

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 31 October 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the briefing provided by His Excellency the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, as well as the statements delivered by Their Excellencies Mr. James Cleverly, Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; Ms. Michelle Müntefering, Minister of State in the Federal Foreign Office of Germany; and by the representatives of Belgium, China, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Indonesia, the Niger, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, the United States of America and Viet Nam, in connection with the video-teleconference on “Women and peace and security” convened on Thursday, 29 October 2020.

In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members for this video-teleconference, the following delegations and entities submitted written statements, copies of which are also enclosed: Afghanistan, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, the European Union, Fiji, Georgia, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Latvia, the League of Arab States, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, the Netherlands, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates and Uruguay.

Pursuant to the letter by the President of the Security Council addressed to Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council dated 7 May 2020 (S/2020/372), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, the enclosed briefing and statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vassily Nebenzia
President of the Security Council



Annex 1

Statement by the Secretary-General

I thank representatives for this opportunity to brief them on women and peace and security, 20 years after the adoption of the landmark resolution 1325 (2000).

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is the greatest test the international community has faced since the Second World War. In March, I appealed for an immediate global ceasefire so that we could focus on our common enemy, namely, the COVID-19 virus. I built on this call in my address to the General Assembly last month (see A/75/PV.3).

In resolution 2532 (2020), supporting a global ceasefire, the Security Council made a strong and valuable link to the women and peace and security agenda.

First, the Council said that the pandemic will have a disproportionate negative impact on women and girls. This is proving to be true both in conflict zones and around the world. Women are already suffering from rising gender-based violence. There are clear signs that resources are being diverted from women's health, including sexual and reproductive health. The pandemic could have a long-term impact on girls' participation in education and on women's employment. This will contribute to the continued marginalization of women from political decision-making and peace processes, which damages everyone.

Secondly, the Council noted that women are playing a crucial role in the response to the pandemic. Women at all levels are on the front lines of the COVID-19 response, dominating sectors of the economy that are critical to daily life. Women caregivers, nurses, teachers, farmers, food vendors and other essential workers are providing the services that keep communities, economies and societies running. We must recognize these women as the peacebuilders they are, at the local level, in communities around the world. We must also recognize women who step up every day in conflict zones to help those at risk, mediating between groups to enable access by civilians and to humanitarian aid, building trust and strengthening social bonds.

Thirdly, the Council's resolution called for women to be in positions of leadership and decision-making everywhere. We have seen the remarkable success that many women leaders have had in containing the pandemic while supporting people's livelihoods. This confirms an obvious truth, that is, that institutions, organizations, companies and, yes, Governments work better when they include half of society, rather than ignoring it. Women's leadership and decision-making is not a favour to women; it is essential to peace and progress for all. We cannot hope to turn the climate crisis around, reduce social divisions or make sustained peace without the full contributions of all of society. Women's leadership in all spheres will be critical to finding the fastest, safest route through the pandemic and to building a more peaceful and stable future.

Twenty years since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), there have been important changes to the ways in which the United Nations works on international peace and security, the resources we invest and the expertise we deploy. The women's movement and its allies in Governments and international institutions have changed discriminatory laws, reached milestones in political representation and international jurisprudence and made a difference in peace processes. But gender equality is first and foremost a question of power, and wherever we look power structures are dominated by men. Women lead only 7 per cent of countries. Three quarters of the members of COVID-19 task forces and committees are men. Decisions about international peace and security are still overwhelmingly made by men. Even as

we improve the representation of women in United Nations mediation teams, they remain largely excluded from delegations to peace talks and negotiations.

Let us take some recent examples. Are women fairly represented in the rooms where the future of Afghanistan is being discussed between the Taliban and the Government, or in Mali as it embarks on a political transition? Is the Sudan on track to meet the 40 per cent quota for women's representation in parliament, set out in the new Constitutional Declaration? Will South Sudan meet the 35 per cent quota for women's representation across the executive arm, included in the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution to the Conflict? Are political actors and conflict parties in Yemen including women at the negotiating table? If the answer to these questions is no, then clearly we face serious obstacles in the task before us.

Women's meaningful and effective participation in mediation matters. It broadens the prospects for peace, stability, social cohesion and economic advancement.

Ensuring that women play their full part in peace processes also requires stronger partnerships among the United Nations, regional organizations, Member States and civil society. We must use the full range of tools at our disposal and find innovative solutions that have a rapid and decisive impact on women's representation. Temporary special measures, including quotas, can make a huge difference. I witnessed this myself as a politician in my own country.

And it is time that we, the United Nations and Member States, consider how we can best use our political influence, funding and support to incentivize and create conditions for women's equal representation and participation in peace talks. Women must be included as a priority from the outset. And as peace processes move online during the pandemic, efforts to promote women's participation must keep pace.

When I became Secretary-General, ending discrimination against women within the United Nations was one of my first priorities. We achieved gender parity in the leadership of the United Nations at the beginning of 2020, with 90 women and 90 men as full-time senior leaders. We also have parity among our Resident Coordinators, including in countries affected by conflict. In field missions, women's leadership leapt from 21 per cent to 41 per cent in just three years; in our special political missions, 52 per cent of heads or deputy heads of those missions are now women. I am determined to push for parity at all levels, well ahead of deadlines.

Women's full participation is also relevant for uniformed personnel. I commend the Council for adopting the first resolution this year focused on women in peacekeeping. The number of women deployed are still too low, but they increased significantly in the past five years. This is important not just because the United Nations must reflect the people it serves, but also because women bring their own perspectives and expertise to every issue — including peace and security.

One of the foundational tenets of the women and peace and security agenda is that weapons do not make us safer. This has been proven once again by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2019, global military expenditure reached \$1.9 trillion, following the largest annual increase in a decade. Meanwhile, women in some countries are at greatest physical risk where they should be safest: in their own homes. Their chances of suffering violence may be equivalent to or higher than in a war zone. The COVID-19 pandemic has only increased this threat. The women and peace and security agenda challenges the relentless focus on inter-State conflict at the expense of measures to protect women.

In the past 20 years, academic research and practice have demonstrated the close links between gender equality, conflict prevention and peace. The women and peace and security agenda calls for broader consideration of ways to prevent

conflict, prevent gender-based violence and create peaceful, inclusive communities and societies.

As we recover from the pandemic, we face a choice, namely, to continue down the path of increasing militarization, conflict and intergenerational losses or to work towards greater inclusion, equality and prevention of conflicts and crises of all kinds. For Governments and international institutions everywhere, gender equality is one of the surest ways of building social cohesion and trust, and inspiring people to be responsible, participating citizens. For the women mediators, peacebuilders, human rights defenders and essential workers who risk their lives to build peace, and for the millions of women, men, girls and boys whose hopes for peace and security rest on more equal and just societies, we cannot wait another 20 years to implement the women and peace and security agenda. Let us start that work together today.

Annex 2

Statement by the Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, James Cleverly

Today we mark a great achievement, the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). Twenty years ago, that resolution recognized that sustainable peace relied on inclusive peace. It provided a framework to address the disproportionate impact that fell on women and girls on the ground. And it advocated for their meaningful inclusion as agents of change.

As a global force for good, the United Kingdom has been proud to lead the way on the women and peace and security agenda as penholder for resolution 1325 (2000). We work with Governments and non-governmental organizations around the world to share good practices and expertise, such as supporting those brave women who are resolving conflict, countering violent extremism and building peace at the grass-roots level.

As proud champions of the women and peace and security agenda, we will not accept any rollback of the progress made on women's rights over the past 20 years. There are 10 Security Council resolutions dedicated to advancing this agenda. We must ensure that those resolutions are taken seriously and implemented fully. We are not prepared to un-pick the framework that has been so hard-fought. That is only right. We owe it not only to women but also to global peace. Women's rights are human rights, and it is not a matter up for discussion.

As we look ahead to the next 20 years, we must reflect on the challenges before us. Because the truth is that, despite our best intentions, we face a widening implementation gap. But the United Kingdom is working hard to bridge the gap and welcomes others to join us in doing so.

We fully support women's meaningful participation in peace processes. And that is why I am proud to announce that the United Kingdom is dedicating £1 million of funding to the Women Mediators across the Commonwealth network. Their vital work increases the recognition of the role of women mediators in peace processes, from local to global, ensuring they get the acknowledgment, respect and support they deserve. We also continue to support the Elsie Initiative for women in peace operations.

The voices of women peacebuilders must be heard and amplified. But for many, speaking up and carrying out their vital work comes at great personal risk. No woman should have to risk her safety to heal her community. That is why I am proud that the United Kingdom has supported the International Civil Society Action Network in developing the protection framework for women peacebuilders. This vital piece of work provides guidance to States and multilateral organizations on how best to prevent and respond to reprisals. And I am pleased to announce that the United Kingdom will formally commit to supporting this framework and its recommendations. I urge others to do the same.

It is not only the voices of women but ethnic, religious, sexual and disabled minorities who are silenced. The deadline for the Sustainable Development Goals is only 10 years away — we must hear diverse voices at all levels.

We also face additional threat from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). It has laid bare many inequalities, but the most disproportionate impact is on women and girls. The impact will be felt for years to come and threaten hard-won progress on gender equality. That is why I am proud to announce that, along with Gender

Action for Peace and Security and partners, the United Kingdom is committing £250,000 in funding to undertake research on the gendered impacts of COVID-19 in fragile and conflict-affected States. This vital research will help ensure that the needs of women and girls are considered in any future crisis response — because, ultimately, peace is not a finished product or a final result; it is a continuous effort. So I call on all our partners to continue to push for real progress on this vital agenda.

It is time to turn intentions into actions — for the next 20 years and, indeed, for future decades to come.

Annex 3**Statement by the Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office of Germany, Michelle Müntefering**

Twenty years ago resolution 1325 (2000) was a small revolution. For the first time, a united Security Council made it crystal clear that women's full, equal and meaningful participation is required to maintain world peace and security; gender equality is not only about fairness and human rights but also about security and conflict prevention; and sexual and gender-based violence is not an inevitable by-product of war but a crime that must be punished and abolished.

The adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) was the result of an exceptional wave of civil society engagement. Hopes were high. And the pledge was clear: women's voices were to be heard, and their seat at the peace table was no longer rejected. It is clear who is accountable to these expectations: us, the States Members of the United Nations.

Twenty years and nine hard-won Security Council resolutions later, the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda continues to be too weak. Women are still excluded from peace processes. Their rights and interests continue to be ignored in building post-conflict societies. So let me be frank, as a global community we have not lived up to our commitment. Too often, conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence remains unpunished. Even worse, in the past years we have seen a global pushback on women's rights. Principles and rights that we agreed upon decades ago are once again questioned.

Let us pause for a second and think about this. Twenty years ago all members of the Security Council agreed to the principles that are enshrined in the agenda. I doubt that today we would still be able to achieve such a milestone.

Germany is determined to advance the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Over the past two years as a Security Council member, we have made women and peace and security a key priority of our work. We initiated resolution 2467 (2019) to strengthen the rights of all survivors of sexual violence and to hold perpetrators accountable. Survivors' human rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, must be guaranteed.

We are convinced that including civil society in our debates is vital. Many of them, such as Ilwad Elman, who just won the Africa Prize in Berlin, were quoted today. Civil society plays an essential role in filling the women and peace and security agenda with life. We gave them a voice in the Security Council during our Council presidencies. In April 2019 and July 2020 alone, 26 civil society speakers addressed the Council. Now the Council must follow up on their recommendations. And we pushed hard to include the women and peace and security agenda in all Council products. Our aim is to make the women and peace and security mainstreaming approach the norm. That also means that mandate renewals and sanction regimes need to be gender responsive.

Let me be clear: we have a joint responsibility to implement what we have agreed upon. And that is without watering down any of the commitments that we have signed up for. We have all the necessary instruments at hand. What is needed is the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and all subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security.

Last year, Foreign Minister Heiko Maas called for specific commitments to implement the agenda before the twentieth anniversary. Seventy-five Members States and United Nations entities came forward with concrete proposals, the majority of which have been implemented.

Let me emphasize our deep respect to all the activists outside, the women peacebuilders. They do a fantastic job on the ground. We can and should support these women. Support, funding and protection are the three keywords here. We will continue to support civil society and protect women peacebuilders and women's human rights' defenders inside and outside of the Security Council. As board members of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, we are planning to further step up our support in addition to the €4 million that we have already contributed in the past two years.

Annex 4**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations, Philippe Kridelka**

[Original: French]

As we celebrated the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations last month, we were reminded that on the day the Charter was signed in 1945, only four of the 850 delegates present were women, namely, Bertha Lutz of Brazil, Minerva Bernardino of the Dominican Republic, Virginia Gildersleeve of the United States and Wu Yi-Fang of China. We have come a long way since then.

On 31 October 2000, the Security Council adopted resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. A true milestone, this text recognizes the importance of integrating the gender aspect in peace and security initiatives. This resulted in a series of resolutions on women's rights in conflict situations, making a clear contribution to the four pillars of the women and peace and security agenda, that is, prevention, protection, participation and relief and rehabilitation.

It has also paved the way for the creation of a solid set of implementation tools — the establishment of the Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security. To date, nearly 90 countries have adopted national action plans for the implementation of the objectives of the women and peace and security strategy, and several regions have adopted regional frameworks, such as the 2019 European Union Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

Belgium is currently implementing its third national action plan. The realization of women's rights and gender equality, the full and equal participation of women in all decision-making processes, combating violence against women and girls and promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights are long-standing priorities in Belgium's domestic and foreign policies.

This year, Belgium has committed to increasing its annual contributions to projects specifically aimed at combating gender-based violence and — in the light of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic — to allocating a special budget for preventing and addressing gender-based violence. Work within the local context is essential in this regard, and we are prioritizing women and women-led organizations. Belgium supports the essential efforts of its partners in these areas, such as UN-Women, the Oxford Famine Relief Organization, Plan International, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and others.

For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, one of the three target countries of the Belgian national action plan, Belgium supports projects in the east of the country to strengthen grass-roots organizations that tackle issues of gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive rights and the training and empowerment of rural women, such as Mamas for Africa in South Kivu. As a result, considerable progress has been made. But, as the Secretary-General has said, many challenges remain.

Women are still underrepresented in many global decision-making bodies and peace processes. This is particularly the case in some peace and security processes, such as counter-terrorism and disarmament. We must learn from, and be inspired by, good examples. For instance, in the Central African Republic, the Peacebuilding Fund financed a project on women's political participation. With the support of Belgium, the United Nations Development Programme and UN-Women set up a

working group to influence discussions on the electoral code and make the text gender-sensitive.

We must push for minimum standards, while ensuring that women are fully involved as equal partners and from the earliest stages of every political and peace process. The peace agreement on Colombia signed in Havana is exemplary in this regard. We stress the importance of the meaningful participation of women in the peace negotiations on Afghanistan in Doha.

We must give civil society the means to act. In this regard, we are concerned about the increasing threats to women human rights defenders and the difficulties faced by women peacemakers. By empowering civil society leaders and women human rights defenders and combating the negative stereotypes and structural obstacles they face, we can ensure that women can participate fully in peacebuilding. We must have a zero-tolerance policy towards reprisals against civil society activists.

In Libya, for example, civil society activists and women politicians face increasing reprisals. In July, it had been a year since a member of parliament, Siham Sergewa, was abducted from her home. Calls to investigate her abduction and ensure accountability for her abduction have not been heeded. These attacks were an attempt to intimidate other women, journalists, and human rights activists involved in political life. We must intensify our efforts to prevent violations of women's rights and hold the perpetrators of such acts accountable. The Council can apply sanctions against perpetrators of conflict-related sexual violence — for example, in South Sudan.

In order to improve our implementation strategies, we need to fill the gaps in data collection and increase our knowledge on the most pressing issues for women and girls.

Donors must commit to conditioning their contributions to the implementation of gender-responsive planning, including by providing sustained and robust funding to women's organizations.

Throughout its 20 years of working to advance the women and peace and security agenda, the Council has shown remarkable unity. Let us continue on this path. We must take action to advance gender equality and leave no one behind.

Annex 5**Statement by the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Zhang Jun**

[Original: English and Chinese]

I thank Secretary-General Guterres and Executive Director Mlambo-Ngcuka for their briefings. I also thank all other briefers for their statements.

This year marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, and the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. It is also the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These anniversaries are meaningful reminders of the interconnectedness of promoting gender equality, maintaining international peace and security and achieving sustainable development. The international community should capitalize on these anniversaries to reaffirm its commitment, increase input and inject new impetus into the women and peace and security agenda and women's development.

First, we must continue to support women in playing an important role in peace and security. Twenty years ago, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1325 (2000), which re-examined and defined the relationship between women and peace. As Secretary-General Guterres put it, it was the first time women were recognized not only as victims of war but also as people with their own agency and expertise in finding peaceful solutions to conflict.

Progress has been made in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in recent years, and women are playing an increasingly important role in the field of peace and security. As we speak, female Special Representatives and Special Envoys are working tirelessly for the political settlement of hotspot issues, taking on risks and difficulties, and countless women peacekeepers and volunteers are promoting reconciliation and reconstruction, helping the needy in conflict zones. We should continue to uphold the spirit of resolution 1325 (2000) and support women in participating on an equal footing in the peace process in a comprehensive and effective manner and in making greater contributions.

When it comes to maintaining international peace and security, Chinese women have never been absent. Over the past 30 years, more than 1,000 Chinese women have participated in United Nations peacekeeping operations. They are found patrolling in the infantry battalion of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, clearing minefields in the engineering company of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and treating patients in the peacekeeping hospitals of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In May, Ms. Xin Yuan, a senior demining staff officer of UNIFIL and an outstanding representative of Chinese female peacekeepers, was awarded the United Nations Certificate of Recognition for her work advocating gender equality in the military.

Secondly, we must advance the women and peace and security agenda in a holistic and balanced manner. Prevention, protection, participation, relief and recovery are the four pillars of the women and peace and security agenda. Only by promoting the work in these four areas in a balanced manner can we continue to achieve steady progress. We should make every effort to prevent conflicts, give special attention to eliminating the root causes of conflicts and create a peaceful environment for the development of women. The Security Council should fulfil its

primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, promote the political settlement of hotspot issues and encourage all parties to respond to the Secretary-General's appeal for global ceasefire by committing themselves to resolving disputes through dialogue and consultation.

We should also strengthen the protection of women, resolutely oppose any violence against women and girls, reject sexual violence as a tactic of war, vigorously combat terrorism and protect women from terrorist and extremist forces. We should respect women's right to speak and to decision-making, ensure their representation in peace negotiations and support the participation of more women in mediation and national governance. We need to protect the legitimate rights and interests of women during and after conflict, provide timely humanitarian assistance to women affected by conflict and give full consideration to their actual difficulties and needs. China will participate in the work of the Council's Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security and, together with other members of the Council, contribute to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions.

Thirdly, we must promote gender equality and women's empowerment. The issue of women and armed conflict is one of the 12 priorities in the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action. The women and peace and security agenda should be advanced within the overall framework of women's empowerment and development, in concert with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We should reaffirm our commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and capitalize on the Decade of Action and delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals, so that women's empowerment becomes the early harvest in our efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda. In doing so, we can promote development through women's empowerment and promote peace through development.

We should elevate the protection of women's rights and interests, respond to such challenges as gender-based violence and discrimination, increase women's voice in political, economic, cultural and social affairs, promote social stability and eliminate the root causes of conflict. We should also increase investment in women's education, medical care, employment and so forth, improve women's livelihoods, eradicate poverty among women and promote women's development in tandem with social and economic progress, so as to remove obstacles and create favourable conditions for women's effective participation in the peace process.

As the coronavirus disease rages across the world, it has had a severe impact on the economy, employment and people's lives, and has brought about greater challenges for women. In fighting the pandemic and promoting economic and social recovery, special attention should be paid to vulnerable groups, such as women and children, so that they can overcome the negative impact of the pandemic faster.

Fourthly, we must strengthen global cooperation for women's development. The women and peace and security agenda is an integral part of the global cause of women's development and requires the joint efforts of all countries, international organizations such as the United Nations, regional and subregional organizations, and all sectors of society. We should promote multilateralism and uphold the authority of the United Nations. The Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and UN-Women should work in accordance with their respective mandates and make their due contributions. We should take seriously and give full play to the unique strengths of regional and subregional organizations such as the African Union and the League of Arab States, and encourage regional initiatives and practices based on the actual conditions prevailing in those regions. We should fully respect the sovereignty and ownership of the countries concerned, support them in advancing the women and peace and

security agenda in line with their national conditions, and guide women's groups and civil society to play a constructive role.

China has been actively promoting global cooperation in women's development, implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the relevant United Nations and Security Council resolutions through concrete action. Five years ago, President Xi Jinping announced a series of initiatives at the Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, including the building of 100 health projects for women and children and 100 "happy campus projects", and providing vocational training for 130,000 women in developing countries. As of now these projects have been fully implemented.

At the high-level Meeting on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held earlier this month, President Xi put forward the important initiative of convening another Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in 2025, announced another \$10 million donation to UN-Women in the next five years, and pledged to continue funding the UNESCO Prize for Girls' and Women's Education.

China stands ready to continue to work with the international community in advancing the women and peace and security agenda, promoting the greater role of women in peace and security, accelerating the realization of gender equality and women's empowerment, and contributing to women's development around the world.

Annex 6**Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations**

[Original: English and Spanish]

The Dominican Republic condemns the cowardly act of terrorism that took place in France. We express our condolences to the families of the victims.

I thank the presidency for having convened this meeting on women and peace and security, and recognize the leadership of the Secretary-General and Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka in this area. Our appreciation goes also to the briefers for bringing their experience and recommendations to the Council.

Without a doubt, gender equality is a predictor of peace. This year marks a historic milestone for the women and peace and security agenda, with not only the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) but also the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. This juncture increases our determination to step up efforts towards the full implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

Regrettably, as we have heard today, we are still falling short of our goals. This calls for not only ongoing political support and determination but also concerted action.

In speaking of full implementation, we would underscore the need to recognize the interrelated, inseparable and mutually reinforcing nature of all its elements. In our view, full implementation involves addressing the intersecting forms of discrimination many women face, as well as the removal of the structural barriers that prevent the inclusive participation of women in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

We may agree or disagree on certain policies, but it is unacceptable that in the twenty-first century, in the name of cultural, traditional or religious norms, women's rights continue to be undermined.

In too many contexts, women's rights violations are deeply rooted in inequality and widespread discrimination against women, and yet they are often swept under the rug. The interconnections with the commitments made under the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and its general recommendation no. 30 cannot be ignored.

Civil society and women human rights defenders, as well as their civic space, must be protected by States and supported without reserve by the Council and the United Nations so that they can carry out their critical work without fear of reprisal.

Many peace agreements do not include gender provisions that would adequately address women's security and peacebuilding needs — another reason why the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and young women in peace processes and in decision-making is not negotiable. It has to be at the core of any peace process for it to be credible and sustainable.

For example, women organizations' repeated calls for disarmament and arms control remain unanswered. The Council should not lose sight of the gendered impacts of small arms and light weapons. Decisions, planning and efforts aimed at preventing their illicit trafficking must involve the participation of women. Conflict prevention also requires converting a culture of impunity into one of accountability, including redress for victims of conflict-related sexual violence and gender-based violence.

The coronavirus disease is disproportionately impacting women and girls, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected areas, threatening decades of progress towards women's rights and equality. Nevertheless, against all odds, women have become critical figures in responding to the virus in their communities and countries.

We continue to encourage the inclusion of gender provisions in the design, planning, implementation and evaluation of peace operations. An increase in the number of women peacekeepers is key, as is the inclusion of gender-disaggregated data in mission reports and the deployment of gender advisers and women's protection advisers with the necessary level of seniority.

The Dominican Republic is honoured to co-chair the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security this year. The Group is a key platform for improving the implementation of that agenda on the ground. We encourage the effective use of the information and recommendations derived from it, which would enable us to better monitor and coordinate implementation activities.

As we continue to face challenges in implementing the women and peace and security agenda, it is clear that the focus must be on delivering on the ambitious goals of its full normative framework. All root causes of conflict need to be addressed, including gender inequality and discrimination against women and girls, violations of international law and emerging threats to international peace and security such as climate change. Our resolve to fulfil those commitments has not waned; rather, the sense of urgency has increased.

Let us ensure that the gains achieved in these past 20 years are not derailed and work together to strengthen them as we move forward.

Finally, Danai Gurira just told us that the Security Council has repeatedly invited women to share their experiences and serve as an inspiration; it is the turn of the Council to show that we are listening. The message is clear.

Annex 7**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations, Sven Jürgenson**

We thank all briefers for their interventions.

The objective of today's debate is to address the main achievements and challenges in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. I would focus on the following points.

The foundation of the women and peace and security agenda is built on human rights. Violations of human rights are recognized as one of the triggers of conflict. Restrictions on women's full enjoyment of human rights and the absence of gender equality increase the risks they face in conflict and undermine their full, equal and meaningful participation in peace processes. Women's access to sexual and reproductive health care and rights is equally relevant in conflict and can be life-saving for survivors of sexual violence. Pushback on the human rights of women also weakens the women and peace and security agenda. We cannot accept that.

Turning to implementation and accountability, all of us have undertaken concrete commitments on women and peace and security — nationally, regionally, at the United Nations and as the Security Council. Our record of fulfilling them is mixed. We welcome the steps to increase accountability for the implementation of actions related to the women and peace and security agenda. That was one of the reasons for Estonia's decision to join the Generation Equality Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action as a catalytic member. We are also preparing Estonia's third national action plan on women, peace and security. We welcome the report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/946) and its recommendations.

Making women and peace and security an integral part of each Council discussion and outcome is vital. The Council has taken a clear decision in that regard. Yet often it is not able to agree to live up to its decision in mandate renewals and country-specific resolutions. We also need to improve our follow-up on the deliberations and recommendations arising from the Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security.

With respect to participation, the data is clear: the inclusion of women increases the chances for sustainable peace and thus the effectiveness of Council action. Yet women constituted, on average, no more than 13 per cent of negotiators and 6 per cent of signatories in major peace processes between 1992 and 2019, and this proportion remains low. Given the shrinking political, civic, and physical space for women's participation, the Council needs to speak up for this clearly.

Cooperation by various stakeholders, in particular the key role of civil-society organizations and women peacebuilders, is important. The women and peace and security agenda would not have come into being and it would not have been possible to make it a reality without them. The cooperation of diverse women civil-society representatives with the Council needs to be broader and more meaningful. We need political will and joint action to stand up to threats and reprisals against women human rights defenders. The United Nations has verified that in the four years leading up to 2019, 102 women human rights defenders, journalists and trade unionists were killed for their work; in reality, this is an undercount.

In terms of resources, we need to back up commitments with funding. For United Nations peacekeeping and political missions, that includes supporting women protection advisers, gender advisers and human rights officers. It also means adequate resourcing and gender expertise in all sanctions expert groups. Furthermore, it entails support for women's organizations and initiatives.

Each of those challenges has been magnified by the coronavirus disease epidemic.

The Secretary-General pointed out that there have been notable achievements on the women and peace and security agenda, but that progress has been too slow, too narrow, with setbacks and easy to reverse. As a member of the Security Council, which adopted resolution 1325 (2000) 20 years ago, we reaffirm our conviction that we need to do better and that we cannot take a step back from the clear commitments that we have made.

Annex 8**Statement by the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Nicolas de Rivière**

[Original: English and French]

I thank the Secretary-General and all the other speakers for their presentations. I would like to commend Russia for making women's rights a priority of its presidency of the Security Council.

Twenty years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), we are still far from having achieved the goals set. This is no time for celebration.

