence against women and to enhance women's participation in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. We therefore welcome the Council's continued recognition of the need for more systematic attention to the implementation of women and peace and security commitments in its work.

As the report of the Secretary-General (S/2013/525) indicates, we welcome the progress that has been made since 2012 in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and the operationalization of the accountability framework provided by the Council's resolutions on women and peace and security. In that regard, we take note of the efforts and measures undertaken by Member States, United Nations entities and regional organizations.

However, we remain gravely concerned that, despite the existence of resolution 1325 (2000), which became a beacon of hope for millions of women and young girls, crimes of rape and sexual violence still persist. Women and girls continue to be targeted, while rape and sexual violence continue to be used as weapons of war. The prevention of sexual violence in armed conflict is therefore both a matter of upholding universal human rights and of maintaining international security, in keeping with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

In that connection, impunity for sexual violence by armed groups is unacceptable and can never be tolerated. My delegation wishes to stress the responsibility of States to protect their own populations and the importance of demonstrating commitment and political will to prevent sexual violence. To that end, I wish to emphasize the importance of respect for the rule of law, accountability and access to justice, as we believe that they are critical to protecting women's rights in the aftermath of conflict. Botswana also shares the view expressed by many that gender-sensitive legal and institutional reform, in conformity with international standards, should be accorded priority in order to stem violence against women. With the belief and a sense of optimism that, given our collective will, especially in

the Security Council, we can bring an end to impunity and to those crimes, we call on the Council to strengthen its efforts in that regard.

While greater attention continues to be paid to the prosecution of perpetrators of these crimes, we are also of the view that more must be done to ensure that transitional justice addresses the full range of conflict-related violation of women's rights. My delegation also believes that efforts to address sexual violence in armed conflict should be consistent with and complementary to wider efforts to promote the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and other relevant resolutions on women and peace and security.

Let me also highlight that greater coordination and collaboration with other relevant stakeholders and the provision of assistance to States in conflict and post-conflict situations are vital to improving global efforts to address women, peace and security challenges.

Recognizing that peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men, one of the most important issues to be addressed remains women's participation in conflict resolution, including the negotiation of peace agreements at the national and international levels. In that respect, it is also our belief that the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) can be achieved only through increased recognition of the crucial role of women, as well as their participation and involvement in all efforts aimed at the prevention and resolution of conflicts. We therefore fully share the opinion that gender equality should be recognized as a core issue in the maintenance of peace and security. We also support calls for the inclusion of a gender perspective in mediation and peace processes, particularly in the context of security arrangements and transitional justice mechanisms.

Ending violations of women's human rights is a moral imperative and one to whose achievement we must collectively commit. In that regard, Botswana strongly supports all efforts aimed at preventing and eliminating all forms of violence against women and children. To that end, we wish to reiterate our support for the work of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. In line with the Security Council's intention expressed in 2010, Botswana looks forward to the convening of the high-level review in 2015 to assess progress in the implementation of its resolution 1325 (2000). We therefore welcome this morning's adoption by the Council of resolution 2122 (2013).

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Latvia.

Ms. Freimane-Deksne (Latvia): Latvia aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and would like to make a few remarks in its national capacity.

I thank the Secretary General for his report (S/2013/525), as well as the Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director UN Women, High Commissioner Pillay and Ms. Balipou for their statements.

Latvia welcomes today's adoption of the resolution 2122 (2013) on this very important topic and looks forward to the high-level review in 2015 on progress and obstacles in implementing resolution 1325 (2000). We believe that a global study highlighting best practices, implementation gaps and challenges and priorities for further action on women and peace and security will greatly contribute to that end.

There are three main issues that I would like to address today: first, women's participation at all levels of decision-making in conflict and post-conflict settings; secondly, United Nations gender expertise; and, thirdly, coordination within the United Nations and outside on women and peace and security in order to minimize costs and to maximize the impact on the ground.

Turning to the first topic, let me emphasize that women should be involved and participate in the whole crisis cycle, from the prevention and resolution of conflict to reinstating justice and the rule of law in post-conflict settings. Women play a particular role in voicing women's rights and concerns early on and in preventing backsliding on women's rights in post-conflict governance. There is no justice without women's participation at all levels of public decision-making, and there is no participation without women's economic security and full access to public services. All aspects of women's participation should be addressed equally, and greater attention should be paid to the full range of human rights violations that women experience in both conflict and post-conflict settings. Latvia, as one of the countries that endorsed the declaration of commitment to end sexual violence in conflict and sponsored resolution 2106 (2013), on the same topic, earlier this year, welcomes the progress made in the monitoring, prevention and prosecution of gender-based violence in conflict. However, efforts should be continued in that regard and the protection of women and girls should be carried out on a larger scale.

There can be no real impact on women's rights on the ground if the United Nations and other international partners are not leading by example. Women should be adequately represented at different levels in peacekeeping and special political missions. Appropriate training on gender-specific issues should be provided for military, police and civilian personnel deployed to international peace operations. United Nations gender expertise is crucial for capacity-building and the increased engagement of women in peacemaking and peacebuilding processes. In that regard, Latvia welcomes the review commissioned by UN Women, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and other United Nations institutions on the deployment and coherence of gender expertise across the United Nations system in post-conflict contexts and encourages building on its recommendations. Initiatives launched by UN Women and DPKO, as well as early and active involvement by the Special Envoys of the Secretary General for Sahel and the Great Lakes Region, show that, through common efforts, real results on the women and peace and security agenda can be achieved.

Finally, let me underline the importance of gender mainstreaming and coordination within the United Nations and between different international organizations active on the issue of on women and peace and security. Recent intergovernmental outcomes identified gender equality and women's empowerment both as a thematic priority and a cross-cutting issue in promoting development. The quadrennial comprehensive policy review provided new political impetus to coordination and accountability for gender mainstreaming in the United Nations system, already launched by the United Nations system-wide action plan on gender equality and the empowerment of women. We welcome the fact that resolution 2122 (2013) provides for more regular briefings to the Council on women and peace and security issues and for the Council's increased attention to those issues in other thematic areas of work, as well as while establishing and renewing the mandates of the United Nations missions.

We fully agree that, in order to effectively address threats to the security of women and girls, the links between the United Nations work in political, human rights and development fields should be strengthened. Moreover, better coordination should be ensured among all organizations on the ground. It is time to consolidate knowledge and expertise and choose the most effective

ways to deliver the best results for women and girls in conflict and post-conflict settings.

In conclusion, let me reiterate Latvia's commitment to the promotion and protection of women's rights at all levels and in all contexts, as well as our readiness to actively contribute to common efforts in the effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Georgia.

Mr. Makharoblishvili (Georgia): First of all, Georgia fully associates itself with the statement made by the observer of European Union. Nevertheless, I would like to add some comments in my national capacity and contribute to these fruitful discussions by sharing our country's experience in assisting women to promote their fundamental rights and freedoms.

The Government of Georgia is strongly committed to the protection of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Therefore, ensuring women's liberties represents one of our priorities. The Government seeks to strengthen United Nations coordination mechanisms to ensure our fruitful engagement in overcoming existing challenges.

At the international level, the Government of Georgia fully supports the ongoing efforts of the international community to promote the role of women in different spheres. Georgia has become a sponsor of the relevant resolutions presented within the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council.

As the Council is aware, in 1994 Georgia joined the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, without any reservations. Apart from that, Georgia has acceded to multilateral treaties, among them the 1951 Convention concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value and the Convention on the Political Rights of Women.

To address the rights of women, Georgia has dynamically carried out complex measures in various areas, including legislation and relevant actions as well as implementing all initiatives with the active participation of civil society.

On 27 December 2011, the Parliament of Georgia approved the 2012-2015 Georgia national action plan on the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions on women and peace and security — with

important technical assistance from UN Women. The national action plan is built on four pillars: increasing the participation of women in peace processes and the security sector; preventing all forms of violence against women; protecting women against all kinds of threats and safeguarding their physical, mental and economic security; and addressing the specific needs of women during and after conflict periods. The national action plan is the first such initiative in the South Caucasus region to ensure the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). In total, numerous consultative meetings were held, involving approximately 102 organizations — representing internally displaced persons and conflict-affected women — in the preparation process of the national action plan. That dialogue is continuing to date in the context of the plan's implementation phase.

While discussing the successful developments in advancing women's rights and freedoms, I would like to emphasize the fruitful cooperation that the Government enjoys with UN Women. We appreciate its support in facilitating consultations and information-sharing meetings among representatives of Georgian women's non-governmental organizations and women participants of the Geneva international discussions. The purpose of the meetings was to inform civil society actors, especially women's organizations, on frameworks of peace processes aimed at increasing knowledge and capacity towards advocating for the inclusion of gender-specific concerns related to conflict in the relevant forums.

Women's role in Georgia, including the political and military fields, has significantly grown. Women represent 5.4 per cent of the armed forces and 50 per cent of the civilian personnel of the Ministry of Defense, among whom 20 per cent hold decision-making positions. Women take part in the Georgian contingent of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. This is the first year that female students have attended the main education programme of Georgia's national defence academy.

Regular training programmes are conducted to enhance the skills and capacities of women police officers. After the adoption of the national action plan, female police officers from various regions of Georgia participated in training programmes to enhance the skills and role of female officers, with the aim of becoming leaders and mentors in Georgian law enforcement. In addition, again in close collaboration

with UN Women, the Ministry of Internal Affairs is piloting specialized police unit to deal with gender-based violence in several municipalities of the country.