Progress in this area has been undermined by a succession of crises of which women are systematically the victims. Backtracking is a constant threat in every conflict or crisis, including the current pandemic. The time has passed from acknowledgement to action. The Security Council must not tolerate any regression. That is why it is essential to preserve each and every one of our resolutions and, above all, to work together to implement them.

Although women are often key players in crisis response, they are still insufficiently present in all peace and post-crisis processes. Progress has been made in Afghanistan, Yemen, Libya, Mali and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in particular. But negotiators and mediators do not have the place they deserve. Let us be honest. The conditions for this exist; it is simply a matter of making the most of them. That is why France finances training for civilian and military women, in conjunction with the Department of Peace Operations, UN-Women and the International Organization of la Francophonie.

At the same time, we must pursue determined action against the scourge of sexual and gender-based violence. The prevention of such violence is not a choice but a requirement. Such violence must be suppressed.

Access to sexual and reproductive rights and health care is being hampered, and the coronavirus disease pandemic has exacerbated the difficulties in that respect. We regret the politicization of these issues, which leads to losing sight of the best interests of women and girls. France condemns all sexist, misogynistic or homophobic discourse and supports actions in favour of victims through a significant contribution to the Global Fund for Survivors of Sexual Violence created by Dr. Mukwege and Ms. Murad.

The implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) requires an effort on the part of everyone. That is why national action plans are so important, and France is finalizing its third plan. It has strengthened the integration of gender issues into its humanitarian and development aid in order to provide targeted support to women in conflict and post-conflict situations. France will launch a €120 million fund this year to support women's organizations, particularly in developing countries.

Finally, I would like to recall that France will host, in partnership with Mexico and UN-Women, the Generation Equality Forum in June 2021. On that occasion, a women and peace and security compact will be launched in order to build on existing commitments and raise new funding.

France pays tribute to all feminists and human rights defenders around the world and will continue to make the full implementation of the women and peace and security resolutions a major focus of its action in the Security Council.

Annex 9**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations, Dian Triansyah Djani**

Let me begin by thanking Russia for having organized this important debate as we commemorate 20 years of the women and peace and security agenda.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of UN-Women for their statements as well as all briefers for their compelling presentations.

Twenty years ago, the Council adopted resolution 1325 (2000), which amplifies our voice on women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace processes. The women and peace and security agenda is an important platform for elevating women's voices and leadership. By investing in women, we invest in peace.

Today the role of women in conflict situation remains crucial amid the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and complex tensions around the world. Against that backdrop, I would like to focus my statement on three fundamental points.

First, women's participation needs to be further enhanced with regard to peace and security. We should not be complacent about what we have achieved over the past 20 years.

As mentioned by Secretary-General, the percentage of women involved in major peace processes worldwide remains low — only 13 per cent of negotiators and 6 per cent of mediators.

We need more women in decision-making positions and more women as negotiators and mediators. Indonesia therefore continues to support the involvement of more women mediators and negotiators. The goal is not only to bring greater legitimacy to peace processes but also to ensure the sustainability of peace itself.

Last March, our Minister for Foreign Affairs initiated the Afghanistan-Indonesia Women Solidarity Network during her visit to Afghanistan. The network aims to increase the role of the women of Afghanistan in peace processes.

Indonesia is also developing the Southeast Asia Network of Women Peace Negotiators and Mediators. That network will encourage more women in the region to actively participate in the process of the mediation of conflict.

Secondly, the role of women peacekeepers should be continually strengthened, not by merely increasing the numbers but also by ensuring an enabling environment for them in the field and enhancing their capacity through training. Their broad skill sets are valuable assets for ensuring peace, including to protect victims of sexual violence in conflict.

Hence, Indonesia initiated resolution 2538 (2020), adopted last August, as the first resolution that specifically emphasizes the valuable role of women in peacekeeping efforts. Women peacekeepers have proved themselves in the maintenance of peace as well as in community engagement, as has also been alluded by the briefer Ms. Natalia Emelianova and others. We hope that as a result of that resolution there will be more women peacekeepers in the field.

Today, 157 Indonesian military and police women are serving in various missions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, our women peacekeepers have been actively promoting health education in local communities and assisting the local population in creating a healthy environment.

Thirdly, a multi-stakeholder approach is central to women's participation in sustaining peace.

The partnership of national authorities with local communities and civil society is essential to ensure the implementation of women's participation in peace and security processes. Since 2014, Indonesia has integrated that approach into our national action plan on strengthening women's empowerment and gender equality in social conflict. This approach has also been greatly beneficial to preventing radicalization and counter-terrorism by engaging local communities. Now, Indonesia has approximately 30 Peace Villages, which promote the role and participation of women in order to reduce the potential for violent extremism and terrorism in society.

Looking to the future, Indonesia envisions the women and peace and security agenda as a transformative force leading to greater effectiveness in peacebuilding and the sustaining of peace itself.

We strongly support the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Indonesia will not stop at this time. Rather, we will continue to be actively involved in the initiatives of Member States and multi-stakeholder initiatives to complement the advancement of women and peace and security agenda.

I would like to echo the Secretary-General in that we cannot wait another 20 years. We have to start now. I reiterate the message of our Foreign Minister, Madame Retno Marsudi, that by investing in women, we invest in peace.

Annex 10**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations, Niandou Aougi**

[Original: French]

Each of today's speakers has reminded us, in their outstanding statements, of the need to continue to challenge the status quo. Indeed, too few women participate meaningfully in peace processes, and women and girls continue to be the primary victims of the consequences of conflicts around the world. For a country like mine, in a region plagued by multiple crises, the women and peace and security agenda is not just a concept; it is fundamental to maintaining peace and preventing conflict.

Twenty years have passed since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) and, although progress has been made, there is still a long way to go. Women remain largely underrepresented in decision-making. My country, the Niger, is working to change those trends. Last October, the Niger increased the quota of women in elected positions from 15 per cent to 25 per cent and appointments to high-level positions within the State from 25 per cent to 30 per cent.

Here in the Security Council, we, too, must do more. Consultations with civil-society organizations are important and must be followed up appropriately. Five years after the peace and security reviews in 2015, only half of the recommendations made to the United Nations on the women and peace and security agenda have progressed.

It is clear that there is a need for more systematic follow-up and more effective implementation of those recommendations. The Niger remains determined to support women peacebuilders, whose role we consider essential in our work. That is why during our presidency last month we invited several members of civil society, including four young women, to make presentations to the Council.

The gap between our ambition, our commitments and reality cannot be bridged if we do not adequately support the vital work of women peacebuilders. Women's organizations remain underfunded. It is deeply unfortunate that only 0.2 per cent of total bilateral aid for interventions in vulnerable and conflict areas has gone directly to women's organizations. We all agree that there is a need to allocate more funds to women's organizations working in peacebuilding, especially those working at the grass-roots level in communities.

My delegation stresses the need to address the gender-related factors that amplify conflict and how they intersect with existing vulnerabilities, for instance in the situation in the Sahel countries, where it is clear that further analysis and work on the intersection of the women and peace and security agenda and climate issues is crucial. That is just one example. We believe that monitoring the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda and carrying out regular policy analyses is one of the most important steps we could take towards more effective policy formulation and implementation.

We welcome in that regard the development of the African Union's Continental Results Framework for monitoring the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. That framework, which is a major step towards implementation, must be supported and reproduced in other contexts.

Let me add that tackling some of the structural inequalities and the existing discrimination against women and girls remains paramount for conflict prevention. Access to education is one of the surest ways to tackle it. During the open debate held last month under our presidency, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2020/8) recognizing the gendered nature of attacks on schools

and demanding greater protection for all children, girls in particular. We called for more attention to be paid to how conflict affects young women and girls, especially given the increased incidence of sexual and gender-based violence. Measures must take into account the gender dimensions of conflict and how they amplify existing inequalities.

While women are often the primary victims in conflict situations, they are also the impetus for major changes. We have seen the role played by young women in the Sudan and, more recently, in other parts of the African continent. Young women peacebuilders have greatly expanded the civic space. It is essential that greater protection be afforded women human rights defenders, who face serious reprisals for their vital work. In that regard, the Niger supports the United Kingdom-funded Women Peacebuilders Protection Framework and is committed to strengthening our national legal and political safety net for women peacebuilders.

Like 30 other African countries, the Niger has started to implement a national action plan for peace and security for women, which was developed following a consultation process involving both women and men from all parts of the country. This is an important instrument, and we urge other countries that have not yet adopted one to do so.

Finally, the gender vulnerabilities that the coronavirus disease has highlighted only underscore the systemic exclusion that women face in many areas. It is in that context that my delegation would make the following recommendations.

First, there is a need to allocate more resources to local organizations of women peacebuilders working in the area of peace and security.

Secondly, my delegation, as a troop-contributing country, calls for the more effective participation of women in peacekeeping operations and missions. The Niger is particularly keen to see a strengthening of the trend towards the participation of women in the police force. We also call for the strengthening of early-warning systems.

In the same vein, the relatively low number of women in high-level positions in political and peace and security institutions, as well as the unbalanced geographic representation of women in leadership positions, must be addressed. We therefore call for the full participation of women, on an equal and meaningful basis, in all processes mandated by the United Nations.

Thirdly, it is crucial that peace agreements continue to include special provisions for women. We recognize the key role of women in peace processes, but we regret that only 20 per cent of the peace agreements signed between 1990 and 2018 contain special provisions for women.

Finally, allow me to make a few remarks on the existing normative framework on the women and peace and security agenda. It is a robust agenda, but, as has been underlined in many past and ongoing discussions, what is lacking is its effective implementation.

To conclude, I would pay tribute to the thousands of women who led to the creation of this agenda. We owe the women and peace and security agenda to those women defenders and builders of peace, in particular from the South, who demanded change and sometimes even risked their lives for peace, reconstruction and social justice — and, to put it simply, to have their human rights upheld. It is our responsibility to ensure that the hard-won gains made since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) are not only maintained but also strengthened and fully implemented as a matter of urgency.

Annex 11**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Vassily Nebenzia**

[Original: Russian]

We express our appreciation to the Secretary-General, António Guterres, for his assessment of the progress made on the women and peace and security agenda. We also listened very attentively to the statements made by the Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN-Women, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka; UN-Women Goodwill Ambassador Danai Gurira; a woman peacekeeper in the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei, Ms. Natalia Emelianova; and civil-society representative Zarqa Yaftali. Their joint efforts contribute to the achievement of peace and security and to promoting the role of women in peacekeeping processes.

This month marks 20 years since the holding of the Security Council's first open debate on women and peace and security and the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). This year also marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which is in fact a road map for achieving gender equality and improving the status of women.

Open debates on this issue have become a tradition for the Security Council and give rise to great interest among States, as they serve as a platform for discussing the progress made in the implementation of its resolutions and ways of enhancing the effectiveness of efforts made in this area at the national, regional and international levels. We regret that this year it was not possible to hold face-to-face meetings owing to pandemic-related restrictions.

In the 20 years since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the Security Council has elaborated common approaches to the implementation of this and other documents on the issue of women and peace and security. They focus on four elements: prevention, protection, participation and sustaining peace in situations of armed conflict. The necessary regulatory framework has been developed, and international cooperation has been established.

The involvement and direct participation of women in the prevention and settlement of armed conflicts, as we heard first-hand today, allows for more sustainable and trust-based relations with the local population, helps prevent and investigate cases of violence against women and children, and contributes to the effectiveness of follow-up measures for the rehabilitation and reintegration of victims. Russia partners with the United Nations in training foreign women peacekeepers at certified training centres, including the one in Domodedovo, which is part of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Today, the proportion of women among Russian peacekeepers in United Nations peacekeeping operations stands at about 17 per cent.

As noted in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/946), the percentage of women participating in peacekeeping, including in negotiations, is steadily increasing. That dynamic is very encouraging.

Important areas in which efforts must be made include ensuring women's access to resources, technology and the banking sector in the context of the sustainable post-conflict recovery of States. We believe that increased attention should be paid to issues related to the development of women, overcoming poverty, women's access to education in armed-conflict-affected countries. Family is of particular value and must be protected.

To effectively promote the women and peace and security agenda, we must focus on concrete tasks and avoid any duplication of the efforts of the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission.

In that context, I would like to inform the Council about Russia's intention to join in the work of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security, established in 2015. Our goal is to contribute constructively to the work of the Group on the basis of non-politicized, transparent and democratic decision-making, which is required to establish a mutually respectful inter-State dialogue on this vital topic.

The Security Council must work collectively. We hope that in the year of the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) it will be able to demonstrate its unity.

Annex 12**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations, Halimah DeShong**

I would like to thank the Russian Federation for convening this important annual open debate. We also thank the briefers for their valuable contributions.

The adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), 20 years ago, marked a reassertion of the long-held demands to eradicate gender inequality as a prerequisite for inclusive development and sustainable peace. From its inception, the women and peace and security agenda has existed in alignment with the central purpose for which the Security Council was established — to maintain international peace and security by ensuring justice, promoting the rule of law and safeguarding fundamental freedoms for all without distinction. On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is proud to join Member States in recognizing and celebrating the robust framework established by resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent Council outcomes on women and peace and security. We pay tribute to women civil society, the early architects of that agenda, and call attention to the wider guiding framework established under general recommendation No. 30 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Today, however, with the underrepresentation of women in peacekeeping operations and peacebuilding, escalating levels of sexual and gender-based violence in many situations of conflict, significantly underfunded regional and national gender policies and action plans, women civil society under increased threats of violence, increasing numbers of displaced women and children and the gendered impact of the coronavirus disease in conflict-affected countries and regions, we must urgently address the significant gaps in translating the existing normative framework into action.

To do that the Security Council must ensure that gender analysis and a commitment to gender justice guide all deliberations, outcome documents, operations and actions. Gender equality, partly expressed through the full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership of diverse women in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, is attainable only with the elimination of all forms of gendered violence and discrimination. Indeed, the Secretary-General's report (S/2020/946) points to an urgent need to remove the structural barriers and intersecting discrimination experienced by women, in support of gender parity in participation and leadership.

The sustained advocacy of women's organizations and the political will that have led to the significant participation of Colombian women in formal mechanisms to monitor the peace agreement and to trace the implementation of its gender provisions must become the norm, rather than the exception, across all conflict-affected countries and regions. Similarly, we applaud the efforts of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti as it works with the Government of Haiti on issues such as gender-responsive policing and the scourge of sexual and gender-based violence. We expect to hear more with regard to that issue at the briefing by Police Commissioners next Wednesday.

The current funding model for advancing gender equality remains unpredictable and insufficient. We acknowledge the Secretary-General's call for compliance with the recommendations of the High-level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality, specifically as it relates to increasing funding to women's organizations, the funding of gender action plans, the widespread promotion of gender budgeting and the role of the Peacebuilding Fund in promoting gender and age-responsive

peacebuilding initiatives. In that regard, we urge the donor community to comply with its minimum official development assistance commitments to conflict-affected countries, including for the advancement of gender equality.

There can be no pursuit of global peace that ignores the gendered forms of insecurity threatening half the world's population. We must equally insist that there can be no pursuit of development without the equal leadership and participation of diverse women.

Annex 13

Statement by the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations, Jerry Matjila

We thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his statement, and we welcome the briefings by Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN-Women; Ms. Danai Gurira, UN-Women Goodwill Ambassador; Ms. Nataliia Emelianova, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Adviser in the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei; and Ms. Zarqa Yaftali, Head of the Women and Children Legal Research Foundation.

We join others in highlighting that 2020 is a significant year as we commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, the tenth anniversary of the establishment of UN-Women and the fifth anniversary of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, among other things. It is also the review year for Silencing the Guns by 2020 on the African continent. All those anniversaries are intertwined and pertinent to the advancement of the women and peace and security agenda.

We also wish to take this opportunity to welcome and acknowledge the clear priorities announced by the UN-Women Executive Director that will dominate the decade of action. That will further drive the momentum to fully implement the 10 Security Council resolutions on women and peace and security.

We also welcome the progress that has been made in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), 20 years ago, under the excellent leadership of Namibia (see S/PV.4213), which will also launch its International Women's Peace Centre on 31 October 2020. That will be a valuable regional and international institution towards consolidating our efforts for the full implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. However, we also recognize the need to accelerate the full implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, especially by addressing impediments to achieving its objectives.

South Africa regrets the negative impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic on advancing the women and peace and security agenda, particularly with regard to refugees and internally displaced women. In that context, we take this opportunity to commend the work that has been undertaken by humanitarian and health-care workers, as well as other front-line workers, in mitigating the pandemic, the majority of whom are women. We also recognize that the impact of the pandemic on the women and peace and security agenda has not yet been fully discerned.

However, at this stage, it is imperative that we also take note of the fact that the coronavirus disease pandemic has not only presented challenges but also opportunities in terms of how the women and peace and security agenda can be pursued, particularly in advancing the participation and representation pillars. That relates to utilizing virtual means to expand women's participation in the various peace processes. While virtual engagement has illustrated to us that the inclusion of women is possible, it should not be used to exclude women from physical interaction.

My country views the women and peace and security agenda as an empowerment tool for women to actively immerse themselves in various peace processes, particularly in prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding. In that regard, South Africa is committed to contributing to reducing the gap in women's underrepresentation in mediation, negotiations and leadership positions. We will continue to build the capacity of women negotiators and mediators by

providing annual training to women mediators and negotiators at the local and continental levels.

We are proud that many women who benefited from such training programmes are actively involved in peace processes in their respective countries. They include women from the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan, to name just a few.

South Africa also wishes to reiterate its support for the Secretary-General's system-wide strategy on gender parity and the uniformed gender parity strategy 2018-2028 of the Department of Peace Operations, which have had a significant impact on increasing the number of women represented within the United Nations leadership, as well as in peace operations. We are pleased that the recently adopted resolution 2538 (2020), the first-ever Security Council resolution on women in peacekeeping, adds to the growing number of normative frameworks on women in peacekeeping. That is important to us, as South Africa remains the leading female-troop-contributing country in United Nations peacekeeping operations, with 15.1 per cent of South Africa's deployed troops being female.

We continue to recognize the pivotal role that civil society actors play in furthering the women and peace and security agenda at the local and national levels, which is why we encourage strengthened collaboration between Governments and civil society in advancing the agenda.

In line with resolution 2493 (2019), which was unanimously adopted a year ago, we continue to urge Member States to create safe and enabling environments for civil society, community women leaders, women peacebuilders and human rights defenders to carry out their work in advancing the women and peace and security agenda without threats, intimidation and physical harm. We continue to be alarmed by the persisting sexual violence against women and children in conflict and post-conflict countries. It goes without saying that there is a need for increased accountability for cases of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict societies. In that respect, South Africa reiterates its support for the work of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

South Africa wishes to underline the pivotal role of regional organizations in advancing the women and peace and security agenda, and therefore requests that future reports of the Secretary-General provide details on the efforts of regional organizations, such as the African Union and its subregional organizations, in promoting the agenda.

Let me conclude by reaffirming South Africa's commitment to advancing the women and peace and security agenda. We are pleased to announce that we recently adopted our first national action plan. That is an essential step for us in continuing to ensure the meaningful participation of women at all levels of peace processes in a manner that is structured, monitored and regularly assessed by all relevant stakeholders.

Annex 14

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Tunisia to the United Nations

I would like to thank the Russian Federation for organizing this open debate in commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the landmark resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General and all the briefers for their insightful comments.

In its resolution 1325 (2000), the Security Council recognized the importance of women's full participation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, while highlighting the particular vulnerabilities of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict settings and the importance of addressing their specific needs in such situations.

For the past 20 years, significant progress has been made in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security. Countless efforts have been deployed by Member States and international and regional organizations, as well as by civil society and grass-roots movements.

However, as we celebrate the twentieth anniversary amid a global pandemic that has exacerbated gender inequality, we have seen first-hand how the ambitions and objectives set two decades ago are still far from being reached today.

This commemoration should serve not only as an opportunity to take stock of past achievements but also as a reminder that, despite the progress made, the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) was not the end of women's long march towards equality. Rather, it set the bedrock for further efforts to achieve women's rights and their empowerment, which now requires scaling up our collective efforts towards implementation.

Such implementation needs to primarily be comprehensive and integrated across the four pillars of the agenda based on coherence among the political, security, development, human rights, gender equality and rule-of-law aspects. In that regard, it is crucial to reiterate our commitment to greater implementation that reinforces the mutual interlinkages with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, particularly as this year also marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women. It should also be inscribed within our broader efforts to fulfil human rights and gender equality, including through the full implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Furthermore, our collective implementation efforts cannot be effective unless they are inscribed within a multi-stakeholder approach that involves all the various actors. In that regard, it is important to recognize the invaluable contributions of civil society, feminist groups and women human rights defenders in the promotion, implementation and monitoring of the women and peace and security agenda.

In that spirit, Tunisia established a national committee in charge of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), which comprises representatives of the relevant Government structures, constitutional bodies and civil society, with women's representation exceeding 50 per cent. The work of that multi-stakeholder committee culminated in the adoption of a comprehensive and multidimensional national action plan in August 2018, followed by 14 coordinated sectoral action plans covering specific areas, such as law enforcement, security, health and prevention of violent extremism.

The coronavirus disease pandemic has had devastating consequences for women and girls, particularly in conflict and post-conflict settings. Unless properly

addressed, its impact will continue to be exacerbated, threatening to disrupt, and even reverse, the progress that we have accomplished so far. Civil society organizations are struggling to maintain their activities while being restricted due to the pandemic and as their resources are being diverted towards urgent crisis response. Member States need to ensure the continuity of the necessary funding mechanisms to support the work and enhance the capacities of organizations that support women's leadership, empowerment and participation at all levels of decision-making.

We need to further implement the existing normative framework on women and peace and security in order to address the causes and manifestations of gender inequality that increase the vulnerability of women and girls in the face of conflict. Special attention must be given to conflict-related sexual violence. We need to promote a survivor-centred approach that recognizes that women and girls are not a homogenous group and that they require adequate response measures in accordance with their different needs and contexts. We also need to put an end to impunity so as to deliver justice to the victims and prevent such heinous crimes in future. Finally, we need to address the underlying drivers of conflict-related sexual violence by promoting gender equality and human rights and by bringing national legislation in line with international norms and standards.

Tunisia is committed to continuing to champion the women and peace and security agenda at the national level through the implementation of our national action plan, the integration of a gender-responsive perspective into our national strategies and policies, and a true partnership and leadership by women in all public and private spheres. We also reiterate our commitment to building on international efforts rooted in peacebuilding priorities and principles that seek to protect women's rights and ensure their full, equal and meaningful participation in peace efforts and decision-making processes.

Annex 15**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Kelly Craft**

I thank Secretary-General Guterres for his unwavering commitment to this important issue. And I thank the other briefers, who provided us with important insights on progress made since resolution 1325 (2000) was adopted and — even more important — identified shortcomings that we all must address.

The United States has never been more committed to the goals of resolution 1325 (2000), and the Trump Administration has been a leader in advancing the women and peace and security agenda. When President Trump signed the Women, Peace and Security Act in 2017, the United States became the first country in the world to pass comprehensive national legislation codifying its commitment.

Just last June, President Trump released the United States Strategy on Women, Peace and Security, which outlines new, concrete actions to accelerate the United States efforts. The strategy recognizes the central role women play in preventing and resolving conflict, countering terrorism and violent extremism and building post-conflict peace and stability. It begins with empowering women leaders with the access, skills and influence they need to be effective. Women have always had a strong voice; they just need to be heard.

Nowhere is this more apparent and urgent than in peacekeeping operations. I witnessed first-hand the importance of women peacekeepers while visiting South Sudan. In an environment where women are often the victims of conflict and bear the burden of providing for families broken by fighting, women peacekeepers provide empathy and sensible support to the people they serve to build resilience so they can recover from violence.

When we increase the number of women peacekeepers we also see improved performance, fewer incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeeping troops and greater likelihood of women coming forward to report sexual and gender-based violence.

To increase the number of women in peacekeeping, the Governments must reduce barriers to entry and provide leadership opportunities for women in national security roles. Troop- and police-contributing countries should adopt and promote policies to achieve these objectives.

All troop- and police-contributing countries must also enforce the United Nations zero-tolerance policy by swiftly and credibly addressing allegations of abuse. The United States praises the efforts of the United Nations to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse. However, more must be done, including repatriating and ensuring the prosecution of individuals and units who commit these terrible crimes. The victims deserve justice.

The United States is deeply concerned about the recent allegations of widespread sexual exploitation and abuse by personnel purportedly employed by international organizations and private relief agencies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as part of the Ebola response. We are following this matter closely and expect the allegations to be taken seriously and the necessary and appropriate steps be taken to address the situation.

The United States strategy also promotes the protection of women and girls' human rights, gives victims a voice and access to humanitarian assistance and provides safety from gender-based violence, including sexual exploitation and

abuse around the world. The strategy reinforces the United States commitment to prevention and a focus on accountability.

The United States is also actively engaged with partners across the globe to support their efforts to advance women's participation in political and security decision-making. In Colombia, women are increasingly welcome in the peace processes and their perspectives are included into negotiated agreements. In Afghanistan, as mentioned by Zarqa Yaftali, women now occupy important positions within the Government and are participating in the United States-brokered peace talks, but they are coming under threat and we all need to support them. And in the Democratic Republic of Congo, we have seen the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo elevate women to leadership positions as part of a project intended to restore social cohesion between communities mired in conflict.

We have also supported the women and peace and security language in peacekeeping and special political mission mandates. Despite attempts by some members to block these efforts, we have pushed through language that promotes meaningful participation by women in peace negotiations and other political processes. Moving forward, we hope mandates will always feature the interests of women and promote their active roles in peace and security.

Today the United States calls on all Member States, all of us, to adopt and implement national action plans and strategies on women and peace and security. The United States is ready to support Member States in that effort. Indonesia worked to advance women during its time on the Council and currently deploys more than 150 women in peacekeeping missions around the world. Kenya's progress in implementing the plan can serve as a model for partners in the region and around the world. We all look forward to working even more closely with Kenya on this and all global peace and security issues.

Together we must make it a priority to champion women and girls, protect their safety and security and promote them so that they can participate in promoting international peace and security. We must do this not just because it is the right thing to do, but also because we know that our world will be safer and more prosperous when women are supported and heard.

Annex 16**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations, Dinh Quy Dang**

I commend the Russian presidency for convening this open debate. I thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2020/946), and the Under-Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN-Women and other briefers for their insights.

We welcome the progress made in the implementation of landmark resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent relevant resolutions. The role of women and issues related to women, including sexual violence and gender equality, have been increasingly integrated in relevant mechanisms and regimes. We are encouraged by the report that, between 2017 and 2019, approximately 70 per cent of Security Council resolutions included explicit references to women and peace and security issues, while this number was only 15 per cent in the first five years since resolution 1325 (2000) was adopted. We also see increased participation by women in all areas, from conflict prevention to peacebuilding, peace processes and reconstruction efforts.

However, much remains to be done. As mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General, the progress has been too slow, too narrow and easy to reverse. In this regard, to enhance the implementation of this agenda, I wish to highlight the following points.

First, we call on all States to support the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire and an immediate cessation of hostilities in all corners of the globe to reinforce diplomatic actions, help create favourable conditions for humanitarian assistance and bring hope to the people, including women and girls, who are most vulnerable to conflicts and the coronavirus disease pandemic.

Secondly, peace can be sustained only if conflicts can be prevented and addressed at their roots. Therefore, we stress the importance of conflict prevention, socioeconomic development and post-conflict peacebuilding, recovery and reconstruction. During these processes, the women and peace and security issues should be fully implemented.

Thirdly, we need to remove persisting barriers and push for a radical shift for women's meaningful participation in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts, while ensuring that women are fully involved as equal partners from the earliest stages in each and every peace and political process.

Last but not least, progress primarily depends on States, but also States' partnerships, especially with a better-coordinated and adequately resourced United Nations. To that end, we call on the international donor community to keep providing a minimum of 15 per cent of official development assistance to conflict-affected countries to be used for advancing gender equality.

For its part, Viet Nam fully recognizes the key role of women in conflict prevention and settlement, sustaining peace and socioeconomic development. Vietnamese women have not only fought for the country's freedom and independence, but also have worked hard and made significant contributions to the national recovery and development. When the situation demands it, Vietnamese women can also be effective agents of peace, as peacekeepers. Besides, women's organizations in Viet Nam, including the Women's Union, have played an active role in post-war recovery, mine clearance and assistance to victims of Agent Orange victims and veterans' families, to name but a few. Viet Nam has been also fulfilling its respective obligations and commitments under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Platform for Action.

In conclusion, Viet Nam reiterates its readiness and commitment to join the efforts of the international community to ensure that the voices of women are heard, their concerns and needs are addressed, and their roles and contributions to peace and security both are enhanced and recognized.

Annex 17

Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations, Mohammad Naeemi

Allow me to first thank the Permanent Mission of Russia for hosting today's open debate. I also want to thank Secretary-General, António Guterres; the Director of UN-Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka; the Goodwill Ambassador of UN-Women, Danai Gurira; the Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Adviser to the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei, Nataliia Emelianova; and the Head of the Women and Children Legal Research Foundation, Zarqa Yaftali, for their valuable inputs on the imperative of continuing to take tangible actions towards the inclusion of women in all aspects of peace and security, including in the armed forces, humanitarian responses, peace processes, conflict prevention and resolution, and peacebuilding.

Twenty years ago, the Security Council acknowledged that women and girls experience conflict differently than men and the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and peacebuilding. Resolution 1325 (2000) challenged Member States to move beyond rhetoric into action. Since its adoption by the Security Council in 2000, women in Afghanistan have made significant progress across a range of indicators. Resolution 1325 (2000), adopted around the same time as the fall of the Taliban, was, and continues to be, particularly relevant to the Afghan people. When the post-Taliban Government of Afghanistan assumed power, global rankings indicated that Afghan women faced one of the most difficult situations in the world in regard to their civil liberties, protection against violence, access to health care and education, and public participation. As such, the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) has been a key priority of the Government of Afghanistan during the past two decades of reconstruction.

To ensure the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and in line with the goals of the resolution, our Government launched its Resolution 1325 (2000) National Action Plan in 2015. Afghanistan was among the first countries in Asia to adopt a national action plan. The plan has sought to increase the role of women in the peace process and acknowledge the impact that armed conflict has on women in order to provide appropriate relief and recovery efforts. The second phase of the Resolution 1325 (2000) National Action Plan began in August of 2019 and reaffirms our Government's efforts to preserve the rights of women and their role throughout the peace process.

Our Government has worked to make significant progress on the inclusion of women at all levels of our institutions, leveraging the legal framework of article 22 of the Constitution, which emphasizes the "equal rights and duties before the law" of all citizens of Afghanistan. We have implemented a gender-sensitive security sector reform and worked to remove barriers to entry for women in the security service, including negative biases and traditions. Today, over 3,000 women serve as police officers and 2,000 serve in the Afghan National Army. For the first time in our history, there are female deputy ministers in the Ministries of Defence and Interior, and based on a presidential order signed in July of this year, all 34 provinces have appointed women as deputy governors. Women also play a much more significant role in the judiciary, and every province has a woman heading the Office on the Prevention of Violence against Women.

Despite the progress, today, many of these hard-fought gains are threatened, and there are formidable challenges to be addressed. Women and children, especially girls, are victims of terrorist attacks and constitute one-third of civilian casualties. Continued efforts to safeguard and promote our achievements will be crucial in the

light of new vulnerabilities resulting from the coronavirus disease and the outcome of the ongoing peace negotiations with the Taliban.

Particularly with regard to the ongoing peace talks, the Government has been diligent in its commitment to an inclusive peace process that incorporates women at the very centre of negotiations and ensures that any outcome result fully respects, builds upon and consolidates the achievements of the past two decades, particularly the constitutional rights of women, girls and minorities. A National Women's Consensus for Peace conference was held in February 2019 and a Consultative Loya Jirga for Peace was held in April of the same year. In the latter, women made up to 30 per cent of the 3,000 participants and headed various commissions. Both of these meetings called for the participation of women in the negotiation team. Their request has been answered by the Government and the current negotiating team includes four women. The full, equal and meaningful participation of women at all levels of the peace process will continue to be a priority for the Government. In this connection, we thank the international community for its unwavering support to Afghan women and its contribution to the Afghan Government.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Afghanistan's firm commitment to promoting and protecting the rights of women and girls, including the Resolution 1325 (2000) National Action Plan, as well as continuing its efforts to uphold women's rights and their social, economic and political inclusion in efforts to achieve peace, stability and prosperity in Afghanistan.

Annex 18

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Albania to the United Nations

Albania commends the efforts of many Member States and partners to put in place solid normative frameworks and commitments on the women and peace and security agenda, as demonstrated by the increase in the number of national action plans for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). However, we strongly believe that effective implementation is not possible without the allocation of proper resources.

It is important to celebrate progress, but equally important to recognize the challenges we face. We need to pay special attention to the engagement of communities at the grassroots level and demonstrate progress in people's lives. We need to give civil society, including women's organizations and human rights defenders, a voice that is heard in the Security Council. Their experience and know-how are crucial to better understand what should be improved. To that end, we need to engage more women mediators and ensure the meaningful participation of women in both conflict prevention and in peacebuilding.

Albania is proud to report some significant achievements on the meaningful participation of women in important decision-making processes. Our first 1325 national action plan, 2018-2020, sets out a robust and detailed plan with clear implementation, financing, monitoring and evaluation strategies, and reporting pathways. Albania is among only seven countries of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) region that have a costed and budgeted national action plan. We have also made sure to include civil society in the main pillars of the national action plan.

It mainly focuses on the increased participation of women in the armed forces in peacekeeping missions outside of the country; the appointment of female officers to leading positions in the police and armed forces and the strengthening of management capacities of women in the police and armed forces; the establishment of a reporting system for the implementation of the national action plan; awareness-raising activities with women members of Parliament and local Government representatives on Security Council resolutions on women and peace and security; and the delivery of trainings on gender equality in military operations, the handling of post-conflict situations, and the prevention of and response to violence against women and girls.

Albania is committed to increasing women's meaningful participation in crisis prevention and peace processes, as well as to improved protection against sexual and all other forms of violence. To that end, Albania has increased the meaningful participation of women in the security sector, while mainstreaming the gender perspective in policies and structural plans of the Ministry of Defence and the armed forces. We included the women and peace and security agenda as one of the priorities of our 2020 OSCE chairmanship, injecting new momentum into the OSCE's work on women and peace and security.

If elected to the Security Council next year, Albania will champion the women and peace and security agenda across the full breadth of its work. We strongly believe that women are agents of positive change and that they must actively participate in all peace and security efforts.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that the chances for building and sustaining peace are much higher once women are fully engaged. We cannot afford to lose 50 per cent of our human energy, talent and ideas. The meaningful participation

of women will boost our common efforts for a more inclusive, transparent and effective approach towards peace and security.

Annex 19

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Argentina to the United Nations

[Original: Spanish]

Argentina aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security (annex 27) and the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect.

At the outset, I would like to thank the delegation of the Russian Federation for organizing this open debate. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres; the Executive Director of UN-Women, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka; the Goodwill Ambassador of UN-Women, Ms. Danai Gurira; the Adviser on Sexual and Gender-based Violence to the United Nations Interim Security Force in Abyei, Ms. Nataliia Emelianova; and the Head of the Women and Children Legal Research Foundation, Ms. Zarqa Yaftali for their statements.

In the framework of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) and the commemoration of 25 years of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, Argentina reaffirms its commitment to the development and implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has made it clear that it will not be possible to prevent conflict, achieve peaceful solutions or build sustainable peace without effectively ensuring gender equality and the full empowerment of women and girls in all their diversity. To that end, it is necessary to increase the presence of women at all levels of decision-making. The increased participation of women will strengthen the contribution of peacekeeping operations and special political missions in the field.

Argentina categorically condemns abuse and sexual and gender-based violence against and exploitation of women and girls, and supports the United Nations zero-tolerance policy in this area. We also condemn sexual and gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict situations. We are deeply concerned about the increase in violence against women and girls during the pandemic caused by COVID-19. In this regard, we reiterate our support for efforts to eliminate sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls, and call for the means to ensure accountability and the punishment of those responsible.

As of 2020 and coinciding with the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) by the Security Council, Argentina has embarked on a very active policy aimed at giving new impetus and priority to the women and peace and security agenda. In this sense, our country has worked hard in recent months on the following substantive aspects of this agenda.

First, Argentina's National Action Plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) was adopted in 2015 with the aim of identifying the structural barriers that hinder women's participation in the field of peace and security and of increasing their participation in leadership positions in all areas at the national, regional and international levels. During the first half of 2020, the evaluation process and conclusion of the first plan was initiated, on 22 July, and the first interministerial dialogue for the evaluation of the National Action Plan for the Implementation of Resolution 1325 (2000) was held. In this context, different ministries have collaborated closely in preparing the second National Action Plan for the Implementation of Resolution 1325 (2000). Work has also been done with countries of our region and other regions that also have national action plans, with the aim of exchanging good practices and lessons learned in the development and implementation of these plans.

Secondly, in 2018 the Federal Network of Women Mediators with a Gender Perspective, comprising 49 women mediators, was established. In September 2020, this network held a meeting at which the 49 women mediators shared the actions undertaken during the second half of 2019 and in 2020. In addition, a road map was presented with activities to be carried out in 2020 and 2021, such as participation in the annual meeting of the Global Alliance of Regional Women Mediator Networks and the exchange of good practices and experiences with other networks of women mediators.

Thirdly, the Ministry of Defence continued to increase the presence of women in peace and humanitarian assistance missions, as well as their participation in its decision-making bodies, by including female military personnel from the command corps. It also carried out various activities related to dissemination, promotion and training to increase women's political participation in peace and security, peace negotiation processes, conflict management and decision-making spaces in each of these areas. It also conducted annual surveys related to post-deployment issues to monitor the existence of gender-based rights violations and the implementation of the information provided prior to deployment, among other topics, in order to mainstream the gender perspective in all peacebuilding activities and humanitarian assistance missions, including disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities. In addition, it undertook actions, such as the creation of a comprehensive plan to promote policies for the prevention, detection and treatment of domestic violence with the aim of protecting the human rights of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict countries (including refugee camps and those in displacement situations), especially in the face of gender-based violence and sexual violence, promoting an environment of security and well-being.

Fourthly, the Ministry of Security continued to step up efforts to implement and achieve increasingly better results in the women and peace and security agenda. With regard to the peace operations in which participation included a police component, throughout 2020 the number of women in United Nations peace missions was maintained. Indeed, until March, when some mobility restrictions caused the planned replacements to be affected, in the missions in which Argentina participates with a police component, the proportion of female officers within the total number of deployed Argentine troops increased or remained the same.

Moreover, in 2020, the Ministry succeeded in increasing the rate of women who are receiving their predeployment training at the Peace Operations Training Centre of the Argentine National Gendarmerie to 30 per cent of the total. Similarly, infrastructure was adapted and modernized to continue providing housing and improving conditions at the Centre, and 50 per cent of the permanent instructors in matters related to peace operations at the Centre were women.

Also, at the institutional level, in 2020 the Ministry of Security created the National Directorate of Gender Policy and maintained its training and continuing education efforts on gender issues, both for members of the police and security forces and for officials of the Ministry and the Integrated Gender Centres of the four Federal Police and Security Forces.

Furthermore, at the international level, Argentina is promoting and working with other countries on the establishment of a Network of Women Mediators of the Southern Cone with a gender perspective, in order to strengthen the role of women in building peace in the region. Argentina is also a member of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security within the United Nations; the national focal points network, which was launched in September 2016; and the Elsie Initiative, which is aimed at increasing women's participation in peacekeeping operations.

In conclusion, Argentina reiterates its strong commitment to gender equality and the economic empowerment of women and girls in all their diversity, as well as to strengthening women's participation at all levels of decision-making in international peace and security.

Annex 20**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations, Mher Margaryan**

I would like to thank the presidency of the Russian Federation for organizing the Security Council meeting to mark the landmark anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. We also thank the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN-Women and other speakers for their comprehensive remarks outlining the importance of the meaningful participation of women in promoting peace and security. We commend the personal contribution and leadership of Secretary-General Guterres in promoting equal opportunities for women across the United Nations system.

Resolution 1325 (2000) has been instrumental in consolidating the efforts of the international community to promote the role of women in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and peacemaking. It also set a normative framework for ensuring the protection of women and girls in conflict situations. The anniversary of the adoption of the resolution creates significant momentum to scale up practical measures for countering all forms of violence against women and girls in conflicts and addressing their particular protection needs.

Armenia prioritizes advancing the women and peace and security agenda in the framework of its national policies and programmes aimed at promoting gender equality, the political and public participation of women and their economic empowerment. The adoption of the national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) has made national policies more coherent and coordinated to this end.

The national action plan attaches great importance to the inclusive engagement of all women affected by the Nagorno Karabakh conflict in peace and security efforts. Among its focus areas are the protection of the rights of women and girls affected by the conflict, providing special protection for displaced women and girls and upholding their socioeconomic rights.

Twenty years after adoption of the resolution 1325 (2000), despite significant progress in advancing the participation of women in peace processes, upholding their rights in conflict situations and engaging women in the security sector, women continue to be disproportionately affected by conflicts and complex humanitarian emergencies, including in our region.

This discussion comes against the backdrop of the ongoing pre-planned large-scale offensive against the people of Artsakh unleashed by Azerbaijan with the direct military support of Turkey and involvement of the foreign terrorist fighters and mercenaries. The military aggression was accompanied by indiscriminate bombardment, artillery and missile strikes of the capital city Stepanakert, other settlements and critical infrastructure of Nagorno Karabakh, resulting in the killing of dozens of civilians, with hundreds of wounded, including many women and children.

The actions of the Azerbaijani army have led to massive violations of human rights law and international humanitarian law. Targeted attacks on residential buildings, hospitals, schools and other objects of critical infrastructure have caused a humanitarian crisis, which has affected women and girls as the most vulnerable. On 28 October, the armed forces of Azerbaijan launched targeted strikes on the residential areas of Stepanakert and Shushi, causing casualties among the civilian population and completely destroying the maternity hospital of Stepanakert, in gross violation of international humanitarian law and customary law.

Perpetrated amid the coronavirus disease pandemic, Azerbaijan's heinous actions are aimed at denying people access to essential services and at erasing decades-long efforts to fight disease, reduce child mortality and improve maternal health — and, as such, reveal the criminal purpose of the leadership of Azerbaijan, namely, to make life in Artsakh impossible. Moreover, the decision of the political-military leadership of Azerbaijan to target a maternity ward whose location was well known to the military clearly demonstrates the genocidal intention “to destroy, in part or in whole, a racial, ethnic, religious, or other group” by preventing births of a particular ethnic group in Artsakh.

The international community should resolutely and unequivocally condemn the ongoing aggression by Azerbaijan — with the involvement of Turkey and foreign terrorist fighters — and extend its support to the efforts of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Minsk Group co-Chairs to achieve a verifiable ceasefire, which is crucial to ensure the protection of civilians, including women and girls, from violence and restore their inalienable rights.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Armenia's firm commitment to further streamlining the empowerment of women in its reform agenda and promoting their active participation in political and public life as important prerequisites for promoting peace and stability.

Annex 21**Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and for Women of Australia, Marise Payne**

As both Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Women, I am pleased to present the national statement of Australia to the Security Council on this important milestone: the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). We welcome the Secretary-General's call to action on the women and peace and security agenda. We thank Russia for hosting this debate.

Calls by women activists to end conflict were pivotal to the development of the agenda, with the recognition of women's critical role in negotiating, building and sustaining peace.

The women and peace and security agenda remains as relevant now as it was 20 years ago. We commend the critical role women are playing as front-line responders as we work together against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). However, we cannot overlook the negative and significant impacts on women during this crisis. Growing levels of hostility against women, including political violence, conflict-related sexual violence and intimate partner violence, have devastating effects on victims and survivors. These are not just attacks on women; they are attacks on good governance and democracy. They undermine communities' resilience to conflict and to extremism.

As we look towards building back better, we must draw on the capabilities of all, particularly women.

Nationally, we are committed to improving the number and influence of women in national security services, including by meeting the United Nations uniformed gender parity targets and funding the Elsie Initiative to increase the meaningful participation of uniformed women. We commend the United Nations Force in Cyprus for the strong representation of women in its leadership team, including Australia's Major General Cheryl Pearce as Force Commander.

In our region, we strongly value our women and peace and security partnership with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), including supporting Viet Nam's hosting of the Global Conference on Women and Peace and Security and co-hosting the second ASEAN-Australia Women and peace and Security Dialogue.

Internationally, as a top-ten donor to UN-Women, we have renewed our support for the Global Facility and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund to advance women's participation, academic partnerships and women-led grassroots organizations pivoting towards COVID-19.

Australia has played a key role in mainstreaming gender into the countering violent extremism policy, including by co-chairing with Indonesia the Global Counter-terrorism Forum Countering Violent Extremism Working Group, and developing a policy toolkit to guide gender-sensitive implementation.

We are pleased to have supported the PeaceFem App through the Towards Inclusive Peace project, an innovative digital tool to share strategies on gender-sensitive peace processes with practitioners.

Australia also continues to use its voice on the global stage. As a member of the Human Rights Council, we have consistently promoted and protected women's rights and gender equality in our work.

As the Secretary-General concludes in his report (S/2020/946), we must go beyond plans and numbers to address the root causes of gender inequality and

conflict, including harmful norms and inequitable structures. We must promote and protect women's rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, and commit to women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding and crisis response and prevention. As we adjust to the realities of COVID-19, Australia gives its assurances to all that we remain committed to implementing fully the women and peace and security agenda.

Annex 22

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Austria to the United Nations

We thank Russia for convening this open debate.

Austria aligns itself with the statements submitted on behalf of the European Union (annex 38) and by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends on Women and Peace and Security (annex 27).

Austria considers this year's open debate particularly timely, as we are celebrating not only the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) but also the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. We should seize this opportunity to take stock of the implementation and identify the challenges that lie ahead of us.

Allow me to thank the Secretary-General for his annual report (S/2020/946), which underlines, *inter alia*, the linkages between the women and peace and security agenda and international disarmament efforts, including on nuclear disarmament — a topic that Austria spearheads in its multilateral diplomacy. In recent years, the gendered impact of conventional weapons has revived increasing attention. To give an example, women are disproportionately affected by the long-term and reverberating effects of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Austria therefore encourages the Council to follow a comprehensive human-security approach in all its deliberations.

Despite the call of the Secretary-General for a global ceasefire in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, hostilities, shamefully, continue and parties to armed conflicts persistently ignore their humanitarian law obligations with regard to the protection of civilians. In resolution 1325 (2000), the Security Council recognized that women and girls suffer disproportionately when international humanitarian law is ignored by parties to armed conflict. Austria therefore calls on the members of the Security Council to systematically mainstream the women and peace and security agenda in all its country-specific debates and mandates for United Nations peacekeeping and political missions. We welcome the efforts of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security in this regard.

Furthermore, the Security Council should address situations of internal conflicts where gender-based violence is systematically used to target human-rights defenders, just as currently in Belarus. Overall, the widespread impunity for sexual violence committed in conflict is outrageous and can no longer be banalized. We need more decisive action to sanction such crimes. In this context, we applaud the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Pramila Patten, and her team to advocate for more accountability, in particular through closer collaboration with the International Criminal Court.

The COVID-19 pandemic and its socioeconomic consequences have increased existing vulnerabilities and put at risk hard-won gender-equality gains. Around the globe, we have witnessed a worrisome rise in gender-based violence. At the same time, due to lockdowns, effective help by women grass-roots organizations has proven to be more difficult. Therefore, at the national level, we are enhancing our policies to combat all forms of gender-based violence, including acts of violence committed online, in close collaboration with civil society organizations.

Austria strongly believes in the transformative power of civil society in advancing the women and peace and security agenda. Through international cooperation, we will pursue our financial support to UN-Women, the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund and, in particular, civil society partners to further

implement all pillars of the women and peace and security agenda together with partner Member States. We commend the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders and all its partner organizations at the grass-roots level for bringing the women and peace and security agenda from the Security Council Chamber to the ground level through localization programmes and the development of national action plans.

In order to make the voices of those first responders heard, Austria, organized the Global Women's Forum in Vienna in February, together with our partners from the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund and the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders. The discussions among more than 70 representatives of local women's organizations from 17 countries on priorities and challenges in the full and effective implementation of the women and peace and security agenda resulted in a set of concrete recommendations, which we should take into consideration in our future work.

Twenty years after the adoption of the groundbreaking resolution 1325 (2000), we are convinced that the focus of the international community should now centre on its full and effective implementation. To achieve this, we do not necessarily need new resolutions, but to act on our promises. We therefore welcome various initiatives, such as by Germany and the United Kingdom, to accelerate implementation through time-bound commitments. We look forward to the launch of the women, peace and security and humanitarian action compact under the framework of the Generation Equality Forum. More than ever, it is our conviction that women are agents of change for peace and security. Let us actively follow up on our pledges in order to further advance the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda in a collective effort.

Annex 23**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Bahrain to the United Nations**

[Original: Arabic]

At the outset, I would like to thank the delegation of the Russian Federation for holding this annual debate on women and peace and security. This debate is of great importance in the light of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its many repercussions for women, which are exacerbated by conflict.

I also thank His Excellency Secretary-General António Guterres and Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN-Women, for their valuable briefing.

This year marks the commemoration of important events related to women and peace and security, namely, the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), in which the Council stresses the need to ensure the equal participation of men and women at all levels, particularly with regard to decision-making and involvement in peacebuilding and peacekeeping, in view of the disasters and conflicts afflicting humankind.

In the light of the emerging global crisis, the need to lay the foundations for peace is more urgent than ever. We reaffirm the support of Bahrain for the Secretary-General's call in the first months of the pandemic for an immediate global ceasefire and an international response to COVID-19.

Led by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the Kingdom of Bahrain has made maintaining the highest levels of social security one of its national priorities. In doing so, it supports women's participation in decision-making and public affairs and their role as equal partners in addressing current and future challenges and opportunities, by promoting self-sufficiency, scientific excellence and digital technology.

Aware that achieving gender balance supports sustainable development, Bahrain is at an advanced stage of developing a comprehensive system to regulate the processes of mainstreaming and ensuring equality of opportunity for men and women. This system encompasses plans, programmes and mechanisms aimed at supporting and integrating the needs and aspirations of women so that they may continue their progress at the national, regional and global levels.

Under the leadership of Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeekah bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, Consort of the King of Bahrain, the Supreme Council for Women has launched initiatives to provide everything necessary to meet the needs of Bahraini women on the front lines and to ensure that they benefit from financial packages and Government decisions to ameliorate women's family and economic situations. Such initiatives are in line with intensive national efforts to address the pandemic, safeguard the gains made and strengthen the efforts of Bahrain in the area of women's advancement, in accordance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as the country continues to uphold its international obligations under the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as well as resolution 1325 (2000).

In order to strengthen cooperation with the United Nations in supporting women and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, last year the Supreme Council for Women announced the winners of the first edition of the Princess Sabeekah Bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa Global Award for the Empowerment of Women.

Her Royal Highness stressed that the award sums up, from an intellectual and knowledge standpoint, our national experience with women's participation and continuing advancement in Bahrain, enabling us to place this initiative at the disposal of the international community through UN-Women.

A believer in the important role of education in empowering women and girls, especially those in conflict zones, Bahrain has established schools in Syrian refugee camps in countries neighbouring Syria and in the Gaza Strip.

Moreover, Bahrain is working to eliminate practices that hinder women's progress and to bridge existing gaps in that regard. One example is combating trafficking in persons; Bahrain was placed in tier one for the third consecutive year by the United States Department of State in its report on combating trafficking in persons, the lone country in the Middle East and North Africa region to attain that distinction.

Lastly, we affirm that Bahrain supports all international efforts to promote the advancement of women and achieve gender balance in all areas related to development and humanitarian matters, so as to ensure a comprehensive response to the coronavirus pandemic and recovery from its repercussions, as well as to promote the contributions of women as active partners in security, peace and sustainable justice.

Annex 24

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations, Rabab Fatima

I wish to thank the Russian presidency for arranging this important debate on the women and peace and security agenda and for its excellent leadership of the Security Council this month. As we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the landmark resolution 1325 (2000), I congratulate the Council and all States Members of the United Nations on their contribution to the women and peace and security agenda.

I thank the Secretary-General for his statement (annex 1), and I take note of his 2020 report on women and peace and security (S/2020/946). I also thank the briefers for sharing their useful insights with us today.

Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement submitted by Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security (annex 27).

I wish to recall the pioneering role of Bangladesh, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, in the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, in October 2000. It was during Bangladesh's presidency in March 2020, under the leadership of Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury, that press statement SC/6816 was issued on 8 March 2000 — International Women's Day — recognizing the role of women in peacemaking and peacekeeping. That eventually led to the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000).

There have been significant qualitative changes in United Nations peacekeeping with the participation of women peacekeepers. Women's participation has been found to make peacekeeping more humane, robust and sustainable. Women peacekeepers have a different level of outreach with women, children and families and can bring different life experiences and perspectives to the communities that they serve.

With the changing nature of conflicts and the wider responsibilities that peacekeepers are undertaking, the utility of women in uniform is increasing, with specific roles that are more suited to women peacekeepers. Bangladesh also had a pioneering role in deploying women to peacekeeping missions.

The feedback that we get from our women peacekeepers only strengthens our conviction in the indispensability of women in peacekeeping operations. Women peacekeepers contribute to reducing gender-based violence and to preventing conflict in areas where they serve. They provide a higher sense of security, especially to women and children, who often come forward and share their suffering and miseries with women peacekeepers. That builds greater trust between the host communities and the peacekeepers, which has an important bearing on the success of peace operations.

Women peacekeepers have proved to be particularly effective in post-conflict settings where sexual violence is rampant and mostly not addressed. On many occasions, the victims, who are usually silenced by the societal norms, have gathered courage and spoken out to the women peacekeepers. We all know that breaking the silence is the first step in the journey to justice.

In line with its firm commitment to advancing women's rights and gender equality, Bangladesh adopted its first national action plan on resolution 1325 (2000) in 2019. Our national action plan recognizes the adverse effects of conflict on women and girls and prioritizes gender equality in all aspects of our engagement in international peace and security, including peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

As a leading troop- and police-contributing country, Bangladesh is also one of the front-runners in sending women peacekeepers, with more than 1,700 deployed in various missions. We are also taking measures to deploy more women officers to fulfil the target set by the United Nations of 15 per cent staff officers/military observers in United Nations peacekeeping missions. Along with other partners, we are championing the women, peace and security priorities of the Action for Peacekeeping.

We strongly support the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy 2018-2028 of the Department of Peace Operations and the Secretary-General's efforts towards ensuring gender parity in senior appointments under the system-wide strategy on gender parity. However, there is clearly much more to be done in enhancing the number of not only women peacekeepers on the ground but also women in leadership positions in peace negotiations. We earnestly hope that, in keeping with his commitment to achieving gender parity in women's representation in senior positions in the United Nations system, the Secretary-General will also appoint women as Force Commanders/Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in field operations and political missions.