In June 2013, the Georgia Parliament adopted amendments to the labour code to introduce regulations that are more liberal with respect to women's employment. Currently, Georgia's Ministry of Justice has also initiated the drafting of a non-discrimination law that will foresee the establishment of mechanisms to ensure the protection of citizens from all forms of discrimination, including those based on gender identity and sexual orientation.

While the Government of Georgia spares no effort in ensuring women's liberties in the country and to strengthen women's role in areas related to security and peacebuilding, we face major challenges in the occupied regions of Georgia. Concomitant to the installation of barbed wire fences along the occupation line of the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions, heavy restrictions on freedom of movement have been imposed, extending even to the most vulnerable populations, namely, those in need of urgent medical assistance, and expectant mothers. Unfortunately, such restrictions have even led to casualties, when three women died en route to hospital after having been refused passage through the occupation line.

Despite numerous calls by the international community, up to a half million internally displaced persons and refugees, among them several hundred thousand women, continue to be deprived of their fundamental right to a safe and dignified return. We remain hopeful that the international community will adequately react to the illegal activities in the occupied regions of Georgia and the ongoing violations of human rights.

In conclusion, I would like to, once again, reiterate the firm commitment of my Government to strengthening cooperation with the relevant United Nations agencies in order to defend the interests of women who are suffering from gender bias, violence and other inhuman or degrading treatment.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Namibia.

Mr. Emvula (Namibia): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your country's assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of October. Furthermore, I wish to thank you for organizing this very important

debate affording the wider United Nations membership an opportunity to contribute to the very important discussion on women, the rule of law and transitional justice. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN Women and the High Commissioner for Human Rights for their kind introductory remarks. I am also grateful for the concept note (S/2013/587, annex) that you have circulated, Sir, which we believe will guide our deliberations to a successful conclusion.

From the outset, Namibia has recognized the important role of women in peacebuilding, as enunciated in resolution 1325 (2000), of October 2000, which my delegation, together with many others, successfully negotiated during our presidency of the Security Council. Since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), we have been pleased that the United Nations has adopted specific policy directives to achieve gender equality in peacekeeping operations. Due to their vulnerability, women in many conflicts situations around the world continue to face intolerable hardship, as they become targets of sexual violence. In that context, Namibia welcomes and supports the adoption of the recent Arms Trade Treaty, as it is the first international instrument that includes a gender criterion in the context of arms transfers, thereby identifying women as vulnerable targets in conflict situations.

The role of women in conflict prevention and post-conflict peacebuilding is of great importance. Namibia therefore fully supports the inclusion of women in security systems such as armed forces, police and peacekeeping operations and special political missions in support of various United Nations resolutions that recognize that important role.

Namibia is proud to be among the troop-contributing countries that have successfully complied with resolution 1888 (2009), which urges Member States to deploy greater numbers of female military and police personnel in United Nations peacekeeping missions. As we speak, a group of police women from Namibia is on its way to Darfur.

We recognize the important role of non-governmental organizations such as Justice Rapid Response in training Member State officials as investigators of gender-based violence and rapidly deploying them to conflict areas. Namibia will continue to support such initiatives, as they can go a

long way in assisting the international community in investigating such horrible crimes, which specifically target women and children. We therefore welcome the partnership between Justice Rapid Response and UN Women in organizing the upcoming training course for investigators of sexual-based violence to be held in Bogota in January 2014.

We would like to draw the Council's attention to the recent resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on the elimination of violence against women that encourages the use of mechanisms such as the UN Women/Justice Rapid Response joint roster of international investigators of sexual and gender-based crimes in its efforts to promptly make available the relevant expertise to investigate mass rapes and systematic violence.

There is a need to combat impunity and bring the perpetrators of sexual violence to justice. Sexual violence must be prosecuted at both the national and international levels. However, we have noticed with great concern that sexual violence is underreported at both the national level and in conflict situations. Therefore, there is a need to support the strengthening of judicial systems and the destigmatization of sexual violence for the victims so they may access justice without being excluded.

At the international level, we urge States to fully comply with international humanitarian law, international human rights law and the International Criminal Court mechanisms, which need to be strengthened.

In conclusion, the legacy of conflict-related violence is endured long after peace agreements have been concluded. Women continue to be targets of violence as insecurity continues in the absence of effective justice systems that facilitate large-scale impunity. Therefore, the involvement of women in peace processes and the establishment of the rule of law are the foundation for sustainable and durable peace. We therefore commend the continuous engagement of the Council in promoting the role of women in peacebuilding.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.