Increasing women's leadership in peacekeeping would require a holistic approach to women's role in peace as a whole, in both civilian and military capacities. Women need to participate equally and meaningfully at all stages of the peace process, from the making of peace to its implementation on the ground. They also need to be adequately trained to take up higher responsibilities. In the same vein, ensuring a women-friendly space and environment in the mission setting is also an important prerequisite to having more women in peacekeeping.

Implementation of the women and peace and security agenda is the key to achieving all the aforementioned elements. While national Governments need to accelerate their efforts by developing and implementing their respective national action plans, the international community, especially the United Nations, also has an important role to play. The women and peace and security agenda must be internalized across the United Nations system, particularly in United Nations country programmes. Let us step up our collective efforts to that end. In that regard, Bangladesh underscores the importance of the increased, sustained, flexible and coordinated funding for the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and the women and peace and security agenda.

Bangladesh has been making its best efforts to ensure women's empowerment and participation in all spheres of our lives. In our endeavour to further strengthen the women and peace and security agenda, we are willing to learn from the best practices around the world and are ready to share our experiences with others.

Annex 25**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations, Ronaldo Costa Filho**

The present debate is both critical and timely, and for that Brazil thanks and congratulates Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia and the Russian Federation on this initiative.

The celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) is a milestone and an achievement of which this body should be proud. As a testament to its ground-breaking nature, suffice it to say that since then, as many as 10 follow-up resolutions have been adopted by the Security Council, the most recent of which was endorsed by the current composition of the Council under the Indonesian presidency, whom we also congratulate. Resolution 2538 (2020), the first resolution devoted exclusively to women peacekeepers, is definitely an important step.

The women and peace and security agenda is primarily driven by the mission of maintaining international peace and security. Women peacekeepers and mediators are valuable actors in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. It is a well-established fact that the greater the number of women negotiators, mediators, peacekeepers and police officers, the better the chance that peace deals will be struck and last longer and that peacekeeping missions will be successful.

Women Blue Helmets are also able to reach out to more segments of the local population. The element of added diversity is conducive to more efficiency in mandate implementation, and their presence on the ground encourages reporting of cases of sexual violence.

The Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative recognizes the significance of the women and peace and security agenda as one of its constitutive pillars. It remains incumbent on all stakeholders involved in peacekeeping, not least troop-contributing countries, to implement its commitments.

One area where progress must be expanded is meeting the targets of the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy 2018-2028. Brazil's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security commits to increasing the proportion of women military and police officers in peacekeeping from the current levels in order to achieve the Strategy's targets, in which we are glad to report to have succeeded in several cases this year.

The service of two of Brazil's women peacekeepers also makes their country especially proud. Commanders Marcia Braga and Carla Araújo were both distinguished with the United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award for their innovative work promoting mixed teams and striving to reduce sexual violence in the Central African Republic. Such recognition stands as a testament to the competence of those two officers, as well as to Brazil's commitment to ensuring a broader participation of women in peacekeeping.

With regard to sexual exploitation and abuse, Brazil adheres entirely to the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy, which we envisage as a starting point and as a coherent conceptual framework to tackle this lingering scourge in the context of peacekeeping. Brazil is proud of the overall track record of our peacekeepers in their performance over more than 70 years under the United Nations flag. President Jair Bolsonaro has recently joined the Secretary-General's circle of leadership on the prevention of and response to sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations operations, in continuation of our unwavering commitment to this issue.

The international community celebrates the anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) at an especially challenging juncture. We must strengthen our determination in perfecting the mechanisms of preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. International efforts to fight the pandemic must steel our collective resolve in tackling threats to international peace and security, for which we congratulate the Council on its adoption of resolution 2532 (2020), calling for a global ceasefire to allow for humanitarian aid during the pandemic.

Moreover, we must consider that, among its various impacts on international peace and security, the coronavirus disease pandemic creates an ever-more challenging environment for survivors of sexual violence. The Council must remain ever vigilant regarding the fight against sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations, especially in these troubled times.

As we continue the celebrations for the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), Brazil would like to commend its neighbours in the Americas for the past year's efforts to develop a regional perspective on women and peace and security. In that regard, we congratulate the efforts of the Women and Peace and Security Focal Points Network under the Canadian and Uruguayan presidency and highlight our determination to continue working with our regional partners to advance the agenda in the Americas.

This occasion is also auspicious for the international community, and the Security Council in particular, to reflect on the accomplishments attained over the past two decades and on the obstacles that the women and peace and security agenda still faces as we plough ahead. Member States can count on Brazil as one the staunchest advocates of that agenda.

Annex 26**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Bulgaria to the United Nations**

Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement submitted by the European Union (annex 38).

This is a seminal year for the rights of women and girls. In October, we commemorated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Moreover, 2020 also marks two decades since the adoption of the pivotal resolution 1325 (2000). Those two anniversaries epitomize some of the highlights of the progress made throughout the past quarter of a century. Yet they also come as reminder that we need to take stock of the implementation in the field of women's rights and empowerment, especially in terms of participation in the peace and security pillar, since, when considering the impact of armed conflicts and violence, we always need to follow the gender perspective.

This year is also of landmark importance for Bulgaria, as in March we joined the universal consensus on gender equality as the main predictor of peace by adopting our first national action plan on women and peace and security for the period 2020-2025. That critical step objectivizes my country's commitment to the women and peace and security agenda.

The impact of the coronavirus disease has proved to be unquestionably gendered. While the pandemic has deepened security challenges, it has also exacerbated risks for women in vulnerable situation, in particular gender-based and domestic violence, and limited access to essential services, such as sexual and reproductive health and rights, social protection, education, nutrition, full access to clean water, including safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene.

Bulgaria recognizes the achievements in the field of women and peace and security in the 20 years since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) and stands as a staunch supporter of the full, equal and meaningful participation of women, especially in the frame of peace processes. Nevertheless, we acknowledge that there are still implementation gaps, since women are still highly underrepresented when it comes to decision-making and processes related to peace and security. In that regard, Bulgaria welcomes the adoption of resolution 2538 (2020), which is guided by the principles of resolution 1325 (2000), and aims to strengthen action on women and peace and security. The resolution firmly supports all efforts meant to ensure the full and equal participation of women at all levels, ranging from conflict prevention to post-conflict reconstruction, peace and security, as well as the prevention and elimination of sexual violence in conflict.

My country attaches great importance to civil society organizations and recognizes their crucial role in the implementation and the very creation of the women and peace and security agenda. In that regard, reprisals and threats against women human rights defenders, women peacebuilders, women political leaders and activists should be condemned in the strongest terms, while addressing the shrinking space for civil society.

Bulgaria remains committed to the promotion of gender equality and the protection and fulfilment of the human rights of women and girls. Our view is that we do not necessarily need new Security Council resolutions to achieve that goal. At this point, we should follow up on our promises through the full and effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the International Conference on Population and Development and the outcomes of its review conferences.

Annex 27

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security

[Original: English and French]

We are submitting this statement on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, an informal network of 63 Member States, representing all five regional groups of the United Nations — Afghanistan, Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Botswana, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Guinea, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, the Republic of Korea, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mali, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Namibia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Rwanda, Senegal, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, Uruguay, the United States of America and Zambia — and the European Union. The Group welcomes the most recent report of the Secretary-General as well as the recommendations it contains (S/2020/946).

As we mark the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the Group recognizes the progress made as well as the opportunity and need for far greater implementation of all pillars of the women and peace and security agenda. The Group urges Member States to fully implement the provisions of all previous Security Council resolutions pertaining to the women and peace and security agenda and to reinforce their efforts in this regard. The Group underscores the importance of ensuring that commitments made are kept and accompanied by appropriate accountability frameworks.

The Group recognizes and pays tribute to the critical role played by civil society in the creation and ongoing implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. Now more than ever, we must create enabling spaces for civil society's important voices and critical perspectives to be heard, considered and acted upon, including in the Security Council. The Group condemns in the strongest possible terms the ongoing and, in many cases, increasing intimidation, threats and violence against women peacebuilders, women political leaders, women community leaders and women human-rights defenders. This violence is unacceptable, and it must stop. The Group urges all Member States to fulfil their obligations to that end and further urges all Member States to unequivocally call out speech and acts that fuel gender-based discrimination, stigma and violence, including in the digital space.

The Group welcomes ongoing efforts undertaken by the Security Council to more systematically include women from diverse backgrounds in its discussions and urges its members to fully integrate women and peace and security into all of its work and outcomes, including on country-specific situations and mission mandates. The Group similarly welcomes continuing efforts across the United Nations system and calls on United Nations departments and entities, including their senior officials, to deliver on their 10 core commitments included in the 2019 report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/800). The Group emphasizes that women's participation in peace negotiations is not only desirable; it is essential to achieving more sustainable peace. As such, the Group calls on the United Nations to aim towards making women's full, equal and meaningful participation a requirement in all mediation teams, political transitions and the peace processes it leads or co-leads. The Group also encourages Member States and the Security Council to follow up on the recommendations addressed to them in the reports of the Secretary-General.

As highlighted in this year's report, the Group emphasizes how increased, predictable, sustained and flexible funding for women and peace and security is key to making the agenda a reality. Despite some positive examples, we are concerned by the relative stagnation in financing for women's organizations, especially as compared to the trillions of dollars spent every year on peace and security. The financial situation of many women's organizations has been further weakened as a result of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. More must be done to support them.

The twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) comes at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic continues to wreak havoc worldwide, with its impacts exacerbated for women and girls, including increased violence, impacts on safety and livelihoods and exclusion from the design, implementation and monitoring of response efforts. We remain outraged by reports of increased sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls during COVID-19, including in armed conflict and post-conflict situations, which undermines the fragile gains on gender equality and women and girls' human rights. Recalling the responsibilities of parties to armed conflict to respect fully international law applicable to the rights and protection of women and girls, the Group once again echoes the call of the Secretary-General for a global ceasefire in response to COVID-19, and we underscore the importance of human rights-based and gender-responsive measures against the pandemic.

In this particularly challenging context, it becomes even more imperative to seize on this anniversary year, which also marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, to call on the international community to redouble our efforts to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all aspects of peace and security, to ensure women's rights are promoted and protected and to fill the gaps in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

Annex 28

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations

[Original: English and French]

This anniversary year has been a year like no other. While we had planned to celebrate progress since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), 20 years ago, the year 2020 has instead — ironically — proven how fragile this progress has been.

Hard-fought gains in advancing gender equality and inclusion have, in some instances, been eroded in just a few months, due to the coronavirus disease and inadequate pandemic response. Women, racialized and marginalized communities are suffering disproportionately from shifting government priorities, increased domestic and sexual and gender-based violence, limited access to sexual and reproductive health care, and economic insecurity.

At the same time, women peacebuilders and human-rights defenders are demonstrating once again that they are essential leaders in emergencies and play key roles in addressing basic needs, defending human rights and preventing further conflict and instability.

This year we have also witnessed blatant, and often violent, expressions of racism, and are reminded how deep-rooted gender-based discrimination, violence and racism are. It is clearer than ever that we need profound structural change.

As Canada develops our feminist foreign policy and implements our second national action plan on women and peace and security, we are striving to address the persistent inequalities among women, men, girls and boys, and to transform power relations and discriminatory social, political, legal and economic systems and structures.

Canada stresses that our collective focus must be on addressing critical gaps in the full implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. On this twentieth anniversary, women and girls are counting on us to increase our resolve, not diminish it. This includes support for and protection of women peacebuilders and human-rights defenders, support for sexual and reproductive health and rights, and for a more inclusive agenda.

We commend the Security Council for inviting civil society activists to share their expertise with Council members. Recommendations must now be translated into informed decisions for action. Listening to women peacebuilders and human-rights defenders ensures our policies, programming and interventions are attuned to the realities on the ground.

As co-Chair of the Women and Peace and Security Focal Points Network together with Uruguay, Canada has heard directly from women peacebuilders from all over the world. More than anything else, they have clearly articulated that they lack sustainable, reliable financial support. To address this important gap, Canada increased its financial contributions, including to the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund and the Equality Fund initiative — a first-of-its-kind global platform that brings together government, philanthropic and private sectors and civil society actors to create a sustainable source of funding for women's organizations and movements for years to come.

But we need to do more. That is why Canada will be launching a number of new initiatives, including a dedicated funding envelope focused on women peacebuilders, with an emphasis on supporting efforts at the grassroots level.

Canada is also pleased to serve as co-lead of the Action Coalition on Feminist Movements and Leadership, and as a catalytic member of the Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action Compact — both important initiatives under the Generation Equality Forum. We look forward to working with partners to accelerate progress.

We must hold ourselves and each other accountable for turning words into action. This includes the commitments made by United Nations entities operating in fragile, conflict and crisis-affected settings to consult and partner with diverse women's civil society actors to inform their analysis, planning and programming. If implemented, these commitments hold the promise of improved outcomes for sustainable peace.

We must all track our efforts, evaluate our results and collaborate in exchanging best practices. We should not underestimate the power of impact-driven, evidence-based action plans and initiatives in this regard.

For example, as lead of the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies, Canada has launched the Call to Action Road Map for 2021-2025. With an increased focus on gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls, localization, intersectionality and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, the Road Map provides us with opportunities to make strong commitments that align with the women and peace and security agenda.

Under the framework of the Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations, Canada and Norway have funded the development of a barrier assessment tool, to assist police and military institutions in enhancing their integration and deployment of uniformed women. This tool has been made public, with funding available through UN-Women's Elsie Initiative Fund to complete these assessments. Increasing the meaningful participation of uniformed women in United Nations peace operations is a priority.

Inclusion is at the core of the women and peace and security agenda, whether it be in peace operations, at the grassroots, at the negotiating table or in decision-making processes; sustainable peace cannot coexist with inequality and exclusion. Canada believes that working together, with smart investments of our energies and resources, and a clear-eyed focus on our goals, we can and we will bring about the transformational change that resolution 1325 (2000) has set in motion.

Annex 29**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations, Milenko Esteban Skoknic Tapia**

[Original: Spanish]

Chile is a member of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security and associates itself with the statement submitted on behalf of the Group (annex 27). We would like to contribute some additional remarks to this debate in our national capacity.

The impacts of the coronavirus disease pandemic, together with other global challenges, have further complicated already-difficult situations of conflict, humanitarian crisis and peacebuilding. Twenty years on from the historic adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), and amid an increasingly complex global context, the women and peace and security agenda is more important than ever. This agenda has taught us major lessons on the differing impact of crisis situations on women, and on the importance of placing women at the centre of response, recovery and peacebuilding efforts.

Resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security constitute a foundational normative and political framework for protecting the rights of women against gender-based violence and abuse and discrimination in crisis and conflict situations. They also provide a road map for enhancing the participation of women at all levels and in all phases of crisis and emergency response — this includes in relevant institutions, operations and missions, as well as of local women in negotiating and peacebuilding processes and in peace and security decision-making at all levels.

We reiterate Chile's commitment to this agenda, while recognizing the importance of the tools developed under its auspices. We were among the first countries in our region to develop, in 2009, a national action plan for its implementation. In 2015, we launched the second national action plan, which incorporated indicators for monitoring and evaluation against goals and commitments, in line with recommendations of the Secretary-General.

Chile is highly vulnerable to natural disasters, which, like other emergencies, have a disproportionate impact on women. We are currently in the process of developing our third national action plan, considering the relevance of the lessons learned from, and tools developed under, the women and peace and security agenda to emergency and disaster situations.

Another component of this agenda we deem particularly important is the development of regional networks of women mediators and the established in 2019 of the Global Alliance of Women Mediators. These reflect the aspirations, commitment and participation and leadership capacities of women in peace processes.

Our region of Latin America and the Caribbean does not yet have such a network linking women peace and security mediators and peacebuilders. That is why we welcomed, and are actively participating in, the initiative of Argentina and UN-Women in Latin America to establish a network of women mediators for the southern cone.

We reiterate the need to address and eradicate the scourge of sexual and gender-based violence, including in conflict situations, as well as in the context of the pandemic, and must ensure that those responsible are held to account for their actions.

In conclusion, we renew our commitment to the women and peace and security agenda, and reiterate its centrality and relevance to international peace and security, conflict prevention, peace processes and peacebuilding.

Annex 30

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations, Guillermo Fernández De Soto Valderrama

The twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) is an opportunity to reiterate our political commitment to gender equality. Having recognized that the achievement of a peaceful and inclusive society must be based on the promotion of the political and economic empowerment of women in order to achieve the principles of legality, entrepreneurship and equity, Colombia has been a living example of resolution 1325 (2000).

Colombia has been working on the implementation of the gender perspective established in the 2016 Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, specifically through the materialization of the 51 gender indicators of the Government's implementation framework.

President Iván Duque Márquez has been emphatic in highlighting those 51 indicators as the path to implementing that approach in a cross-cutting manner. The participation of women in peacebuilding is a priority for my Government, as it contributes to the transformations proposed by the "Peace with legality" policy with regard to economic autonomy, the generation of dignified workspaces and other conditions in order to end the cycle of violence that violates women's rights. That is particularly true for rural women.

Women's participation is fundamental at both the national and territorial levels. At the national level, the Special Body for the Gender Perspective in Peace was set up, with the representation of women's organizations and platforms from different sectors and backgrounds of the social movement in Colombia. At the territorial level, more than 65,000 women participated in the formulation of the development plans with a territorial focus.

To combat violence against women, my country is working on cultural and institutional transformation. In the face of gender-based violence, we must change social and institutional tolerance practices in order to ensure the safety of women and prevent the recurrence of violence. That is why it is important to draw up guidelines for establishing protocols for the prevention of sexual harassment and gender-based violence and providing care for its victims. We have been working on that on an inter-institutional basis.

Additionally, Colombia has been working on the promotion of legal economic opportunities for women in areas that have traditionally been co-opted by illegal economies, primarily drug trafficking and illegal mining.

The impact of violence against women, in terms of sexual violence and forced displacement, is recognized globally, but very little has been said about the economic and property violence suffered by women exposed to the control of illegal armed groups and illegal economies. That is why we insist that ensuring their security can contribute to their empowerment and economic autonomy.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the impact of the pandemic in relation to gender-based violence. To that end, the Government has been working on ways to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus disease, including specific guidelines to prevent and deal with that violence.

The women and peace and security agenda is a priority for my Government, and we will continue to share our lessons learned and challenges in order to continue to make progress in making this agenda a reality.

Annex 31**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations, Maritza Chan Valverde**

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Russian Federation for convening today's open debate. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts to address the implementation of this important resolution, and wish to welcome today's briefers.

The adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) was a landmark moment in the history of the United Nations, representing a widespread normative shift in how we talk about women in the context of international peace and security. Resolution 1325 (2000) called on Member States to move women to front and centre in peace and security processes, to stop talking only about women as victims and, instead, to begin conversations about the importance of women's agency and participation. Resolution 1325 (2000) established a bold agenda in which gender equality was recognized as the foundation of peaceful and inclusive societies.

However, a significant gap remains between our good words, agreements, discussions and events, on the one hand, and our actions, on the other. As a consequence, change — as stated by the Secretary-General last year — is coming at a pace that is too slow for women and girls whose lives depend on it, and for the effectiveness of our efforts to maintain international peace and security.

Costa Rica therefore welcomes the stress placed on implementing our common commitments and delivering fully on the ambition of the existing framework of women and peace and security resolutions, rather than producing more texts. In that regard, Costa Rica would like to focus on one particular issue.

The original intent of resolution 1325 (2000) was not simply to promote female soldiers, but rather to reap the rewards obtained when women become equitable participants in all peace and security deliberations and solutions. That includes women's representation at international meetings and multilateral forums dealing with arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

Research has shown that at meetings of international treaties and processes that address disarmament and weapons issues, only about one quarter of participants are likely to be women. Less than a fifth of statements made are likely to be given by a woman. In many instances, almost half of all national delegations are composed entirely of men, despite the fact that women often suffer disproportionate or differential harm from the development, use and trade of weapons.

It is crucial to confront women's underrepresentation and other patterns of marginalization in those forums, alongside other objectives, such as ensuring the participation of those who have been most directly impacted by the trade and proliferation of weapons, and the full consideration of their humanitarian consequences. Costa Rica encourages States, in accordance with their commitments under resolution 1325 (2000), to intensify their efforts to fulfil this promising aspiration and to reaffirm our commitment to promoting the leadership and full, equal and significant participation of women in all disarmament processes — including meetings that are held virtually — and to strengthening analyses and approaches that take into account the gendered impact of weapons and weapons systems. Empowering women and increasing women's participation remain among the most effecting tools for advancing global peace and security.

Annex 32

Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the United Nations

The Czech Republic aligns itself with the statements submitted on behalf of the European Union (annex 38) and the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security (annex 27).

This year we celebrate several important gender-related anniversaries. We commemorated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action during the recent special high-level meeting of the General Assembly.

Twenty years ago, resolution 1325 (2000) became the first step in creating what we today call the women and peace and security agenda. Resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, and the nine follow-up resolutions have brought women's full and meaningful participation to the very centre of both peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

We thank the Secretary-General for his timely report on women and peace and security, in which the Secretary-General states the regrettable fact that

“[w]e still live in a world where women face exclusion from peace and political processes; where the number of attacks against women human rights defenders, humanitarians and peacebuilders continues to rise; where the attempted erosion of international human rights standards persists; and where xenophobia, racism, intolerance, homophobia, transphobia and violent misogyny continue to spread.” (*S/2019/800, para. 3*)

The Secretary-General's statement also presented a range of concerning statistics to help us identify some of the implementation gaps of resolution 1325 (2000).

According to the report, between 1992 and 2019, only 6 per cent of mediators, 6 per cent of signatories and 13 per cent of negotiators of peace processes were women. Furthermore, between 2015 and 2019, only 11 ceasefires and 26 other peace agreements included gender provisions. That shows that women's participation remains disproportionately low and that women's needs and voices are still not adequately reflected.

That is true even 20 years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), which recognized the role of women in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and peacekeeping, and called on us to take action.

This sobering reality has indeed been aggravated by the coronavirus disease pandemic, which has not only deepened pre-existing inequalities but also, in many ways, now jeopardizes the fragile progress made in some areas.

As for the Czech Republic, we are meeting our commitments. As we speak, the second national action plan, for the years 2021-2025, is being approved by our Government and will be adopted by the end of this year. It sets out general goals, as well as specific targets and concrete measures, to reach those targets. The preparation of that document was a joint effort of various stakeholders, including the Government, the non-governmental sector and academia. The document is the primary national instrument to strengthen accountability and improve monitoring of our progress in implementing the women and peace and security agenda. Mainstreaming the gender agenda and achieving the women and peace and security agenda continue to be among our top priorities.

We would like to once again urge all States that have not yet done so to join more than 80 Member States in adopting and acting upon their national action plans in order to improve the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. We must all redouble our efforts to make sure that the solemn promise of the women and peace and security agenda is fulfilled.

Annex 33

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations, Martin Bille Hermann

The Nordic countries — Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark — welcome the most recent report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2020/946), as well as its recommendations. We commend the United Nations on efforts to enhance accountability, and commit to doing our part.

Twenty years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), we recommit to stepping up our efforts to ensure the full implementation of all resolutions and all pillars of the women and peace and security agenda. In that regard, we welcome the Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, as part of the Generation Equality Forum, the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund's Rapid Response Window for the deployment of women to peace processes and the Commitment 2025 initiative.

Inclusive peace processes are more likely to produce sustainable results responsive to a diverse set of needs. Yet the numbers in the Secretary-General report speak for themselves. While progress has been achieved in many areas, women remain underrepresented at all stages of mediation, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and in political processes in general. Much remains to be done. I would like to mention a few concrete examples.

First, women need to be part of peace talk delegations. The representation of women in dialogue and mediation efforts are key to ensuring a sustainable outcome.

Secondly, peace negotiations should be informed by a gender perspective in order to ensure that the needs of the whole population are considered.

Thirdly, reporting from conflict situations should include gender analysis and sex-disaggregated data.

Fourthly, consultations with women's organizations should be conducted regularly. We need to link local initiatives to formal peace talks. Security Council briefings from women civil society representatives help create informed decisions.

Fifthly, security assessments need to address the security of women, including conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence.

Sixthly, security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes should integrate a gender perspective to achieve inclusive political transitions.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has exacerbated conflicts and inequalities worldwide. We should not let it result in a setback for hard-won progress on women's and girls' rights. We must work to ensure that our societies emerge more resilient, equal and inclusive. The Nordic countries remain particularly concerned about the Secretary-General report's clear demonstration of a global rise in sexual and gender-based violence and the increased risk of sexual exploitation and abuse as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 crisis. The pandemic constitutes a great challenge to women's sexual and reproductive health and rights. Ensuring the fundamental rights of women and girls is key to promoting their full, equal and meaningful participation and representation. Moreover, there is a pressing urgency for creating a safe environment for women peacebuilders and human rights defenders. That is our duty as Member States.

The Nordic countries were among the first to launch a national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). National action plans remain a key

tool, but if we are to ensure accountability, they must be followed up with concrete and tangible efforts to support women and girls living in conflict-affected areas.

Political will and sufficient resources are needed to speed up the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The Nordic countries strongly urge all States Members of the United Nations to put women at the front and centre of their peace and security efforts in conflict prevention and humanitarian responses — from the very start of a peace dialogue to the implementation of a peace accord. We call on the United Nations to ensure gender parity on its mediation teams, and to take concrete steps towards women's full, equal and meaningful participation in all peace processes and political transitions in which it has a role, as well as in the peace processes it leads or co-leads. It is not only the right thing to do, it will also promote sustainable and lasting peace.

Annex 34

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations, Cristian Espinosa Cañizares

[Original: Spanish]

I would first like to highlight the great work carried out by your delegation, Sir, during your presidency of the Security Council for this month of October. I thank you, in particular, for having convened this open debate to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, which reaffirmed the valuable role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, negotiations, consolidation and peacekeeping.

In that respect, the Ecuadorian State has a solid legal framework that guarantees the validity, exercise and enforceability of women's rights, which in turn are based on two fundamental pillars: the Constitution and the international instruments ratified by the State.

The Constitution establishes that the armed forces are an institution for the protection of citizens' rights, freedoms and guarantees. That framework includes a gender perspective in the defence policy agenda and promotes policies for gender parity. Through those instruments, Ecuador also implements resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1889 (2009).

Furthermore, our national development plan recognizes the equal participation of women and men in public and private life and incorporates a gender perspective in a cross-cutting manner.

On numerous occasions, the Council, the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and Member States have expressed their views on the relevance and invaluable contribution of women to the promotion of peace and security. At the end of this first year of the decade of action, we must give a definitive boost to the Organization's efforts in this area, including the ongoing review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture.

Ecuador actively supports the objectives of resolution 1325 (2000), such as increasing the participation of women and incorporating a gender perspective into all the peace and security efforts of the United Nations.

Ecuador also supports and promotes the implementation of special measures — by all parties to conflicts — to protect women and girls from violence in crisis and post-conflict situations.

In recent years, following the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), we have witnessed important progress at both the international and the local levels. The participation of women in the Ecuadorian Armed Forces has quadrupled since the tenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). In recent years, we have also encouraged greater participation of women soldiers in peacekeeping missions.

On 28 August, we had the honour of co-sponsoring resolution 2538 (2020), which calls on the Secretary-General to continue to implement the System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity and Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy 2018-2028.

Ecuador is very concerned that the crisis generated by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has highlighted vulnerabilities and inequalities. It will take time to know for certain the full impact of the crisis, but their general effects are already clear: huge losses of lives and livelihoods, and deepening poverty and hunger. The consequences of COVID-19 will be profound and lasting, and they risk reversing decades of progress.

This has a disproportionate impact on women. We will not be able to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development if we do not preserve and consolidate the gains we have made. We must also ensure international solidarity to promote recovery through policies that are gender-sensitive and ecologically sustainable, and promote peaceful, safe and resilient societies.

This year, we also commemorate the seventy-second anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Charter of the United Nations and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women. But what better way to commemorate those milestones than by implementing them effectively? In that context, Ecuador reiterates its commitment to continuing to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as their participation in peacebuilding efforts and in processes to enhance international security.

Annex 35

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations, Mohamed Edrees

At the outset, I would like to thank the Russian Federation for organizing this open debate to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the landmark resolution 1325 (2000).

On this occasion, it is important to recall the African role in placing the women and peace and security agenda on the Security Council agenda. Egypt praises all African efforts to fully implement the women and peace and security agenda in Africa.

In that regard, it is worthy to highlight that the African continent was the first to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of this resolution. In its capacity as Chair of the African Union Peace and Security Council, Egypt convened a meeting early this month dedicated to commemorating that paramount resolution and reviewing its implementation.

Egypt believes that adopting women and peace and security action plans is not sufficient. Adequate resources should be allocated to the implementation of those action plans. Egypt stresses the importance of lending assistance to African States, upon their request, to build capacities and implement these ambitious actions plans, especially for States suffering through or emerging from armed conflicts.

The President of the Arab Republic of Egypt was one of the first leaders to join the Circle of Leadership initiative to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations operations. Raising awareness of sexual exploitation and abuse is an integral part of the comprehensive training received by the Egyptian forces prior to their deployment in peacekeeping operations.

Egypt takes pride in initiating and championing the negotiations on General Assembly resolution 71/278, adopted on 20 March 2017, which advocated for a system-wide response, comprising both United Nations and non-United Nations personnel, aimed at forging a collective commitment to the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse throughout the United Nations by prioritizing prevention, promoting accountability and providing justice for victims.

The Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding and Egypt's National Council for Women continue to provide capacity-building trainings for Egyptian stakeholders, as well as relevant officials in the sisterly African countries.

We also stress the importance of ensuring the effective contribution of women to peacebuilding. The global alliance of regional networks of female mediators is an appropriate platform for stronger advocacy in this area.

Egypt is keen to stress the critical importance of ensuring the necessary balance for the implementation of the four pillars of the agenda — prevention, protection, participation and relief and recovery — while ensuring national ownership and taking into consideration the cultural and societal specificities of the various countries in armed conflict or emerging from it.

In conclusion, Egypt calls for renewing our political and moral commitment to further supporting and empowering women during and after armed conflicts. Women are critical during the transitional period from conflict to development. Their empowerment is a must for a healthy and coherent society striving towards sustainable peace. In that regard, Egypt welcomes the Peacebuilding Commission's efforts to adopt the System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity, as well as the Commission's allocation of a portion of the Peacebuilding Fund to women's empowerment in post-conflict countries.

Annex 36**Statement by the Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the United Nations, Egriselda González López**

[Original: Spanish]

El Salvador aligns itself with the statement submitted on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security (annex 27), of which it is a member.

My country emphasizes its commitment to the development, implementation and fulfilment of the women and peace and security agenda, while reaffirming its conviction that women, in all their diversity, are active agents of peace and development, as well as protagonists in the prevention of conflict and in the search for effective and efficient responses to current and future challenges.

This year, which marks not only the twentieth anniversary since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), but also the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a document that focuses on women and armed conflict and recognizes the link between peace and the advancement of women, who are a vital force for community leadership, conflict resolution and the promotion of lasting peace at all levels. El Salvador recognizes the progress made in the implementation of both instruments and the importance of urgently addressing the remaining challenges, particularly in such a complex situation.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has highlighted the importance of fulfilling the commitments set out in resolution 1325 (2000). In addition to its devastating impact on health, the crisis, which has exposed existing inequalities and vulnerabilities, is having profound social, economic and political consequences, with significant challenges to peace and security, as well as the possibility of triggering or intensifying violence, exacerbating gender inequality and reversing the peace gains of recent years.

El Salvador expresses its deep concern about the serious impact that the pandemic has had on women and girls. From health to the economy to security and social protection, the effects of the pandemic, like those of conflict, have a differential and disproportionate impact on women and girls.

Since gender-based violence has increased considerably in the current context, with many increases of over 25 per cent, El Salvador believes that efforts to achieve the full, equitable and meaningful participation of women in all activities related to the prevention and resolution of conflicts, at all levels, cannot be delayed.

Informed by its experience with its own peace process and the challenges it currently faces, El Salvador is convinced that achieving that goal requires ensuring a significant increase in the representation of women in decision-making mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. That requires incorporating a gender perspective into public policies and programmes that contain concrete measures to guarantee that the commitments established in resolution 1325 (2000) are met.

In that regard, as a sign of its willingness to comply with the provisions of this resolution, El Salvador has formulated its Women, Peace and Security 2017-2022 national action plan. The plan takes up the historical background of women's participation in the Salvadoran peace process; it reinforces the country's regulatory framework and develops its method of action through the pillars of participation, prevention, protection, reparation measures and measures for the restitution of rights, and a strengthened implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). That makes El Salvador one of 85 Member States — 44 per cent of the Organization's membership — that

have translated the agenda into a national action plan. My country will initiate the process of updating our plan to incorporate current challenges and ensure that it is a renewed guide that enables all participating bodies to coordinate priority actions for the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. El Salvador calls on the United Nations and its Member States to continue supporting each country in the development and implementation of its national action plan to comply with resolution 1325 (2000).

In addition, through its participation in United Nations peace operations, El Salvador has sought to mainstream resolution 1325 (2000) into the training of its troops. One of the main advances in that field is that 35 per cent of the country's currently deployed police personnel is female, compared to 15.1 per cent globally.

The implementation of the women and peace and security agenda is a task that concerns everyone and in which political leadership is essential. El Salvador believes that, in future, it will be possible to meet the pending challenges in its implementation only through coordinated and coherent action among the multiple actors. It therefore calls for the strategic incorporation of the agenda into national, regional and global plans, policies and guidelines.

With regard to the role of the United Nations in this area, El Salvador considers it extremely important to follow up on the measures to be adopted by the Organization, as reflected in the Secretary-General's 2019 report (S/2019/800), and to take advantage of the processes under way, such as the review of the peacebuilding architecture and the repositioning of the United Nations development system to incorporate concrete actions to implement the operative paragraphs of the resolutions on women and peace and security throughout the Organization's work.

It is essential that women and peace and security remain on the agenda of the Security Council so as to ensure the inclusion of language on women, peace and security in its decisions, the sustained increase in Arria Formula meetings on this matter and its mainstreaming in all United Nations peace operations mandates.

Likewise, it is important to address the existing gap in financing the agenda and to seek to allocate sustained, predictable and flexible resources. Increasing and diversifying sources of funding will be key to translating political commitments into concrete actions and implementing resolution 1325 (2000), thus serving as a catalyst for progress on other instruments such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Finally, El Salvador believes that in the current context, it will be key for women in all their diversity, who have a critical voice in ensuring a gender perspective in crisis and conflict mitigation, prevention and recovery policies at all levels, to participate in decision-making on the response to and global recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, we must redouble our efforts to achieve the urgent commitments with regard to the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

Annex 37

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations, Taye Atskeselassie Amde

Allow me to first congratulate you, Sir, on a successful presidency of the Security Council and to extend our appreciation to you for organizing this commemorative meeting. I also wish to thank Secretary-General António Guterres and all the briefers for their statements.

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of landmark resolution 1325 (2000), the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the seventy-fifth anniversary of our Organization's founding. All of these instruments recognized the vital and indispensable role women play in the promotion of peace and security and called on Member States to prioritize gender equality and women's empowerment.

As the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2020/946) on women and peace and security makes clear, despite the progress made with regard to gender equality over the past two decades, major hurdles remain. Those limited gains are now at risk of reversal due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Gender-based violence is on the rise. Women are at the forefront of the fight against this deadly virus and are paying enormous sacrifices. Tragically, they are also likely to be disproportionately affected by its economic consequences. That is why it is so fitting that this debate focuses on the implementation of that milestone resolution. More work and practical commitments are needed to bridge the gap in implementation, including in the context of the COVID-19 response, and to support Member States in developing policies and strategies that align with the women and peace and security agenda.

The full, equal and meaningful participation of women in development and peace and security should no longer be an option. It is an absolute imperative. We believe that neither peace nor prosperity can be achieved or sustained without the active and meaningful involvement of women in society. Lasting peace and security cannot prevail as long as women continue to face gender-based violence, have their rights violated, lack access to public services and enjoy only limited participation.

For Ethiopia, the empowerment of women is a key pillar of our development aspirations. Women have been responsible for the transformation in the provision of basic health services throughout rural Ethiopia, especially with regard to maternal and child health. They continue to be instrumental in conflict prevention, notably in mediation and in the resettlement of internally displaced persons. Women's role in our security sector reform is also central.

The equal participation of women in all sectors of life in Ethiopia is constitutionally guaranteed. Access to education is a critical element in that endeavour. Women cannot enjoy their full rights as long as they continue to struggle for access to education. Addressing poverty and the educational deprivation of women is essential if we are to achieve fundamental changes in advancing gender equality. Ethiopia is working to increase the enrolment of women at all levels of education and boost their participation at all levels of decision-making in our national institutions.

The appointments of the country's first woman President, the first woman President of the Federal Supreme Court and the first woman Chair of the electoral board and achieving gender parity in the Cabinet are all part of our efforts to increase and elevate women's participation. My Government also set up a new ministry with a direct oversight of the security sector to ensure women's involvement in peace and security matters. Over the past two decades, Ethiopia has made steady progress

in increasing both the number of women and women's leadership positions in our armed forces and police, as well as in addressing their barriers to entry.

To minimize the implementation gaps, we must strive to mainstream the women and peace and security agenda in all our policy interventions, and my Government is committed to implementing a series of actions over the next decade under the 10-year perspective development plan. We are also consulting with a wide range of stakeholders, including civil society organizations, on a draft national action plan on the women and peace and security agenda.

In conclusion, let me reaffirm Ethiopia's full commitment to sustaining progress towards the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Today's commemorative meeting is an opportunity for us all to recommit to implementing the resolutions and declarations we have agreed on, thus ensuring that women are fully involved as equal partners in peace and political processes at all levels. I would like to take this opportunity to call on the members of the Security Council to redouble their efforts to strengthen women's role in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, mediation and enforcement, including through capacity-building and the provision of financial and technical support to developing countries.

Annex 38

Statement by the Permanent Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations

The Candidate Countries Turkey, the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of groundbreaking resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Both of these milestones speak to the importance of women's leadership and participation in peace and security processes and the need to fully consider the gendered impact of armed conflict and violence. They also serve to underline the need to understand gender inequality, the exclusion of women and human rights violations as root causes and drivers of conflict and fragility. With the declaration (General Assembly resolution 75/1) on the commemoration of the Organization's seventy-fifth anniversary, adopted in September, all States Members of the United Nations pledged to accelerate action towards achieving gender equality, women's participation and the empowerment of women and girls in all domains.

In the twenty-first century, disasters and human-made crises and conflicts are increasingly linked to global challenges, such as climate change, environmental degradation, displacement and pandemics. The consequences of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) have shown that the women and peace and security agenda is central to addressing the need for women's inclusion and leadership and the growing threat of violence against women and girls. In order to implement the women and peace and security agenda, we need all actors, including the Security Council, to take holistic, whole-of-Government and cross-pillar approaches to security.

Moreover, as the pandemic has exacerbated both inequalities and wider security challenges, those tensions create conditions conducive to violence, particularly sexual and gender-based violence, including domestic violence, and limit access to assistance and essential services, including sexual and reproductive and other health-care services, social protection, education, nutrition, full access to clean water, including safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene. The European Union (EU) remains particularly concerned about the Secretary-General report's (S/2020/946) clear demonstration of a global rise in sexual and gender-based violence and the increased risk of sexual exploitation and abuse as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 crisis. Nevertheless, the fact that 146 Member States and observers in April answered the Secretary-General's call to make the prevention and response to gender-based violence a key part of their national responses to COVID-19 gives us grounds for optimism.

While there have been notable achievements in the field of women and peace and security since the year 2000, much remains to be done. Women are still appallingly underrepresented when it comes to decisions and processes related to peace and security. In that regard, we welcome that the recent resolution 2538 (2020), on women in peacekeeping, was guided by the principles of resolution 1325 (2000).

We are deeply concerned about the increasing level of violence and threats against women human rights defenders, aid workers, peacebuilders and political leaders, as well as the shrinking space for civil society. In some cases, COVID-19 has exacerbated human rights violations and contributed to further shrinking spaces. We must enhance our collective efforts to protect women's rights. The EU remains committed to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and the

full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the outcomes of their review conferences, and remains committed to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Building on the success of our joint EU-United Nations Spotlight Initiative in tackling all forms of violence against women and girls, we intend to move forward hand-in-hand with our partners. We will reach out to international financial institutions and the private sector to ensure that sustainable funding for gender equality is included in multilateral investment and financing and provide further support to global initiatives in the framework of the Generation Equality Forum. The EU also plays an active role as one of the co-leaders of the Action Coalition on gender-based violence. The EU will continue to call on all parties to conflict to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law and to stop all forms of sexual violence in conflict, as well as to end impunity for perpetrators of such crimes and to provide the survivors access to justice and comprehensive health services.

For the European Union and its Member States, supporting and advancing gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls is at the core of our policies, whether at home or abroad. The EU has been at the forefront of promoting the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace processes. Important strategies have been adopted in that regard. We are working on the new Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in External Action 2021-2025 to guide the EU's external action for that period. The EU Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2019-2024 is an integral part of that approach.

The women and peace and security agenda is driven by the critical contribution of civil society, which also plays an essential role in its implementation. In this milestone year for women's rights and gender equality, we take this opportunity to express our gratitude to civil society actors around the world, as well as to the dedicated gender advisers and focal points, without whom we would never have gotten this far. The future of the women and peace and security agenda depends on how well we all work together to take this endeavour to the next level, as underlined by the Human Rights Council in its resolution (A/HRC/RES/45/28) on promoting and protecting the human rights of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations, on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000).

We, the international community, have not yet delivered sufficiently on the unanimous commitment we made in 2000: to implement the women and peace and security agenda in full. To achieve that, we do not necessarily need new resolutions, but to act upon our promises. The European Union is determined to lead by example. We are determined to bring to bear all our political, diplomatic, technical and financial instruments to ensure that this is implemented now so that, when we mark the next anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), we can present results. The United Nations and women peacebuilders, activists, human rights defenders and leaders can count on our full support and engagement, and we invite all our partners and allies to spare no effort in striving towards this goal for the sake of future generations.

Annex 39

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Fiji to the United Nations

It has been 20 years since landmark resolution 1325 (2000), which recognizes that women's protection and participation are crucial to peacebuilding, sustaining peace and promoting inclusive development. This year the United Nations also commemorates 75 years since the signing of the Charter of the United Nations, and 25 years since the conclusion of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action for women. These are significant milestones that show how far the United Nations has come and how much more work it needs to do in order to realize the aspirations of resolution 1325 (2000).

The Secretary-General's 2019 report on women and peace and security (S/2019/800), highlighted that there are considerable challenges to advancing the goals of resolution 1325 (2000). The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has multiplied all these challenges manifold.

Fiji welcomes the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire and to focus all efforts on fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. Conflicts compound obstacles to advancing women's rights. The pandemic has further worsened conditions for women and girls and undoubtedly represents the gravest challenges yet to the women and peace and security agenda. Violence against women and girls has increased. Girls have been disproportionately impacted by the closure of schools.

The Pacific Island Forum's Boe Declaration on Regional Security identifies climate change as the "single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and well-being of the peoples of the Pacific." Fiji fully recognizes that enhancing the preparedness, protection and resilience for all women and girls is an investment in security.

Fiji is implementing its third women's plan for advancing women's rights. It is working towards adopting a national prevention action plan to prevent violence against women and girls. Fiji has established a national gender policy to promote gender equality. There has been an increase in the number of women in leadership positions, in both the civil service and the Parliament. Fiji's social and economic recovery pays considerable and careful attention to protecting social security, supporting women in small businesses, enhancing food security and help women who have become unemployed due to the pandemic.

Fiji has continuously participated in United Nations peacekeeping for over 40 years, for nearly 30 of which it has been deploying women peacekeepers. Fiji is proud to report that 56 per cent of Fijian police officer peacekeepers are women, including the first female Police Commissioner of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, Unaisi Vuniwaqa. Recently, Fiji deployed a female senior military officer to be the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization as Chief of Observer Group Golan.

Fiji is working closely with our partners to improve the capacity and skills of women peacekeepers. Fiji continues to strengthen and mainstream gender perspectives across all areas.

Advancing the women and peace and security agenda across our peace operations is not free. Peace operations are becoming more complex, and they need predictable and sustainable long-term financing.

In the past 20 years, Fiji has made continued progress in increasing women's participation and protection and in mainstreaming gender issues, under the Beijing Declaration and Plan of Action and resolution 1325 (2000). However, far more needs to be done.

This year, as we recommit to the Charter of the United Nations and to building the future that we want, Fiji reaffirms its commitment to all its obligations under resolution 1325 (2000).

Annex 40**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Georgia to the United Nations**

At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General and all the briefers for their valuable contributions.

Georgia aligns itself with the statement submitted by the European Union (annex 38).

This year we mark the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the historic resolution 1325 (2000). This was the first time that women were recognized as proactive participants in all stages of the conflict cycle — from prevention to conflict resolution and from peace operations to peacebuilding. This year also marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which flagged 12 key areas in need of urgent action to ensure greater equality and opportunities for women.

Whereas the past two decades have been marked by strides towards strengthening the women and peace and security agenda, we must not forget that the requirements set out in resolution 1325 (2000) and its subsequent resolutions are far from being fulfilled. That reality has been well epitomized in the latest reports of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security. We are concerned by the ample evidence provided by the Secretary-General, which highlights that the violence against women and girls and attacks on their human rights continue to be rampant in both conflict and post-conflict settings. At the same time, the participation of women in decision-making processes concerning the prevention, handling and resolution of conflicts also lags behind. More worrying, the existing social and economic inequalities, especially for women in fragile situations, have been further exacerbated by the ongoing coronavirus disease pandemic.

Against that background, urgent action is needed to ensure that the gains made towards gender equality and women's empowerment over the past two decades are not rolled back.

With that in mind, the Government of Georgia continues to promote gender equality in all aspects of its public life, including by integrating gender perspectives in the military as an essential part of the predeployment preparation of peacekeepers and by increasing women's participation in peace negotiations. Our third national action plan for the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda (2018-2020), among other activities, facilitates the increased involvement of women in confidence-building and reconciliation processes.

Moreover, for years the Georgian delegation has been actively raising all issues related to the needs and priorities of women internally displaced persons and conflict-affected women within each round of the Geneva International Discussions and the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism — the only formal format of negotiations between Georgia and the Russian Federation on the security and humanitarian issues stemming from the Russian aggression and subsequent occupation of the two Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali.

Extending protection to those conflict-affected women who live in the Russian-occupied regions of Georgia, however, remains an insurmountable challenge for the Government of Georgia. The protracted illegal occupation of those two regions by the Russian Federation leaves local residents, including women and girls, continuously deprived of their basic human rights. Restrictions of the right to freedom of movement, the deprivation of property rights, the prohibition of education in the native language and, to make matters worse, ethnically targeted human rights

violations have become an everyday reality for thousands of ethnic Georgians living in the occupied regions, as well as in the areas adjacent to the occupation line.

Furthermore, Russia is responsible for closing the so-called crossing points along the occupation line in Georgia's Tskhinvali region, where those in need, including women and girls, have been continuously denied access to urgent care and medical evacuation. As a result, 16 Georgian citizens have died since September 2019. Just a few days ago, yet another woman resident of the Russian-occupied Tskhinvali region died after several attempts to access the Georgian Government-controlled territories to receive medical assistance.

Allow me to conclude by highlighting the fact that, despite the aforementioned hardships, Georgia's commitment to contribute to the promotion of the women and peace and security agenda at the national and international levels will remain unwavering. Finally, we call on the international community to urge the Russian Federation to adhere to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and fulfil its international obligations, first and foremost the European Union-facilitated 2008 ceasefire agreement.

Annex 41**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations, Martha Pobee**

The Group of Friends of the African Women Leaders Network to the United Nations, chaired by the Permanent Mission of Ghana to the United Nations and vice-chaired by the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations, expresses its appreciation to the Russian presidency of the Security Council for convening this open debate as we commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the landmark resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security.

The Group also commends the Secretary-General for his report on the issue (S/2020/946), which captures the progress made on the role of women in securing peace and security, while forthrightly calling on Member States to step up efforts on financing and on the implementation of the agenda.

It is now 20 years since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. However, women remain largely excluded from local, national, regional and international decision-making processes.

Despite our strong and continued engagements to ensure women's meaningful participation, the global coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has tested Governments and civil society alike. It has added yet another layer of risk and complexity to conflicts. It has also further widened gendered inequalities and threatens to undermine human rights. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbates poverty, inequalities and gender-based violence. It has been aptly coined the shadow pandemic by UN-Women, with particular effects on women and girls, threatening all efforts led on the peacebuilding front.

Despite the many challenges brought about by the pandemic, women in peace and security in Africa and across the world have shown resilience in their undertakings and determination to ensure that this invisible enemy does not erode the gains made over the past two decades.

Since its launch in 2017, the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) has brought to the fore women's leadership and participation in peace, security and sustainable development. The AWLN platform is jointly supported by the African Union (AU) Commission and the United Nations through UN-Women.

More than three years after the establishment of the AWLN, the Group of Friends remains committed to making the message of women's meaningful participation a central part in the efforts regarding the maintenance of international peace, security, conflict prevention and mediation, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. The AWLN Group of Friends wishes to focus its statement on four main points.

First, the AWLN Group of Friends recognizes the urgent need to continue its march to localize peace and security efforts and to continue to support a bottom-up approach at the local and national levels if we are to ensure long-term gains for peace and stability. Since 2017, 25 national chapters of the AWLN have been launched in Africa in line with the Beijing+25 Conference, serving as rallying platforms to continue our work of building sustainable peace together with the AU and the United Nations.

AWLN women leaders are leading national and community efforts to prevent and mitigate conflict and build peace. AWLN women in Mali have been able to bring their expertise and to participate in the recent mediation and ongoing transitional mediation process. AWLN women leaders in Zimbabwe and in the Central African

Republic actively participate in peace, security and governance spaces, including as voters, community leaders, candidates, civil society leaders, ministers and parliamentarians. AWLN women leaders have been at the forefront of mobilizing efforts and resources to respond to the COVID-19 crisis and prevent the widespread contamination and misinformation at community levels and across the continent.

Secondly, the AWLN Group of Friends identifies intergenerational partnerships, among younger and senior women, as a key instrument to build sustainable peace and security, building on the synergies between the women and peace and security agenda, pursuant to resolution 1325 (2000), and the youth, peace and security agenda, pursuant to resolution 2250 (2015). At the country level, the AWLN convened several intergenerational strategic engagements on peace, security and governance, while hosting its first Intergenerational Retreat on Leadership in Africa last year with young women and senior United Nations and AU officials under the leadership of the President of Kenya, His Excellency Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta, and the AWLN patron, Her Excellency Ms. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

Thirdly, the Group recognizes that the meaningful participation of women in peace, security and peacebuilding processes requires moving beyond the numbers to ensure that women's rights, needs and experiences are heard and reflected in the peace outcome documents and reconstruction processes. The Group of Friends stands with the 2020 review of the Peacebuilding Commission in ensuring women's meaningful participation to help de-escalate tensions, prevent conflicts and promote lasting and inclusive peace.

Lastly, AWLN leaders have operationalized resolution 1325 (2000) on the ground by conducting 10 joint United Nations-AU fact-finding solidarity missions in the course of three years to recentre women's participation and leadership in peace, security and development in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, as well as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Sudan and South Sudan. The Group commends the leadership of AWLN champions United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Ms. Amina Mohammed, UN-Women Executive Director Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security Ms. Bineta Diop, together with other AU and United Nations officials, for bringing the agenda closer to the women and other people on the ground.

The ongoing world pandemic brings us closer to one reality, namely, that we all have a role to play in building and sustaining peace. The Group of Friends of the AWLN to the United Nations calls on the Security Council to continue to provide robust mandates that integrate women and peace and security priorities, while we continue to build the necessary partnerships and mechanisms to deliver on the call for women's meaningful participation.

Annex 42

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations

Greece congratulates the Russian presidency of the Security Council on convening today's open debate on women and peace and security on the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the ground-breaking resolution 1325 (2000), which triggered the evolution of the women and peace and security agenda. The agenda reaffirms the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women and girls and stresses the importance of their meaningful participation, as agents of peaceful and democratic change, in peace and security efforts.

This year also marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the most comprehensive global agenda for the realization of gender equality and the human rights of women and girls. Furthermore, it marks the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which recognizes the role of gender equality in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. All those anniversaries highlight substantive gender equality as a key requirement for international peace and security, human rights, the rule of law and sustainable development.

Nevertheless, 20 years after the adoption of the women and peace and security agenda and despite some progress in some of its priority areas, women continue to be disproportionately affected by violent or non-violent threats to their security. Whether survivors of conflict and conflict-related gender-based violence or peacebuilders, mediators, human rights defenders or journalists, women continue to experience the disproportionate burden of war, authoritarianism and instability. Added to that, the global health crisis caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, along with climate change, exacerbates, as threat multipliers, pre-existing inequalities, having a negative discriminatory impact, particularly on women and girls.

Greece remains committed to achieving substantive gender equality by establishing and implementing a coherent legal and institutional framework. To that end, the law mainstreams a gender perspective across the entire range of public policies. Moreover, the National Action Plan on Gender Equality is being renewed for the period 2021-2025, in conformity with international legal principles and standards, as well as the European Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, focusing, inter alia, on tackling the multidimensional impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the same time, Greece is currently finalizing its first national action plan on women and peace and security, to be adopted later this year, which aims not only to strengthen the foundations for systematic gender mainstreaming in foreign, defence and security policies, but also to enhance gender-equal representation, participation and leadership in decision-making at all levels. Furthermore, this action plan draws attention to the protection of women and girls, including migrants and refugees, from any form of violence, be it sexual, gender-based or domestic, as well as to the full and unimpeded enjoyment of all their rights.

In addition, by implementing the aforementioned action plan, Greece seeks to strengthen meaningful cooperation with the United Nations, the European Union, NATO and other like-minded partners in order to advance the beneficial role of women in conflict prevention and resolution and peacebuilding.

Finally, Greece firmly believes that substantial gender inclusiveness with regard to peace and security efforts, as envisaged by the women and peace and security agenda, together with the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda, is the appropriate tool for achieving a better future for generations to come, namely, a peaceful, sustainable and gender-equal world.

Annex 43

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Guatemala to the United Nations

[Original: Spanish]

In recent years, we have seen that the meaningful participation of women significantly strengthens protection efforts, expedites economic recovery, enhances peacebuilding efforts and leads to sustainable peace. Every year, the Council has therefore been paving the way for reducing the vulnerability of women and girls, particularly on the basis of resolution 1325 (2000) and its subsequent resolutions. That once again convinces us that lasting peace cannot be achieved without the protection of women and girls. Today, by means of this debate, we are bringing added value in order to ensure the full implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

Twenty years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), it is important that each State Member of the Organization assess the direction of our actions so as to continue the implementation of this important resolution. We must conduct a review and identify the outstanding gaps in order to strengthen and fulfil the commitments that we have made at the national, regional and international levels.

Since the signing of the Peace Accords, in 1996, Guatemala has taken on a series of commitments to the international human rights agenda, in particular to women in a post-conflict context. These agreements include 28 substantial commitments to advance the rights of women, who constitute 51.5 per cent of the total population of the country.

Along these lines, efforts have been made in the implementation of mechanisms, programmes and plans for the advancement of women, among which we can mention the Political Peace Agenda for the period 2017 to 2026, which is aligned with the national development plan “Katún Nuestra Guatemala 2032” and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We also have in place an advisory and coordinating entity that guarantees the implementation of public policies in terms of promoting the comprehensive development of Guatemalan women and fostering a democratic culture, which is the result of the demand of Guatemala’s women’s movement, the commitments assumed by the country through the adoption and ratification of international instruments by the State of Guatemala, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Platform for Action, among others.

Similarly, Guatemala has a national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), which is a tool for advancing women’s rights, women’s full participation in decision-making and their access to justice and reparation through concerted interventions among the stakeholders involved, allowing for better follow-up and coordinated implementation of the global agenda for women and peace and security. This plan has substantially contributed to strengthening national legislation, women’s mechanisms and the coordination of institutional initiatives that have generated internal changes in the public administration.

At the international level, we have participated in various meetings and forums, including the network of focal points on women, peace and security. We believe that these meetings are a platform for the exchange of experiences and best practices on the global agenda of women and peace and security, and we are convinced that the strategic alliances that have been generated within this network

are important to achieve the goal of a world with inclusive, peaceful societies that advocate protecting and strengthening women's rights in all aspects.

Women's leadership and participation in conflict prevention and resolution remains necessary. Furthermore, it is necessary for our countries to increase the representation of women at all decision-making levels in the various national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution.

Based on this argument, Guatemala, committed to the noble task of contributing to the United Nations peacekeeping operations and taking into account the need to increase the number of female personnel in these operations, has so far deployed more than 270 women and has trained more than 380 women in different national and international courses. The Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. We recognize that the challenge of sustaining peace requires the creation of close and functional partnerships among the United Nations, Governments and civil society to complement efforts and increase the role of women in decision-making with respect to conflict prevention and resolution.

On this twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), Guatemala stresses that we must redouble our efforts to continue achieving concrete results in realizing the commitments of the global agenda on women and peace and security. This will allow States and the United Nations together to increase the full participation of women in peace processes. I urge the Council to continue to work hard on an inclusive agenda that will strengthen the role of women as peacemakers.

Annex 44

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Hungary to the United Nations

Hungary aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security (annex 27).

We thank the Secretary-General for his statement and leadership, as well as the briefers for their insightful remarks.

On the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the landmark resolution 1325 (2000), Hungary reaffirms its commitment to the full and effective implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

Hungary has demonstrated its firm dedication to delivering on the agenda at the national level since its inception. Last December, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade organized a workshop for the relevant ministries, institutions and academia, which was dedicated to the effective and full implementation of the agenda, with special attention to gender-based violence in armed conflict. The Hungarian Defence Forces have incorporated training and education on resolution 1325 (2000) — including on sexual exploitation and abuse, and conflict-related sexual violence — into national predeployment training courses and international courses, such as the International Military Observer Course. In addition, they regularly carry out intensive training courses related to the women and peace and security agenda for non-commissioned officers and officers.

Moreover, women contribute significantly to the work of the Hungarian police and military forces; they account for 23 per cent of law enforcement and 20 per cent of the armed forces. The participation of female officers in all civilian crisis management and peacekeeping missions is ensured and encouraged. In order to increase the number of deployed female personnel, we are working on projects that contribute to recruiting a higher percentage of female soldiers for deployment, such as creating a better work-life balance or atypical forms of employment.

Our efforts should be embedded in a wider agenda for the empowerment of all women and girls, and ensuring the full enjoyment of all their human rights. The twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the entry into the Decade of Action for Delivering the 2030 Agenda, as well as the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations this year provide remarkable momentum for taking a holistic approach and accelerating efforts to this end.

Women should be free from the scourge of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence, as well as sexual exploitation and abuse. They deserve comprehensive, survivor and human rights-centred, immediate and long-term support, as well as accountability and redress. Hungary has been regular contributor to the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women to support this endeavour.

Peace is not possible without women. Women's full, equal, meaningful and institutionalized participation at all stages and levels of peace processes, post-conflict recovery efforts, in the implementation of peace agreements and wider decision-making structures, as a key to preventing conflict and putting societies on the track of sustainable and inclusive peace. These efforts require the cooperation of all stakeholders: Member States, regional and international organizations and civil society.

Hungary is firmly committed to protecting and empowering women and girls belonging to minorities, to upholding their rights, including their freedom of religion

and belief, and to amplifying their voices globally, with special regard to persecuted religious communities, such as Christians.

History has shown that women's participation is crucial to achieving sustainable peace, and we call on the Security Council to keep this important issue on its agenda as a priority.

Annex 45

Statement by the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations

We thank the Russian Federation for convening the open debate on this important issue. We also thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2020/946) and all briefers for sharing their insights.

Five years after the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Security Council adopted a path-breaking decision on 31 October 2000 — resolution 1325 (2000), which, for the first time, linked gender equality and the maintenance of international peace and security and recognized women's participation as key to resolving conflict and securing peace.

Conflict and humanitarian crises already hold women and girls back from progress. The further burdening of health care systems and the economic fallout of the coronavirus disease threaten to put women and girls in war-torn, fragile and humanitarian contexts at even higher risk.

The women and peace and security agenda has transformative potential. It is now recognized internationally, but there are still challenges. Patriarchy, inequalities and discriminatory power structures inhibit effective conflict prevention, inclusive peace, women's rights and participation.

To realize the transformative potential of the women and peace and security agenda, it is time to move from verbal commitments to action. Governments, the United Nations, civil society and other actors must implement relevant commitments across all thematic areas. States must identify and address barriers to women's meaningful participation in the prevention and resolution of conflict and in post-conflict peacebuilding efforts and programmes.

Violence against women and girls perpetrated by terrorists deserves our strong condemnation. Such violence targeting women distorts the very basis on which civilized societies rest.

Advancing democratic structures and the rule of law in post-conflict situations is instrumental to addressing the inequalities faced by women and to ensuring their full and meaningful participation in peaceful and inclusive development.

It is also important that the Council strive to effectively integrate women and peace and security considerations into sanctions regimes, including by listing terrorist entities involved in violence against women in armed conflicts.

The positive impacts of the increased participation of women in United Nations peacekeeping is well recognized. Members will recall that in 2007, India provided the United Nations Mission in Liberia with its first all-female formed police unit. The formed police unit provided critical policing support, deterring sexual and gender-based violence, and helped rebuild safety and confidence among the population. The formed police unit proved to be a strong and visible role model for Liberian women, gaining worldwide attention.

India attaches the utmost importance to the representation of women in decision-making positions. In India, more than 1.3 million elected women representatives lead the formulation and implementation of public policies at the grassroots level. India has been using new and innovative people-centric schemes and technologies to advance women's empowerment.

Through the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, Member States are committed to implementing the women and peace and security agenda by increasing the number of civilian and uniformed women in peacekeeping. Despite United Nations

efforts, women form only 5.4 per cent of the military and 15.1 per cent of police in peacekeeping operations.

India is committed to working in favour of the meaningful participation of women in peace and security issues. India's experience of mainstreaming women's leadership and political participation will continue to inspire our actions.

Annex 46**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Iraq to the United Nations**

At the outset, allow me to thank the Russian Federation for convening this debate on the issue of women and peace and security. We congratulate the Russian Federation on its successful presidency for the month of October, and wish an equally productive one for its successor.

This year paves the way for the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of historic resolution 1325 (2000). Almost 20 years after its adoption, a considerable gap remains in place, particularly in the context of addressing the specific needs of women in peace processes, conflict prevention and resolution. The realization of those goals requires a comprehensive approach, as well as realistic and pragmatic solutions.

Terrorism and violent extremism also have serious adverse effects on women's lives. Genuine efforts are therefore needed to protect women and girls from violence and extremism. Similarly, women are the main victims of sexual violence as a tactic of war and terrorism; a horrific weapon of war that is a threat to international peace and security. In order to end that brutal crime, we must promote accountability and access to justice.

In March, when sufficient pieces of evidence were provided, Iraq held accountable a terrorist of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), who had committed sexual violence crimes against a Yazidi female survivor who was, at the time, only 14 years old. The perpetrator was found guilty of participating in the rape and abduction of a Yazidi girl by the court. Iraq believes that such a move would encourage other women and girls raped and abducted by ISIL to come forward and seek justice as the judicial system had been hampered in hearing this kind of case owing to the reluctance of victims to testify in public. It will also empower women and girl survivors of sexual violence and protect their rights.

Iraq is developing its second national plan, with the assistance of the United Nations and civil society organizations, which focuses on new, as well as previous, challenges. Owing to Iraq's fight against terrorism and the multiple hurdles that have developed as a result of that war, the first action plan was not fully implemented. Iraqi women are playing an active role in mediation efforts and in the country's response to the coronavirus disease, as they have shown great resilience in their fields of work.

In 2019, Iraq, in coordination with the United Nations Population Fund and in collaboration with civil society organizations, developed its national strategy to combat violence against women and girls, which will serve as a guiding tool to prevent and respond to the needs of women and girls and raise awareness against negative gender stereotypes. Civil society organizations have played an active role in this regard, as they have helped supply significant inputs to the domestic violence draft law and the survivors draft law.

In conclusion, Iraq is working to ensure the empowerment of women at the economic, social and political levels, thereby enhancing their engagement in political and economic decision-making, as women play a robust and effective role in transformation and building processes towards the achievement of peace, security and sustainable development.

Annex 47**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations**

We thank the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of UN-Women for their continued leadership on this issue and the briefers for their insights.

As we mark the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, Ireland would also like to thank the Russian Federation for organizing today's open debate with a focus on better implementation. We hope that this occasion can be commemorated in a way that commits to advancing the agenda.

Ireland aligns itself with the statements made by the European Union (annex 38) and on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security (annex 27).

Let us be clear, we have fallen short of our ambition. In the past two decades, the women and peace and security agenda has seen significant normative advances and modest success in implementation. But progress on making women and peace and security a reality on the ground has been too slow. We see national actions plans being developed and implemented. Women have played a critical role in some peace processes, but not enough. I am saddened that, 20 years after its adoption, we are still discussing the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) rather than seeing the tangible results of its ground-breaking vision.

We made clear commitments in 2000 and there can be no excuse for not having delivered on them two decades down the road. The truth is that, if the promise of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions had been fully realized, our work on sustaining international peace and security would look very different across the agenda of the Council. Put simply, the world would be a safer place.

Yet here we are in 2020, still grappling with many of the same obstacles we faced in 2000. This is not a failure of language, as the 10 resolutions on women and peace and security show; it is a failure of political will to see that language translated into action.

We know from the recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/946) that there remains a shocking dearth of women participating formally or informally in peace processes; we know that women's organizations are grappling with diminished funding; we know that gender-based violence and attacks on women human rights defenders are rising and impunity for conflict-related sexual violence is rampant. We know that support for agreed commitments is being diluted and that gains made on gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights are being reversed. We know that those persistent challenges are now being compounded by the disproportionate impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on women and girls. So my question today is: If we know what the issues blocking the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda are, why are we not doing more to address them? What is the problem?

Our rhetoric has not matched, and is not matching, our reality. And sadly, the gap between what we say and what we do has consequences for women every day struggling with the impact of war and striving to build peace. Convening meetings once a year will not change this if we do not translate our own words into concrete action.

For Ireland, this agenda is not merely words on a page. In Northern Ireland, we witnessed first-hand the transformative impact of including women at the negotiation table when the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition, a group of women from both sides of the political divide, fought for their voices to be heard. Their participation

resulted in a more sustainable and inclusive peace agreement, focused on building a common future, while coming to terms with the past.

This lived experience has given us a deep appreciation of the importance of implementing gender-responsive policies when it comes to peace and security. It is why, with over 60 years of continuous peacekeeping experience, we push for integrating gender perspectives and empowering women peacekeepers to enhance mission response. It is why we recently partnered with UN-Women and the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders to explore how the women and peace and security agenda was being experienced by grassroots women peacebuilders — including in the wake of COVID-19 — and how we can better support them. It is why we, along with other States and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, are working to integrate the women and peace and security and disarmament agendas across the multilateral system and include the issue in our national action plan, given that disarmament and arms control issues are central to the lives of so many women and girls in conflict situations. And it is why, over a year into our third national action plan, our Oversight Committee continues to actively review our implementation and will report to our Parliament on progress. We are holding ourselves to account.

As an incoming member of the Security Council, Ireland will use our seat for two years to make sure that the women and peace and security agenda is implemented, not recited. We will work across the Council's agenda to highlight the differential impacts of conflict on women and demonstrate how women can be agents of change in conflict and post-conflict settings, by bringing those women to the table. In short, our aim will be to embed gender perspectives right across our Council activities.

To close, I want to emphasise five key points.

First, after two decades, we need to move beyond window dressing and actually implement the women and peace and security agenda by integrating it across all the Council's work; it is not merely a topic for reflection at an annual event. The Council must step up and more consistently integrate gender perspectives into its briefings, discussions, mandate renewals and products.

Secondly, the Council needs to bridge the gap between New York and the realities on the ground. It needs to hear directly from experts, civil society and grassroots women's organizations, and ensure their safety when doing so. Field visits — be they virtual or in-person — must be used as an opportunity to listen to women affected by conflict, and those who are working to build peace, including at the grassroots level. The Security Council should not be an echo chamber.

Thirdly, we must do more to connect the instruments at our disposal at the United Nations, from the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security to the Peacebuilding Commission, and ensure that the important work being undertaken by these bodies informs Council discussions and outcomes.

Fourthly, we need accountability for the agenda. National, regional and organizational action plans, specifically those that are financed, are key ways to guide implementation. We must invest in initiatives that promote gender equality and provide direct assistance to women's organizations. And we must accelerate a gender data revolution on women and peace and security to ensure follow-up and inform decision-making at the United Nations.

Fifthly, we will never stop saying it — we demand the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace processes. The first place to demonstrate that is here within the United Nations system, through building capacity and empowering women peacebuilders to facilitate their participation in all tracks of peacebuilding initiatives. United Nations mediation teams must include women and engage with

women grassroots builders locally to ensure that gender perspectives are included in negotiations and peace agreements.

When the Council meets in 20 years' time to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), we cannot hear the same tired excuses for staggered implementation. We must seize this opportunity to renew our commitment to the women and peace and security agenda and drive work on implementation, integrating the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic to build back better. As we prepare to take our seat on the Council in January, Ireland is ready to work with you, Sir, to deliver the vision set out in resolution 1325 (2000), starting here, starting now.

Annex 48**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations**

Resolution 1325 (2000) symbolizes an important milestone in the United Nations recognition of the role that women should play in decision-making and shaping policy, both nationally and internationally, in matters regarding peace and security.

By urging Member States to increase the participation of women at all levels of decision-making, the resolution took an important step towards gender equity. But just as importantly, it took an important step towards fulfilling the United Nations mandated purpose of promoting peace and security.

There can be no real security or sustainable peace without women's direct involvement. Much has been written about the strong correlation between inclusiveness and creating long-lasting, sustainable peace. Women must be a part of the prevention of conflicts, dispute resolution, peace processes and negotiations, peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction. It is imperative that we use all the tools in our collective box to assure the success of peace efforts. This includes the meaningful inclusion of women in these efforts.

The resolution and the progress that it has produced over the past 20 years should serve as a model for the way all decision-making bodies should be shaped. Women add a unique and important perspective on all aspects of society. Hearing and including women's voices and views leads to better and more inclusive policymaking and the adoption of decisions and laws that are better for everyone.

Ensuring that all countries implement the resolution is a first, important step. The next step is ensuring that all countries embrace its spirit as well. The participation of women in peace and security is not enough. Their voice must be heard everywhere.

In Israel, female leadership is prevalent across all decision-making bodies. Women serve as generals and top security officials in our defence forces, as ministers in our Cabinet and members of our Parliament, and as executives in our boardrooms. Israel has achieved gender parity in its judicial system, with 51 per cent of the judges being women, including Israel's Chief Justice.

We are also proud of Israel's achievements on gender issues on the legislative front. Just recently, in October of this year, our Cabinet adopted a decision setting a goal that 50 per cent of senior positions in civil service should be occupied by women by the year 2023. Israel was the first country to adopt domestic legislation based on resolution 1325 (2000), calling for increased representation of women from the various diverse sectors of Israeli society in public committees and teams that receive Government funding.

In Israel and around the world, women serve on the front-lines of our response to the coronavirus disease pandemic. They serve as officers in top ranks of the Israeli military unit tasked with fighting the pandemic, as doctors and nurses and as local leaders, psychologists and social workers, and as educators. The participation of women in forming our national response plans is critical to ensuring a sustainable and effective recovery.

In the same way that resolution 1325 (2000) has paved the way towards the increased inclusion of women in peace and security over the past 20 years, it must inspire a change in the way that we make key decisions that will shape our societies over the next 20 years.

Annex 49**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations**

Italy aligns itself with the statements submitted by the European Union (annex 38) and by the Chair of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security (annex 27), on behalf of a cross-regional group of countries, and would like to add a few remarks in its national capacity.

We welcome the organization of this open debate on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), which highlighted how women and a gender perspective are relevant to negotiating peace agreements, planning and participating in peacekeeping operations, and reconstructing war-torn societies with a view to achieving sustainable peace. In other terms, the resolution defined how women's participation, at all levels, can be a basic element of resilient and stable societies.

Since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) and the launching of the women and peace and security agenda, the Security Council has adopted several other important resolutions, focusing on specific aspects of the agenda and its implementation. It is essential for the Council to keep promoting further advancement of the women and peace and security agenda and to resist any pushback. At the same time, the importance of the women and peace and security agenda requires that all relevant United Nations organs and entities constantly reaffirm their commitment towards its full implementation and contribute to mainstreaming it in their activities.

Twenty years on, in spite of their meaningful contribution to conflict resolution, women are still heavily underrepresented in peace processes. It is a primary responsibility of Member States, alongside the United Nations, that this be corrected, and Italy is unwaveringly committed to that goal.

Over recent years, we have stepped up our efforts to mainstream the participation of women in peace processes in all our relevant policies and activities. In December 2016, we launched Italy's third national action plan on women and peace and security, for the 2016-2020 period. The Italian Parliament allocated €4 million in support of the plan's implementation, which made Italy one of the very few countries devoting public funding to the implementation of its national action plan.

The following year, in October, we launched the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, which is a proud co-founder of the Global Alliance. While we are proud that our efforts have been paying off, we are resolved to engage further. We are sparing no effort to further develop the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, through the opening of new local antennas. Two of these were recently inaugurated, in Turkey and Cyprus, and a third one will be opened, in Kosovo, on 19 November.

Next month, within the framework of the Mediterranean dialogues, we will organize the fourth edition of the Women's Forum, in order to raise awareness on the women and peace and security agenda and to gather inspiring women for a fruitful exchange of ideas.

At the same time, we are looking beyond 2020. We are currently engaged in the drafting of our fourth national action plan on women and peace and security, 2020-2024, with the active contribution of civil society organizations, academia, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and trade unions. These actors will also be heavily involved in implementing the plan.

The road ahead of us is still long and winding. We need to join our efforts to face the challenges to the full implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. Italy will continue to play its part in this collective endeavour.

Annex 50**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations, Ishikane Kimihiro**

I would like to thank the Russian Federation for convening this debate commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security.

Japan promotes the women and peace and security agenda as an important pillar of its international gender policy. As a staunch supporter of the human security concept, Japan appreciates that today's meeting focuses on the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. Debating in the United Nations amounts to very little if it does not result in positive changes on the ground and delivering better to those in need.

Allow me to explain the concrete actions by Japan to implement its national action plan, as required by the women and peace and security resolutions, in the following four areas: participation, conflict prevention, protection, and humanitarian relief and recovery.

First, on participation, in collaboration with UN-Women and bilaterally through the Japan International Cooperation Agency, Japan supports developing countries' initiatives to improve women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Under the Group of Seven Women, Peace and Security Partnerships Initiative, Japan supports Sri Lanka through UN-Women to promote women's participation in national reconciliation and peacebuilding, including the development of the national action plan.

Secondly, on conflict prevention with gender perspectives as well as addressing gender-based and sexual violence against women in conflicts, Japan will continue to support the work of the United Nations Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict in the areas of criminal investigation and prosecution, legislative reform and capacity-building for judicial and security authorities.

Thirdly, on protection for women and girls in and after conflicts, Japan will work closely with UN-Women, the United Nations Population Fund and the secretariat of United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict, among others, to respond to the special needs of women and girls, including physical, psychosocial, economic and judicial protection needs. This year, Japan contributed €2 million to the Global Fund for Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence.

Fourthly, on humanitarian relief and recovery, since 2018, Japan has been serving as the champion of UN-Women's flagship programme initiative, Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection in Crisis Response. In 2019, Japan contributed approximately \$8.8 million to support projects in Asia, Africa and the Middle East under this initiative.

I wish to underscore two points that are crucial to realizing effective implementation of the women and peace and security agenda by various actors engaged in delivering assistance on the ground, including United Nations agencies, bilateral donors, and local and international non-governmental organizations, among others. The foremost is the principle of national ownership. The second is information sharing among all the actors and coherent actions by all. UN-Women and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict should play a leading role in this respect. Japan also believes that the Peacebuilding Commission could make use of its convening power to provide a thematic platform on this issue and bring together all relevant actors in the United Nations system and beyond.

To conclude, let me emphasize that Japan stands ready to support United Nations efforts to strengthen its role on women and peace and security.

Annex 51

Statement of the Permanent Mission of Jordan to the United Nations

I would like to express Jordan's appreciation to today's speakers and to welcome the report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/946) and its recommendations on women and peace and security.

Jordan also aligns itself with the statement submitted by Canada on the behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security (annex 27).

As we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), Jordan reiterates its commitment to the full implementation of all the pillars of the women and peace and security agenda. The women and peace and security agenda is of utmost value to Jordan, and its goals have been introduced and implemented through our national action plan. We have been at the helm of vouching for gender equality, but there is certainly room for improvement, and that begins at the systemic level.

As Jordan has outlined in the 2020-2025 Jordanian national action plan, it is imperative to build a culture of peace and gender equality with a particular focus on youth and preventing gender based violence.

My country has made major strides towards integrating gender perspectives across all peacekeeping functions, and is committed to further developing best practices on gender mainstreaming in military and police operations, including in predeployment training, as well as supporting the role and tasks of gender advisors deployed in peacekeeping missions. Jordan has increased the proportion of women in senior leadership positions in the Civil Defence Directorate, from a baseline by 4.7 per cent, in 2018, to 5.5 per cent in 2019, and from 1 per cent to 1.6 per cent in the gendarmerie for the same period. My country has also appointed a full-time gender advisor in both the military and security institutions. In 2020, Jordan will also deploy 716 peacekeepers in various missions, 29 of whom are female peacekeepers.

The Jordanian national action plan is also committed to providing humanitarian services that are responsive and considerate to gender needs, such as psychological, social, legal and health services, and facilitate safe access thereto, especially among the most vulnerable women, girls and refugees in Jordan.

The Jordanian national action plan is also in line with Jordan's response plan to the Syrian crisis, and vocational training has been provided to women as front-line human service providers to equip women with the means to fend for themselves and further community resilience. The Plan has also provided gender awareness within the judicial system, and, according to the Family Protection Department, reporting on domestic violence increased by 41 per cent in 2019 as compared to 2018.

Progress has also been made towards strengthening the capacities of community-based organizations and women-led civil society institutions to ensure an inclusive approach both in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of the National Action Plans. Civil society actors, especially women's organizations operating in conflict regions, have the extensive knowledge and expertise needed to build sustainable peace. They can play a central role in conflict prevention, including in early warning and in peace processes. In addition, manipulation of the status and rights of women by extremist movements makes it particularly important that violent extremism be dealt with from the gender perspective; women's organizations have invaluable expertise in such cases.

The coronavirus disease has revealed the importance of the women and peace and security agenda in response to crisis. During the lockdown, Jordanian women

in the security and health sectors were at the front lines of the response. In addition, local women-led civil society organizations played an important role in responding to local community needs during the lockdown. The Jordanian Government views relations with civil society organizations as core to the success of our efforts aimed at responding to the crisis. It is our goal to ensure that leadership and decision-making positions are among the work opportunities that women are eager to join. The inclusion of women in all political and regional processes is a valuable principle in the fight for peace and security.

Annex 52

Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations, Michael K. Kiboino

At a time when the world is celebrating the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, the focus on better implementation, full and equal participation and the political and economic empowerment of women is of paramount importance. Kenya acknowledges the tenacity of women peacebuilders, especially in the face of the coronavirus disease pandemic as front-line health responders, mediators and peacekeepers, particularly among internally displaced persons and in refugee camps.

The various briefings, discussions and outcomes this morning have further reminded us that there is a need for strengthened coherence and collaboration among Governments, civil society and the international community, in order to ensure that the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) on the ground fosters gender equality, the protection of women and girls and accountability when it comes to sexual and gender-based violence in both conflict and non-conflict situations.

Although strides have been made in the quest to ensure women's participation and leadership before, more needs to be done during and after conflict to realize the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and the following relevant points.

First, inclusiveness needs to be sustained through purposeful national policies and strategies that prioritize women's rights and enhance women's contribution to peace.

Secondly, resolution 1325 (2000) needs to be localized and community-based, in order to address specific implementation contexts.

Thirdly, an intergenerational approach that links the women and peace and security agenda, on the one hand, and the youth and peace and security agenda, on the other hand, is critical. These agendas must be aligned for a comprehensive and holistic response that leaves no one behind.

Fourthly, the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) is a whole-of-society endeavour that requires concerted and consistent action from both the Government and its citizens. Therefore, entrenched sociocultural stereotypes that constrain women's full and equal participation need to be addressed.

Fifthly, issues relating to climate change and sustainable development should be included in peacebuilding strategies, as these crises aggravate marginalization, dislocate and weaken communities and exacerbate gender inequality, thereby becoming threat multipliers and bottlenecks to the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

Sixthly, gender-sensitive initiatives and perspectives need to be woven into the design of peacebuilding and peacekeeping processes so as to meet women's specific needs and aspirations in the peace-conflict cycle.

In terms of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), the Government of Kenya has achieved the following.

First, we have developed a national action plan to catalyse the mainstreaming of resolution 1325 (2000) into development, conflict-prevention and -resolution, peace and security and reconciliation strategies. We are in the second phase of the implementation of the national action plan, as we also roll out the Decade of Action for the Sustainable Development Goals.

Secondly, we have operationalized gender-based training for women peacebuilders at the grass-roots level and incorporated them into Government-supported peace and reconciliation committees.

Thirdly, we have developed gender policies and strategies that advance the career progression of women to leadership and decision-making roles in such peace-and-security organs as the Kenya Defence Forces.

Fourthly, we have increased the number of women engaged in peacekeeping missions to 19 per cent.

Regional frameworks and mechanisms are also vital in reinforcing national peacebuilding policies and projects. For our region, these include the African Union (AU), the Network of African Women Mediators and the AU Continental Results Framework for Monitoring and Reporting on the Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa (CFR). We validated the CFR in March 2018, as we see the importance of measuring value in implementation not only in quantitative terms, but in qualitative terms as well.

As an incoming elected member of the Security Council, Kenya, in partnership with like-minded States, will advance the women and peace and security agenda with the aim of generating appropriate operational global action on the subject.

Annex 53

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Latvia to the United Nations

We commend the Russian Federation's presidency of the Security Council for the month of October for convening today's debate. Latvia thanks Secretary-General António Guterres and rest of the briefers for their remarks and valuable input in this debate. Latvia welcomes the most recent report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security and its recommendations (S/2020/946).

Latvia aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the European Union (EU) (annex 38) and of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security (annex 27).

This year the global community marks the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the landmark resolution for women's rights in both conflict and in peace. While so much has already been achieved, we cannot become complacent and forget that we are not even halfway there, especially when we are presented with new challenges.

The women and peace and security agenda has never been more relevant than during this time of global pandemic. It tests the knowledge and experiences that we have acquired over the years and poses unprecedented challenges to the rights, inclusion, representation, equality and protection of women and girls. It amplifies vulnerabilities in political, social and economic systems that in turn risk reversing gains made over decades. We cannot allow the rights of women and girls to become collateral damage.

Women and girls are the least protected group in the pandemic. At the same time, they are constantly at the front lines of the battle against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), risking their lives to save lives. These unprecedented times show that women's participation in crisis prevention and gender-sensitive and human rights-based actions is crucial and one of the keys to a successful response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences. The data confirm this point and demonstrate that women-led countries are showing better results than male-led countries during the pandemic, which leads us to deeper appreciation of just how crucial the women and peace and security agenda truly is.

It is once again a reminder that women must be an integral part of our response, not only to COVID-19 but also to global security challenges and any other matters that have an impact on women and girls. The international community must join efforts to ensure the full implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. Only through working together can we accelerate gender equality and women's empowerment.

Latvia strongly supports the women and peace and security agenda, particularly as it is fundamental to global security. Gender-equality issues and the empowerment of women are Latvia's long-standing priorities in its participation in international organizations and in development cooperation. As a State member of the European Union, we are actively involved in promoting the women and peace and security agenda within the EU's internal and external policies. Gender equality is also a priority for Latvia at the United Nations. We actively support the United Nations efforts, including financially aiding the operations of UN-Women.

In September, Latvia was elected to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) for the 2021-2025 term. Our mandate in the CSW starts next year, and we are committed to playing an active role in shaping and enforcing global standards and policies for gender equality.

We are proud that, in its research for *Women, Business and the Law 2019: A Decade of Reform*, the World Bank recognized Latvia as one of the six economies worldwide that grants women and men equal legal rights. Latvia emphasizes the advancement of women's participation in decision-making positions — for example, in the National Armed Forces, in State institutions and in politics. Specifically, Latvia has integrated participation principles of the women and peace and security agenda into practice with 16 per cent of soldiers in the National Armed Forces being women — NATO's average rate being only 10 per cent — and with 30 per cent of the personnel of the State police being women.

On 14 July, the Latvian Government approved Latvia's national action plan on women, peace and security for the 2020-2025 term. Our plan envisages three main tasks within the women, peace and security framework: first, raising public awareness of gender equality issues and the elimination of gender-based violence, especially in the younger generation; secondly, training for the defence and home affairs sector, including the establishment of a gender adviser's position; and, thirdly, transmitting Latvia's experience and knowledge. These tasks are being implemented in close cooperation with non-governmental organizations, civil society and our foreign partners.

The women and peace and security agenda is ever-changing and has evolved a great deal over the last 20 years. The twentieth anniversary is the right moment not just to reflect on the past but also to look towards the future and address existing challenges to the implementation of the agenda. As such reflection coincides with the global pandemic, we must reassess the framework and rethink our approach as we strive to take the women and peace and security agenda forward in the next 20 years. It is also the right time to ensure that the necessary steps are taken so that the agenda is celebrated every day and not just once a year. We must join our forces to ensure that voices of women and girls are heard loud and clear.

Annex 54**Statement by the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations, Maged Abdelfattah Abdelaziz**

[Original: Arabic]

Today's Security Council meeting on women and peace and security is especially important this year, as it coincides with our celebrations of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations and the twentieth anniversary of the Council's adoption of the historic resolution 1325 (2000), which continues to serve as the basis for highlighting the important role that women play and their active participation in preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding.

Significant progress has been made towards strengthening the role of women in maintaining international peace and security. This progress is evident in the integration of the women and peace and security agenda into the various areas of the work of the United Nations, because it is one of the sectoral issues associated with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as in related efforts to implement Goal 5 of the Agenda.

At the same time, at the high-level meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Beijing Platform for Action, it became evident that, despite the great strides made in promoting the role of women and their participation in the political, social and economic arenas, the international community must do more to empower women to assume a role worthy of them, particularly in relation to peace and security issues. The Security Council should attach the utmost importance to this in the near future.

The reports of the Secretary-General clearly indicate that women's participation in United Nations peacekeeping missions is low, accounting for 4.2 per cent of overall staff, and that very few women participate in negotiations aimed at preventing, containing or resolving conflicts. Despite the progress achieved towards granting women the opportunities they deserve to assume leadership positions at the United Nations, women in many of our countries have yet to assume positions commensurate with their outstanding professional potential as a result of archaic cultural or religious norms.

At the regional level, the League of Arab States has been working tirelessly to support the Security Council and the United Nations in implementing resolution 1325 (2000) since it was adopted. The League of Arab States has issued several strategies and recommendations on protecting Arab women and promoting their role, especially in the area of peace and security. In that connection, I would like to note that the Council of the League of Arab States at the ministerial level adopted the strategy for the protection of Arab women at its 144th session, in 2015. It constitutes a regional strategy and executive action plan for the protection of Arab women, as well as a fundamental platform for raising awareness of regional and international resolutions among officials and relevant stakeholders and for implementing those resolutions by providing protection to women and girls in the Arab region, based on the fundamental pillars of the strategy.

Those pillars include supporting active participation by women and young women and promoting their assumption of leadership roles; preventing conflict and eliminating all forms of violence against women; and ensuring that women and girls have their relief needs met promptly. The League, in cooperation with the United Nations and its specialized agencies for women's affairs, supports the

promotion and empowerment of women and their assumption of a fully active role in political, security, economic and social matters. It extends this support by organizing joint meetings and intensifying Arab efforts to identify and address shortcomings within a regional framework that makes it possible to benefit from shared experiences.

In this context, I would like to refer to the first Ministerial Conference on Women and Achieving Peace and Security, held by the League of Arab States in 2016. Several important recommendations on the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda were adopted at the Conference. Accordingly, and in view of the special circumstances of Arab women in conflict zones in our region — including Syria, Libya, Yemen, Iraq, Somalia and elsewhere — the Council of the League adopted a resolution at the ministerial level entitled “Formation of the Emergency Committee for the Protection of Women during Armed Conflicts in the Arab region”, at its 151st session, held in March 2019.

Moreover, the Network of Arab Women Peace Mediators was established as a mechanism of the Arab Women’s Committee to work in concert with many similar mechanisms in other regions. The Network facilitates the exchange of experiences and enables members to benefit from shared experiences, in coordination and close cooperation with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

The Organization is celebrating several milestones in its history this year, including the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). The League of Arab States urges the international community to seize this important occasion to redouble its efforts to strengthen the role of women and their empowerment in future, in line with the theme of this historic United Nations session, “The Future We Want”; to uphold the full rights of women in various areas; and to ensure that they participate actively, especially in senior leadership positions, and are represented in decision-making, conflict prevention and resolution and post-conflict peacebuilding efforts. By the time we meet again next year, we hope that women will have accomplished even more, overcome more challenges and become active partners in achieving international peace and security.

Annex 55**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations, Amal Mudallali**

Allow me first to congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October, and I thank you for organizing this important debate on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the milestone resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. I would also like to thank the speakers for their thorough briefings, as well as for their leadership in their respective field.

Coming from a country where women have shown the whole world that women's role is not to bear the brunt of conflicts and heal the wounds resulting from them, it is with great pride that I address the Council today. Women have proved that they are not just victims but essential and active agents of change.

Allow me to recall one particular relevant moment that asserts the latter. On 27 November 2019, following a night of unrest in the Beirut suburbs, Lebanese mothers and women of the area flooded the streets and marched together in a solidarity rally, carrying Lebanese flags, banners, white roses and candles, calling for peace, coexistence and unity and chanting out loud: "We, the mothers of the country, will not accept its segregation."

Lebanese women have been at the forefront of every occasion. They have played an essential role through their widespread participation in the 2019 movement on the ground, raising their voices to call for systemic change, maintaining the peaceful face of the protests and forming buffers between security forces and protesters to prevent outbreaks of violence. They were also the first responders to the tragic blast of 4 August 2020 as firefighters, nurses, doctors, paramedics, pharmacists, caregivers, social workers, activists, journalists, reporters, media workers, survivors, human rights defenders, leaders and volunteers.

In that context, our first national action plan on resolution 1325 (2000), which was endorsed by the Council of Ministers last year, reflects Lebanon's aspirations to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment and to consolidate the equal, full, meaningful and effective participation of women in building sustainable peace, preventing conflicts and promoting national stability. This year, despite all the ongoing challenges, implementation is on the right track, with the National Steering Committee 1325, spearheaded by the National Commission for Lebanese Women and supported by United Nations agencies, leading the coordination and implementation efforts.

Despite the unprecedented domestic crises, Lebanon is progressing rapidly in the field of women's participation in the defence and security sectors. The Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) made it a top priority to enlist women within their ranks, which resulted in a significant increase in female enrolment, with more than 4,000 women, including in the air force, land border regiments and the Republican Guard Brigade. Today, the participation of women in the Military Academy amounts to 43 per cent and the percentage of women among high-ranking military officers and soldiers is 5.5 per cent, with five women brigadier generals.

Moreover, women in the LAF have been deployed to high-risk areas, such as the Wadi Hmeid checkpoint in Aarsal, one of the military's most dangerous deployments, which was attacked by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Jabhat al-Nusrah in 2014. Women were also stationed in the Nahr al-Bared Palestinian refugee camp in northern Lebanon, where fighting took place between the LAF and the Fath al-Islam group in 2007.

Regarding the participation of women in the security forces, the General Directorate of General Security has included the goal of a gradual increase in the recruitment of women in its ranks in its five-year strategic plan.

With respect to the political participation of women, Lebanon is committed to advancing this agenda. The current caretaker Government comprises six women ministers, among them the Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister, making her the first Arab woman to hold that position. In 2019, the previous Government also embraced the Arab world's first female interior minister.

Allow me to express my great gratitude for the immense contribution and achievements of female peacekeepers in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and to stress the key role of women in peacekeeping. Today, women represent a small but increasing percentage of the peacekeepers serving under the UNIFIL flag. Over the past years, UNIFIL, which ranks second among major United Nations peacekeeping operations in terms of the percentage of female peacekeepers, has witnessed a slight increase in the number of women peacekeepers, with around 29 per cent of approximately 800 civilian peacekeepers and around 5 per cent of approximately 10,300 military peacekeepers being women.

We strongly support the United Nations efforts to ensure gender parity in peacekeeping. We thank UNIFIL troop-contributing countries for expanding the participation of women in their contingents, and we strongly support the expansion of the role and number of women in UNIFIL, as well as their meaningful participation in all aspects of operations.

As a signatory country to the Action for Peacekeeping Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, we consider the women and peace and security agenda critical to enhancing the performance of peacekeeping operations at all levels, thereby contributing to longer lasting and sustainable peace. In that regard, we commend UNIFIL for incorporating a gender perspective in its mission and for ensuring women's full participation in the day-to-day operations, in compliance with resolution 1325 (2000).

Despite the progress that has been made during the past 20 years regarding the women and peace and security agenda, millions of women still agree that much work remains to be done to evolve into a future where women lead and participate equally, fully and meaningfully in peace and security matters. The voices of women, their active presence on the ground across the world, their demands and their aspirations should be translated into real change. The world of today, grappling with widespread conflicts, wars and upheavals, needs an increased representation of women in all domains at all levels for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict and the promotion of peace and security.

Annex 56

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Liechtenstein to the United Nations, Christian Wenaweser

The twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) is an important moment for the Security Council. It marks the beginning of an agenda that both has had enormous impact on the ground and is the source of ongoing frustration. However, above all, we should salute the work of civil society in the creation and implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, and it is its voice that should be heard today. We are inspired by the brave female protesters in Belarus, who are exemplary agents of peaceful change. While we see progress towards full, equal and meaningful participation, women's participation in formal peacemaking processes, for instance, remains limited. Many peace agreements do not include provisions that give a sufficient voice to women and adequately address their security and peacebuilding needs. We also encourage the Security Council to more consistently invite female expert briefers.

As a contribution to further strengthening the participation pillar of the women and peace and security agenda, Liechtenstein commissioned a research project from the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security on the impact of women's participation in State armed forces on respect for international humanitarian law.

To allow women to be agents of change and to contribute to a more peaceful, sustainable and prosperous world, we need to create an environment that is enabling and inclusive, free of discrimination and unfair social norms and attitudes. Mainstreaming the women and peace and security agenda within the entire United Nations system is of the essence to that end, as is the creation of synergies with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5.

We deeply regret attempts to weaken internationally agreed human rights standards and to roll back the goals of the women and peace and security agenda by members of the Security Council itself. That regress is particularly worrisome in times of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which has disproportionately challenged women and girls. The pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing inequalities and has been the cause of the shadow pandemic for women and girls in particular, pushing women out of the workforce, depriving girls and young women of their right to education and compounding the crisis of domestic violence.

Reports of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and for Children and Armed Conflict document rape, sexual slavery and other forms of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, girls and boys in a large number of conflict situations, many of which are on the Security Council's agenda. Harmful gender stereotypes and abusive power dynamics are the root cause of sexual and gender-based violence, which affects women and girls disproportionately. However, the same stereotypes also impair men and boys and often result in underreporting, as also documented by the Liechtenstein-based human rights organization All Survivors Project. Resolution 2467 (2019) and its comprehensive survivor-centred approach are an important step forward for the women and peace and security agenda. In times of quarantines, lockdowns and other restrictions on movement caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is particularly important to ensure that survivors of conflict-related sexual violence have access to reporting mechanisms and necessary services. In addition to ensuring the implementation of resolution 2467 (2019), we call on the Council to include conflict-related sexual violence as a designation criterion in targeted sanctions regimes.

We firmly believe that there can be no peace without justice and no justice without peace, and there can be no justice without justice for all women. Structural inequalities, discrimination and poverty all too often hinder women's access to justice, including transitional justice processes. We thank Belgium for its leadership in the Council on this topic, and we hope that the Council will agree on an outcome with a strong gender dimension. Achieving peaceful, just and inclusive societies, as envisioned in SDG 16, requires increased access for women to justice from the local to the national level, developing gender-responsive legal and judicial systems and promoting the greater participation of women in the justice sector, including in the post-conflict period through transitional justice mechanisms and reparations processes. We applaud UN-Women and civil society organizations, such as Justice Rapid Response, for their important work in that regard.

Annex 57**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Luxembourg to the United Nations**

[Original: French]

Luxembourg thanks the Russian presidency of the Security Council for organizing this open debate on women and peace and security, as well as all the briefers, who have enriched the debate with their experience and expertise.

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the Security Council's adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. The resolution represents a key milestone in acknowledging women's meaningful and effective participation at all levels of peace and security processes as a prerequisite to achieving sustainable peace. The women and peace and security agenda is based on the understanding that there is a high correlation between gender inequality and the threat of conflict, as well as a strong link between individual safety and respect for women's human rights and international peace.

While significant progress has been made in terms of gender equality over the past 20 years, the context of the coronavirus disease pandemic has exposed the fragility of those gains and the risk of a setback for women's rights.

The Secretary-General's latest report (S/2020/946) highlights gaps in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. It also underlines the need to ensure steady and ongoing funding for the commitments made.

It is incumbent on all States to continue to provide political and financial support for women's human rights, gender equality and women's meaningful and effective participation at all levels so as to contribute to the successful implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, whether in the context of budget negotiations or Security Council mandates, within regional organizations or through their national policies. In that regard, Luxembourg fully endorses the statement submitted by the European Union (annex 38) and will assist in the implementation of the commitments that it has outlined.

Luxembourg continues to actively implement its national action plan Women and Peace and Security 2018-2023 in conjunction with civil society. We also continue to fund projects and initiatives to address sexual and gender-based violence and to combat impunity, including through a policy of gender mainstreaming in our official development assistance, which represents 1 per cent of our gross national income. Luxembourg is among the top 20 contributors to UN-Women in real terms and supports the work of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences.

Such commitments are part of the feminist foreign policy of the Luxembourg Government. The policy promotes women's human rights, be they political, economic and social rights or sexual and reproductive rights, as well as women's representation and participation at all levels. Gender equality is also one of the priorities that Luxembourg will seek to promote if elected to the United Nations Human Rights Council for the period from 2022 to 2024.

Now more than ever, it is essential to redouble our efforts to advance the women and peace and security agenda at the national level and within multilateral institutions. The Security Council can count on Luxembourg's commitment and determination to do that.

Annex 58**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Malta to the United Nations**

Malta thanks the Russian Federation for holding today's open debate on women and peace and security on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000). We also thank the Secretary-General for his message and the briefers for sharing their invaluable insights and experiences.

Malta joins the international community in commemorating this milestone. Resolution 1325 (2000) puts to the fore the principle that women and a gender perspective are crucial for sustainable peace, and this anniversary provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the past 20 years and on how we continue to build on what we have already achieved.

It is imperative that women be involved in all the stages of the peace process, from peace negotiations to peacebuilding, and at all levels. Women on the ground have a unique perspective, and their views must be duly considered and incorporated in a meaningful manner. Peace processes that involve women are likely to be more successful and sustainable. Without women, there is no peace.

The coronavirus disease pandemic has deepened pre-existing inequalities and exposed further vulnerabilities in social, political and economic systems. The reports of increased violence against women and girls around the world, particularly in conflict-affected areas and in fragile, humanitarian and armed conflict-affected contexts are particularly worrisome. Although the situation seems daunting, solutions are available and within reach. It is crucial that States continue to fully respect and implement existing commitments and obligations with respect to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and the full and equal enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. This also should include the strengthening of women's leadership and ensure the full, effective and meaningful participation of women in decision-making processes at all stages, and include gender mainstreaming across the board. Investing in young women's leadership will not only change the trajectory of their future, but that of their communities as well.

Malta remains committed to the women and peace and security agenda, including through achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Malta ratified the Istanbul Convention in 2014 and the Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence Act came into force in 2018. In 2017, a Consultative Council for Women's Rights was established with the aim of strengthening dialogue between the Government and civil society and mainstreaming equality in all aspects of Government's processes. And the Government of Malta launched the Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence Strategy and Action Plan. The female employment rate increased from 54.3 per cent in 2014 to 66.1 per cent in 2019, that is, by 11.8 per cent.

Last year, Malta acceded to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was one of the pledges it made in April 2019 during the high-level side event on women and peace and security. We have also continued to raise awareness on women and peace and security issues locally, regionally and multilaterally. Furthermore, Malta appointed its first Ambassador for Women, Peace and Security, Her Excellency Cecilia Attard-Pirotta — proving its strong commitment to the cause.

Malta is proud to also be about to fulfil its second pledge, namely, the launching of its first national action plan in the coming hours. Much effort and thought has been put into its drafting, and we look forward to its official launch, followed by its

implementation. That is the real challenge to be faced — putting words into actions. However, with the support of relevant local stakeholders, as well as by learning from our international partners and their best practices, we will succeed.

Furthering the women and peace and security agenda is not a task for women and girls alone. Men and boys need to be brought on board as well, since they also have a stake in the agenda's success.

Annex 59**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

Twenty years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), we welcome some of the important progress we have made in ensuring the role of women as key actors in international peace and security. However, the comprehensive implementation of the women and peace and security agenda remains a challenge, as the global pandemic is diluting the modest gains that have been achieved because of its disproportionate impact on women and girls, who continue to face discrimination, marginalization and exclusion. We are concerned that, owing to various cultural, social and economic factors, substantial participation by women in peace processes remains extremely limited — for example, within the framework of the inter-Afghan dialogue.

Gender inequality, increased militarism, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and violent extremism are all factors at the root of armed conflict. Therefore, ensuring inclusive peace processes with the participation of women is the only way to guarantee their sustainability. Failing this, armed conflict will remain protracted, and therefore exacerbate violence of all kinds, including sexual and gender-based violence, which has a devastating impact on the lives of women and girls. In this regard, we welcome some progress in the normative framework, such as the inclusion in the Arms Trade Treaty of provisions requiring that arms-exporting States consider whether the arms could be used to commit serious gender-based violence or violence against women and children in authorizing a sale.

We recognize the essential role of civil society in the design and implementation of this agenda and the special protection that must be provided to women human rights defenders and peacebuilders, who risk their lives in the face of increasing threats and intimidation because of their work.

The Security Council should not simply address this agenda on its own. While we have seen progress in this regard, there is concern that, in 2019, provisions on this matter were not included in Council decisions as often as they should have been. We must reverse this trend, as mainstreaming a gender perspective into all its decisions, mandates and the work of its subsidiary bodies is the only way to achieve tangible results on the ground.

The following are some of the premises that will guide Mexico's participation in the Security Council.

First, women and girls should be placed at the centre of conflict prevention and resolution actions, as well as peacebuilding, and the mandates and strategies of this organ should be based on international human rights law and international humanitarian law, while guaranteeing the protection of all human rights of women and girls in conflict situations and humanitarian contexts.

Secondly, the full, equal and meaningful participation of women, especially marginalized groups, such as refugees, migrants, indigenous people, persons with disabilities, the community of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, young persons and persons from rural areas, should be ensured in all areas related to international peace and security, including conflict prevention, peace processes and their implementation, ceasefire agreements and special political missions, and their role as active agents in peacebuilding, and not just as victims of armed conflict, should be stressed.

Thirdly, the number of women civil society and peacebuilders in Security Council meetings should be increased and their recommendations on specific conflict situations should be incorporated.

Fourthly, more substantive use of the work of the independent Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security for this agenda should be made by inviting its co-Chairs to review specific situations and the Council's thematic agenda.

Mexico will submit its first national action plan this year. And, as part of the Generation Equality Forum, which will take place in 2021, we have promoted the establishment of the Compact for Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, which will also contribute to the mobilization of funding.

We reiterate our commitment to increasing the substantive participation and training of Mexican women in uniform in peace operations. We welcome the adoption of resolution 2538 (2020) and we support the recent call by the Secretary-General on women transforming peace and security. The implementation of this agenda, which we have built over two decades, is a collective endeavour, for which all actors must be held accountable.

This year, which also marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, we reaffirm our full commitment to gender equality and the human rights of women and girls, and we will not allow any back-tracking or attempts to weaken this agenda.

Annex 60**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Montenegro to the United Nations, Milica Pejanović Đurišić**

Montenegro aligns itself with the statement submitted by the European Union (annex 38). In addition, as a member of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, Montenegro joins the statement submitted by Canada on behalf of the group of 63 member States (annex 27).

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of landmark resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, which for the first time recognized women's leadership in achieving international peace and security and their contributions to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Today the situation of women and girls in conflict-affected areas is further deteriorated by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Therefore, their representation in the processes of building and sustaining peace and addressing the COVID-19 pandemic is more important than ever before.

Montenegro is strongly devoted to the implementation of all resolutions on the women and peace and security agenda. The Government of Montenegro demonstrated its determination to address this issue at the national level by adopting, in 2019, its second action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), for the 2019-2022 period. This action plan clearly defines measures and actions for integrating gender perspectives in the defence reform processes, thereby ensuring the realization of three priorities, namely, increasing the participation of women in decision-making and peacekeeping processes, protecting women and girls in conflict zones and integrating gender perspectives and gender education in peacekeeping operations, as well as mechanisms for the implementation of the resolution 1325 (2000) and its accompanying resolutions.

In addition, the Government of Montenegro is implementing its third action plan for achieving gender equality for this period, which defines activities for the further integration of resolution 1325 (2000) into the security sector. The overall strategic framework has been improved by bringing the army closer to the younger female population. In the forthcoming period, a multisectoral approach will be strengthened in order to ensure the realization of defined goals by addressing societal gender stereotypes that are not exclusively related to the security and defence sector, but rather affect all segments of society.

Besides continuous implementation of policies on increasing the number of women in politics, public life and the security sector and combating violence against women and girls, Montenegro is focusing in particular on economic empowerment of women through the implementation of its action plan on the implementation of the Women's Entrepreneurship Development Strategy 2015-2020, which focuses on women in rural areas and marginalized groups. We are also fully dedicated to the effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, as we are aware that ensuring the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the rights of women and girls has positive catalytic implications for the development and progress of the entire society. We believe that, where women live free of violence, have equal access to education, health care and political and economic opportunities, societies are healthier, more prosperous and more peaceful. And that is our goal.

As we are marking several anniversaries this year — the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the seventy-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations — there is a need for far greater implementation of all pillars of the women and peace and security agenda. Therefore, we should redouble our efforts to

ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all aspects of peace and security, to ensure women's rights are promoted and protected and to fill the gaps in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

Annex 61

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations

My delegation would like to thank the Russian Federation, President of the Security Council for the month of October 2020, for organizing this open debate on a very important question of women and peace and security, to mark the twentieth anniversary of the milestone resolution 1325 (2000).

As the international community celebrates this year the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) 20 years ago, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the visionary Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, with its promise of gender equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, and the fifth year of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Agenda, these anniversaries will, unfortunately, not sound like a triumph as long as the progress achieved so far is called into question by the succession of crises and emergencies, of which women are often the first victims. These commemorations should be an opportunity for all of us to reflect on what can be done to further translate the commitments made into concrete actions. The normative framework is already there; what remains is to fully implement it.

The full implementation of the women and peace and security agenda requires full respect of the four pillars on which resolution 1325 (2000) and the subsequent resolutions are based, in particular the participation of women in decision-making and in the consolidation of peace; the protection of women's rights before, during and after conflicts; the role of women in conflict prevention; and the inclusion of women in the resolution and recovery phase, taking into account their specific needs during repatriation, resettlement, reintegration and reconstruction.

Convinced of the crucial contribution of women as essential early-warning mechanisms, their awareness of threats to local security and their role in mediation, Morocco actively participates in a number of initiatives, namely, the promotion of mediation in the Mediterranean; launched by Morocco and Spain, the Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network, created by Spain; and the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, launched by Italy.

Moreover, Morocco, as an active member of the African Women Leaders Network, launched, in December 2019, in Casablanca, the Moroccan chapter of this network, with the objective of creating a joint movement aimed at strengthening the leadership of women at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public spheres. The Moroccan chapter of the African Women Leaders Network focuses on several components, such as the empowerment of rural women, political participation, peace and security, the leadership of young women, financial inclusion and social mobilization. Furthermore, Morocco is at a very advanced stage of putting in place its national action plan on women and peace and security.

Article 19 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Morocco underlines that men and women enjoy, on an equal basis, civil, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental rights and freedoms. This principle is also stated in the other provisions of the Constitution, as well as in international conventions and covenants duly ratified by the Kingdom.

The question of promoting gender equality and women's autonomy is concretized through the elaboration and implementation of a wide range of strategies, policies and laws, put in place by the various ministerial departments and by civil society, with the objective to mainstream the gender approach in all spheres.

The place of women in the Royal Armed Forces is no exception. Indeed, the feminization of the army is an important development by the Royal Armed Forces. Based on the principle that the defence of the national territory is incumbent on women as well as on men, the integration of women into the Royal Armed Forces is in line with the aspirations of the Kingdom of Morocco.

The new provisions of Dahir number 1-12-50, of 10 May 2013, providing for a special status for officers of the Royal Armed Forces, upholds the right of women executive officers to access higher military education, in particular to the advanced defence course, staff officer course and the senior officer course.

The Kingdom of Morocco, as a major contributor of troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations since the 1960s, attaches particular importance to the participation of Moroccan women as United Nations peacekeeping troops. The Moroccan Royal Armed Forces are engaged in a global strategy that includes, in particular, the adaptation of existing infrastructure to accommodate the specific needs of women; financial and professional incentives for recruitment as well as deployment in peacekeeping mission; and a major reform of the recruitment process, which enabled women to pursue commanding careers in combat units. That reform will undoubtedly lead to a significant increase in women's participation in the near future.

The Kingdom of Morocco currently has deployed 44 women in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as part of the Rapid Deployment Battalion; five military staff officers in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic; as well as two military observers in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan. We are confident that these numbers will increase in the near future, mainly thank to the recruitment reform.

Finally, the Kingdom of Morocco would like to reiterate its unwavering commitment to the women and peace and security agenda, and its support for global efforts towards moving ahead with the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and its successors, through a timely, robust and action-oriented approach that will allow for the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace, security and development. This can be achieved through building and strengthening confidence in women and believing in their full potential and merit.

Annex 62**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Myanmar to the United Nations, Kyaw Moe Tun**

My delegation wishes to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. We are confident in your wisdom and able leadership.

I thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2020/946) and his statement.

I also thank the UN-Women Executive Director, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, and other briefers for their important briefings.

Myanmar welcomes the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security.

We have witnessed significant progress in the promotion of the women and peace and security agenda since the adoption of the resolution 1325 (2000), 20 years ago. The meaningful participation and representation of women in conflict resolution and prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding as well as in the protection of women and girls in armed conflict has never been more relevant.

It is encouraging to see a positive trend in the number of women peacekeepers in United Nations peacekeeping operations around the world. However, challenges remain to the meaningful participation of women in the area of peace and security.

The twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) offers the Security Council and Member States an opportunity to take stock of past achievements, highlight gaps and further identify challenges for advancement in the women and peace and security agenda.

After decades of successive authoritarian rule, isolation and ongoing internal armed conflicts, Myanmar has relentlessly been striving to build a peaceful, prosperous and democratic nation. The civilian Government has put gender equality and women's empowerment at the heart of national development strategies towards a people-oriented democratic society. The Government is therefore encouraging the participation of more women in the democratic transition as well as in the ongoing peace process.

In this regard, the Government of Myanmar has undertaken the following initiatives to promote and protect the rights of women and girls and advance the women and peace and security agenda.

The 10-year National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women 2013-2022 is based on the 12 priority areas of the Beijing Platform for Action and the principles of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which include women's empowerment; preventing violence against women and girls; women's participation in politics and public office; women and peace and security; and gender mainstreaming.

The Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan, adopted in 2018, is a comprehensive social, economic and environmental policy reform agenda dedicated to supporting the rights of individuals, especially women and girls, and to supporting gender equity, increased women's participation in politics and the economy, and social inclusion.

Myanmar is committed to, and implements, a zero-tolerance policy against sexual violence. Accordingly, we have carried out domestic legal reforms to better protect the rights of women and girls. In this regard, the prevention and protection of violence against women law has been drafted and will soon be enacted by the

Parliament. The new law reinforces protection of women from all forms of violence, including domestic and sexual violence.

To demonstrate its strong commitment to addressing conflict-related sexual violence, the Government of Myanmar signed, in December 2018, a joint communiqué with the United Nations on prevention of and response to conflict-related sexual violence. Then, in March 2019, the National Committee on Prevention and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence was established to implement the joint communiqué. With technical assistance from the United Nations, we have drafted a national workplan.

Furthermore, one-stop women's support centres and 24-hour helplines have been set up to provide women and girls with physical, legal, psychological and social support. The one-stop women's support centres and helplines are operating 24/7 during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic to provide crucial services, as women and girls are more vulnerable during lockdowns. Victims of sexual violence are also provided with a one-time financial support for rehabilitation. To assist with case management for gender-based violence, a new set of standard operating procedures has been developed since 2019, using a survivor-centred approach. Clinical guidelines are also being developed for responding to rape.

The child rights law, which was adopted in July 2019, criminalizes sexual violence, requiring the Government, the Tatmadaw (military) and armed groups to take necessary measures to protect children from sexual violence.

Moreover, Myanmar submits reports to the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on the protection of the rights of women and prevention of sexual violence against women and girls, and is also included in the Universal Periodic Review process of the Human Rights Council.

With the aim of ending ethnic armed conflict and ushering in a democratic federal union, the Government has been convening the Union Peace Conference, 21st-Century Panglong, since 2016. Even in the midst of the formidable challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government successfully convened the fourth session of the Peace Conference, in August 2020, to advance the peace process.

Since the gender perspective is an important part in the process, it is integrated into the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, signed in 2015. During the third session of the Union Peace Conference, 21st-Century Panglong, four gender agreements were included in the political sector basic principle of Part II of the Union Accord. The Government is also promoting the meaningful participation of women in the peace process.

The Government is implementing the Women, Peace and Development Action Plan for the Advancement of Women in Kayin, Kayah and Mon States (2020-2022), in line with resolution (1325).

In response to the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire during the pandemic, the Tatmadaw (military) announced a three-month nationwide ceasefire from 10 May to 31 August 2020, which was extended twice, until end of October, to help fight the COVID-19 pandemic. The unilateral ceasefire applies to all conflict areas except where terrorist groups have taken positions.

In terms of accountability, the Independent Commission of Enquiry submitted its final report to the President in January this year. The report was based on interviews with close to 1,500 witnesses and came out with findings and recommendations for further investigation and prosecution. The Attorney General is heading up the criminal investigation and prosecution body mandated to investigate and prosecute the perpetrators based on the findings of the Independent Commission of Enquiry.

The military has also set up a court of inquiry to investigate the allegations of human rights violations during the security operations in Rakhine state. There have been three courts martial. Moreover, an investigation of possible broader patterns of violations in northern Rakhine in 2016 and 2017 has started. Such alleged broader patterns could include an inadequate distinction between civilians and Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army fighters, the disproportionate use of force, a failure to prevent the plundering of property and destruction, or acts of forcible displacement of civilians.

Despite all the formidable challenges it is facing, the Government of Myanmar is committed to enhancing human rights for all its citizens, especially the most vulnerable groups, such as women and girls.

Let me conclude by reaffirming our commitment to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment towards achieving national objectives as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We will continue to engage and work constructively with relevant United Nations agencies to achieve our common objective of advancing the women and peace and security agenda.

Annex 63

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations, Neville Melvin Gertze

Namibia thanks you, Sir, for organizing this open debate on the issue of women and peace and security. We are encouraged, as always, by the overwhelming support for this open debate.

When Namibia was campaigning to join the Security Council back in 1998, it was determined to make a positive and lasting contribution to international peace. At that time, Namibia had only been independent for eight years, and our experience in the liberation struggle certainly informed the decision to pursue progressive policies for the maintenance of world peace.

During Namibia's liberation struggle, women played various important roles and were not necessarily seen as victims or as always needing protection. From early on, it was recognized that women could contribute to the liberation movement as teachers, doctors and fighters, and could certainly take a seat at the table when peace negotiations took place. Namibian women in exile played their part in bringing international attention to the colonial situation in Namibia, and engaged with various partners, including the United Nations.

It followed that, by the time Namibia joined the Security Council in 1999, we were ready to introduce the historic concept that women can and must contribute to peace processes. The idea was premised on women's experience in the liberation struggle and also informed by regional and international experiences of women. Although, at the time, the agenda was not the most popular, Namibia managed to garner the support of civil society, women's organizations and many Member States, and in October 2000, under the presidency of Namibia, the Security Council adopted resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security.

Resolution 1325 (2000) formally drew global attention to the unrecognized, underutilized and undervalued contributions of women in preventing war, building peace and helping rebuild societies after conflict. The United Nations acknowledged that the protection of women and the prevention of violence against women and children could no longer be left to men alone.

At that time, we envisioned that the agenda would be adopted by all Governments and that, overall, we would see an increase in women's participation in peacekeeping, peacemaking and in general decision-making at the political level.

Indeed, the basic goal has been attained. In Namibia, various policies and legislative frameworks have been enacted, such as the Defence Policy of 2010, the Namibian Defence Force Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan 2000-2005, the National Gender Policy 2010-2020 and, most recently, Namibia's first national action plan on women and peace and security, which was launched in 2019.

These frameworks and policies have translated into tangible gains for women in decision-making and in the security sector. With 23 per cent representation, Namibia is among the countries with the highest proportion of women in the defence force in the Southern African Development Community region.

Regionally, the African Union (AU) has spearheaded several initiatives, including the launch of the continental framework for reporting and monitoring on the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, which was a huge milestone in advancing the realization of the transformative goals of resolution 1325 (2000) in Africa. The framework demonstrates the continued commitment of the AU to fully implementing the women and peace and security agenda in Africa. In

addition, over 30 African countries to date have adopted national action plans on the women and peace and security agenda.

However, these gains are not enough, there is more work to be done, not just nationally but globally as well. As the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) continues to spread, it poses an even more severe threat in conflict zones. Fighting the virus must not distract us from the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse, and neither must it allow impunity for violations of that policy. In the context of conflict, therefore, our call for action must be to ensure that, as we focus on and bring all our energy to the battle against COVID-19, we must still keep a clear lens on peacekeeping operations.

The missing piece for further implementation is political will. We should develop strategies to promote women's participation in decision-making, including engagement with national electoral systems and political parties to provide an equal playing field for women candidates. There is also a need to support leadership development for women and girls so that we assist them in cultivating their political potential and professional skills.

There is need for increased integration of gender in national planning and budgeting as part of our strategies to train national officials to execute plans and programmes, and thereby strengthen the abilities of women to advocate for decision-making positions and political leadership in general.

In addition, we should broaden the space for women's participation in peace processes, including training women mediators and advocating gender-equality measures as critical to security policies and practices. To this end, Namibia will be launching the international centre for women in peace and security, on 31 October 2020, as we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). The centre will focus on, among other things, research aspects of mediation and negotiations, as well as capacity-building and supporting women on issues related to gender-based violence.

Annex 64

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations, Amrit Bahadur Rai

At the outset, I would like to thank the Russian presidency of the Security Council for organizing today's meeting to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. I thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2020/946) and the briefers for their updates.

The year 2020 is a time to reflect on the achievements made on this agenda since the Security Council recognized its importance back in 2000. The hallmark resolution recognized for the first time the importance of the participation of women in peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts. The resolution also paved the way for an additional nine resolutions that further recognized the crucial roles of women in conflict prevention and resolution, while addressing different dimensions of conflict affecting them. If implemented seriously, these resolutions have the transformative potential to bring about women's empowerment and equality without leaving them behind.

The current pandemic has disproportionately affected women and girls, particularly those in fragile and conflict-affected areas. In addition, a hidden pandemic of gender-based violence is also growing, and women are being excluded and marginalized from all areas of decision-making, including in the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) response and recovery efforts. Together, these issues have threatened the decades of progress made in women's rights and equality.

As our President stated at the high-level event on Beijing+25 last month,

“[w]e should not let the pandemic stall our progress. Ensuring timely medical care, equal access to vaccines and robust recovery plans that take care of the economic and social needs of women and girls are necessary.”

Nepal appreciates the exemplary strength shown by women from various walks of life in combating COVID-19 within their communities. In particular, we commend the selfless service of women peacebuilders and peacekeepers in educating local communities about containing and preventing the spread of COVID-19 while delivering on their peacekeeping mandate. This has proved that, during the crisis, we need more women leaders, peacebuilders and peacekeepers.

From the days of the Council's adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), Nepal has been a proactive supporter of the cause of women and peace and security. As the first country in South Asia and the second in Asia overall to do so, Nepal adopted its national action plan in 2011 to implement resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008). We have made explicit efforts to localize our plan and mainstream the women and peace and security agenda in Government institutions. Nepal's national action plan has been an example of a transparent, inclusive and participatory process with the close involvement of conflict victims and civil society organizations. This experience has been widely shared with countries in the region and beyond.

Nepal has finalized a draft three-year national action plan for a second phase. The draft of the plan builds on the experiences and lessons learned from the implementation of the first-phase national action plan. The draft includes a framework for monitoring, reporting and evaluation as well as a budget breakdown for different components, strategies and activities. It fits well with national and sectoral policies outlining a localization plan. After its adoption, the second national action plan will also be localized at the provincial and local levels.

In conclusion, I want to express Nepal's readiness to share its experience and lessons learned through the constructive engagement of women in conflict-prevention, peacebuilding and peacekeeping.

Annex 65

Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Netherlands to the United Nations

We would like to thank the Russian Federation for convening today's debate.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands fully aligns itself with the statement submitted by the delegation of Canada on behalf of 63 States members of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security (annex 27), and with the statement submitted by the Delegation of the European Union (annex 38) .

Today we reflect on the progress made since the adoption, 20 years ago, of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. This past month we were enlightened by many interesting events supporting the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. Owing to the coronavirus disease, those events took place online. Although we could not meet each other in person, an inclusive space was created in which people from all over the world — from Governments, civil society, think tanks and academic institutions — participated, each one with a story to tell, with knowledge and experience to share.

We will also cherish these dialogues in the years to come because this is how we should work together to uphold, improve and implement all pillars of the women and peace and security agenda in their entirety. We have made progress together, we have achieved results large and small and we have been able to change lives for the better, at least for some.

But that is not enough. Only a fraction of peace agreements contain provisions on gender, and even when such agreements contain specific provisions on gender, implementation has proven difficult. Furthermore, in the Netherlands, a lot remains to be done when it comes to women's participation in politics, peace and security. Some 32 per cent of the members of Parliament in the Netherlands in 2020 are women. Female soldiers currently represent 10 per cent of the armed forces, and of 77 top military officials — those with the rank of general — only two are female.

The report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2020/946) has made it clear again that we as a global community have not been able to implement the women and peace and security agenda in a way that would rightfully change the lives of all women and girls. Gender inequality in itself is a driver of instability and conflict; it should therefore be addressed as a root cause of conflict. Women and girls in all their diversity need to be able to participate and get involved. They also have a right to live without fear and to tell their own stories of how they would like to be involved in achieving peace and contributing to the development and reconstruction of their own communities, their countries and beyond.

We need to reinforce our efforts to keep the theme of women and peace and security on the political agenda, both nationally and internationally, in order to make a difference on the ground. Allow me to share some of our efforts, priorities and challenges, so that we can learn from each other and improve the way we work.

With regard to policy development, planning and implementation, at the end of this year, the Kingdom of the Netherlands will adopt its fourth national action plan, focused on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) for the period 2021-2025. In prior national action plans, monitoring, evaluation and learning remained an area earmarked for improvement. In our upcoming plan, we will monitor and evaluate our efforts better, using a robust monitoring, evaluation and learning framework with clear links to internationally agreed indicators. Our new plan will also include a national focus. The Dutch Government will need to address the specific needs

of migrant and refugee women and girls. Gender mainstreaming is also key in the fourth national action plan, with a view to strengthening gender expertise and using gender-sensitive conflict analysis for strategic planning and the allocation of resources and programmes.

Lastly, as in previous national action plans, close cooperation between Government institutions and civil society remains at the heart of the Dutch approach to women and peace and security. As a key priority in our policy in this area, the Kingdom of the Netherlands is committed to remaining an international advocate for women's rights and gender equality, with special attention paid to sexual and reproductive health and rights, women's participation and leadership in peace processes and ensuring a gender perspective in all peace and security policies. In our efforts to prevent and respond to sexual violence in conflict, the survivor-centred approach remains a guiding principle, including in our efforts with regard to sexual and reproductive health, mental health and psychosocial support, and access to justice.

Emerging global crises, such as the climate crisis and the coronavirus disease pandemic, have serious and negative impacts on the progress made with respect to gender equality and the position of women and girls. The latter bear the brunt of socioeconomic stress and burdens of care, and they face increased violence in the home. In a changing global context, local knowledge and resilience, including the role of local women's organizations — localization — are essential.

In conclusion, the challenge for us now is to make explicit use of the transformative potential after crises and conflict and build back better, with a specific focus on women's rights organizations and movement-building.

Annex 66**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Peru to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

We would like to thank the Russian Federation, in its capacity as President of the Security Council this month, for convening today's open debate on the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), which established the women and peace and security agenda, to which Peru attaches great importance. Likewise, we would also like to thank the very valuable briefings made by the Secretary-General, the Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN-Women, the United Nations Goodwill Ambassador for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, the Adviser on Sexual and Gender-based Violence for the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei and the Head of the Women and Children Legal Research Foundation.

In particular, we welcome and celebrate this important anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), as it marks an important milestone for the Council and recognizes women as actors relevant to the building of international peace and security. It is also special because it coincides with the anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which constitutes a central element in the rights of women and girls, recognizing the fundamental role of women in our societies and developing an action programme in favour of the empowerment of women and gender equality, while also envisaging a world in which women can fully exercise their freedoms and rights.

For Peru, the agenda of gender equality and the empowerment of women is crucial, which is why in recent years we have made great efforts to improve the enjoyment and exercise of the rights of all women, adolescents and girls. Within this framework, Peru is committed to the women and peace and security agenda, which includes the empowerment of women and the achievement of gender equality, in order, inter alia, to achieve the complete and effective participation of women in various decision-making institutions and processes at all levels within our societies, including those related to international peace and security. This commitment was expressed in the work we carried out during our recent membership in the Security Council, in particular within the informal group of experts on women and peace and security, which Peru had the honour to co-chair with Germany. We also wish to emphasize the support we give to multilateralism and the rule of law as essential components of a strong international community.

It is undeniable that incorporating women and their perspectives in peace-oriented processes is important to ensuring sustainable peace. However, despite this understanding, evidence shows that we must redouble our efforts aimed at having the necessary levels of effective, full, equal and meaningful women's participation in them, considering women's double dimension in this regard: on the one hand, they are active agents of peace and, on the other, they are beneficiaries of peace.

If we want to accelerate the achievement of sustainable peace and security, we must ensure the participation of all relevant actors, including women. However, their involvement alone is not enough; their participation must be meaningful, on equal terms and situated at all levels of decision-making. We welcome the progress made so far, but we must continue to make progress and consolidate the true role of women, with a view to achieving gender equality and their full empowerment. Furthermore, we see that the diversity of women is still not properly recognized. Women are not a single, homogeneous group. Therefore, their diversity, uniqueness and particular

needs must be recognized and taken into account. This will have a strong positive impact on the advancement of the women and peace and security agenda.

The important role that women play in all areas of our societies is paramount. The coronavirus disease pandemic has shown this, with women representing 70 per cent of all health and social workers on the front lines of the pandemic. Nevertheless, inequalities and gaps remain evident. Accordingly, the inclusion of women in decision-making processes is quite relevant, since it helps to make their needs and points of view more visible, thereby contributing to the elimination of stereotypes about women's roles. Evidence shows that greater participation by women in decision-making processes results in a diminished likelihood of conflict. In this regard, we cannot fail to mention sexual and gender-based violence, which is a serious problem that we as an international community must address and resolve in order to achieve a safer world and more inclusive and sustainable societies, not only for the benefit of women and girls but for all of humankind.

It is on the basis of what I have said here that Peru guides its actions and promotes the participation of women. We would like to emphasize that our country is the fifth-largest contributor of troops to United Nations peace operations in terms of the percentage of female personnel in such operations and that a significant number of them serve as officers at management level.

In conclusion, we would like to express our recognition of the important work that the Secretary-General is doing in this area, as well as our firm commitment to continuing to work with the United Nations and its Member States in a proactive and constructive manner and to further advance this agenda in line with the need to build a sustainable and inclusive peace.

Annex 67

Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations, Enrique A. Manalo

The Philippines thanks the Russian presidency of the Security Council this month for convening this important debate and the other members of the Council for their efforts aimed at advancing the women and peace and security agenda in the Council's work. We also thank the Secretary-General and the briefers for their briefings today.

The Philippines views women's full, effective and meaningful participation in all stages of the peace process as critical, given women's indispensable role in the prevention and resolution of conflict and in peacebuilding and peacekeeping. These principles are embodied in resolution 1325 (2000) and in subsequent relevant resolutions.

The Philippines was the first country in Asia to adopt a national action plan on women and peace and security. A product of constructive engagement between the Government and civil society, the Philippine plan maximized the gains of decades of gender-mainstreaming work in the country. It enabled national Government agencies and local Government units to identify interventions in the area of women and peace and security for integration in their regular plans, budgets and accomplishment reports, as required by the country's landmark law, the Magna Carta of Women. The Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan 2017-2022 currently provides a framework for promoting women's rights and leadership roles in peacebuilding, peacekeeping and peace negotiations.

In 2014, the Philippine Government signed a peace accord with the rebel group Moro Islamic Liberation Front, ending decades-long conflict in Mindanao. The Government peace panel was headed by a woman, Miriam Coronel-Ferrer, the first female chief negotiator in the world to sign a peace accord with a rebel group.

The Philippines supports the work of the United Nations system in integrating gender dimensions in all aspects of peacebuilding. The Department of National Defence has responded to the United Nations goal of increasing female participation in United Nations peace operations by pledging 30 female military observers/peacekeeping staff to the United Nations Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System. In our view, women bring unique perspectives to peacebuilding and peacekeeping, which results in improved situational awareness, enhanced access to critical services and deepened trust with local communities, among other outcomes.

In the light of the coronavirus disease pandemic, the Philippine Defence Department seeks to increase financing of the women and peace and security agenda recognizing that the pandemic exacerbates gender inequality in conflict-affected, post-conflict and humanitarian crisis contexts. Women and girls face a higher incidence of gender-based violence, more difficulties in accessing basic goods and services, and greater numbers of human rights violations.

The Philippine National Police (PNP) is mandated by law to prioritize the recruitment and training of women in this male-dominated organization. The PNP has to reserve 10 per cent of its annual recruitment, training and education quota for women. In recent years, however, the actual percentage of women in the police has gone up as much as 20 per cent. In promoting gender-sensitive investigations, the PNP was able to establish 2,167 Women and Children Protection Desks nationwide, manned by 5,774 trained women investigators.

In our region, the Philippines supports the efforts of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) aimed at mainstreaming the women and

peace and security agenda in its work. The ASEAN Women for Peace Registry, a compendium of women leaders in ASEAN with expertise in the various aspects of peace processes, including negotiation, mediation, facilitation and research, inter alia, is a good practice that may be shared with other organizations. The ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation, ASEAN's research arm, can also share best practices and lessons learned on conflict management and conflict resolution involving women peace negotiators and advocates.

To promote the further participation of women in the peacekeeping work of the United Nations, the Philippines recommends the designation of female peacekeepers to key United Nations positions, an increase in training opportunities for female peacekeepers and the allocation of a certain percentage of posts to female peacekeepers in formed units or contingent deployments. The Philippines reiterates its commitment to resolution 1325 (2000) and is ready to cooperate with international partners to achieve these goals.

Annex 68

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Poland to the United Nations

Poland commends Russia for convening today's important debate. We welcome the focus of the debate on the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda and on making our shared commitment a reality. We would like to express our appreciation to Secretary-General Guterres for his briefing and for his valuable report (S/2020/946). We also thank all the briefers for their insightful and thought-provoking remarks.

We align ourselves with the statements of the European Union (annex 38) and the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security (annex 27).

In 2000, courageous women peacebuilders, mediators and human rights defenders were the inspiration behind resolution 1325 (2000), which, for the first time in history, called for the inclusion of women in matters of peacebuilding and peacekeeping. Today, 20 years after the unanimous adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), we recognize more than ever the urgent need to deliver on our commitments. We fully subscribe to the words of the Secretary-General that

“women's full, equal and meaningful participation [in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts] is a non-negotiable political priority”.

The women and peace and security agenda has been greatly enriched over the last 20 years, including by highlighting the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the great benefits of enhancing the involvement of women in peace processes and the absolute necessity of tackling the scourge of sexual violence as a tactic of war. It is also widely understood that women and men have different experiences both during and after conflict, and that women face a particular set of challenges related to peacebuilding and security. We admit that while certain progress has been made there remains a stark inconsistency between declarations and actual actions. What is more, the consequences of the coronavirus disease pandemic pose a real threat to the advancements achieved.

Evidence shows that women's inclusion increases the quality and sustainability of peace processes. However, they are still overwhelmingly absent from negotiations. Since 1992, women only account for 3 per cent of mediators on peace agreements. The United Nations must remain resolute in its efforts aimed at promoting women's meaningful participation at all stages of peacemaking. Acknowledging the existence, skills, influence, values and approaches of women peacebuilders is a necessary preliminary step in ensuring their rightful and systematic place at the tables of negotiations and in decision-making and in fostering future peace around the world.

We also need to recognize that women are not a homogenous group and that the women who tend to be most marginalized, such as women with disabilities or women belonging to religious and ethnic minorities, need to be engaged in peace processes. We need to make sure that everyone's voice is heard. In this context, it is worth keeping in mind that resolution 2475 (2019), initiated by Poland and unanimously adopted by the Security Council last year, calls on all States Members of the United Nations to enable the meaningful participation and representation of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action, conflict prevention, resolution, reconciliation, reconstruction and peacebuilding.

Moreover, the meaningful participation of women in peace processes as well as broader political processes is not about number of women at the table; rather, it is about women's leadership. We need to identify and support policies that strengthen not only women's voices but also women's access to leadership positions in decision-making in peacebuilding. We must also ensure that women have a strong

voice in decision-making from initial peacemaking processes to the establishment and development of local and national Governmental institutions. We know that women are adequately trained for these roles and that they are ready for high-level appointments. We also know that qualified women are everywhere.

We fully support initiatives and programmes that contribute to increasing the role of women in building lasting peace and security. To this end, Poland is implementing its first-ever Polish National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. The National Action Plan has been adopted for the term 2018-2021, and its primary focus has been put on the participation of women in conflict prevention and peacekeeping, women and peace and security agenda implementation via Polish humanitarian and development aid, protection and support of the victims of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence, and promotion and development of the women and peace and security agenda both nationally and internationally.

We do recognize that the national action plans are useful only if the outlined commitments are being actually translated into practice. That is why Poland has committed itself at international forums to introducing measures that will ensure that perpetrators are held accountable for acts of conflict-related sexual violence and to strengthening prevention efforts and the fight against impunity of peacekeepers who commit sexual exploitation and abuse.

As a non-permanent member of the Security Council in the 2018-2019 term, Poland was a strong advocate of the women and peace and security agenda. Consequently, the protection of the most vulnerable groups, such as women and children, remains one of the priorities of Poland's from 2020-2022 term as a member of the Human Rights Council.

The participation of female soldiers in United Nations peacekeeping missions is our priority. Poland actively promotes policies that address potential barriers to women soldiers in recruitment, participation and scope of engagement in peace operations. After re-engagement in peacekeeping operations in 2019, Poland paid special attention to the meaningful and appropriate assignment of women soldiers in our contingent in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). In 2020, the level of participation of Polish women in UNIFIL reached approximately 10 per cent, which is far above the 5 per cent average.

The women and peace and security agenda is one of the priorities of Polish humanitarian aid and development assistance. In this area, Poland focuses mainly on protecting women from conflict-related sexual violence. We are targeting these objectives with the support of UN Women, the United Nations Population Fund and UNICEF, and through bilateral cooperation that aims, inter alia, at providing protection and health care and at creating an environment conducive to the empowerment of women.

In order to effectively operationalize the women and peace and security agenda, we need to identify and consistently address persisting barriers to women's engagement. This requires making precise recommendations, systematic and regular assessments, and setting clear and measurable targets and concrete road maps. For this reason, Poland supports all initiatives aimed at providing practical guidance for the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

In this vein, we welcome the Women Peacebuilders Protection Framework, created by the International Civil Society Action Network with the support of the United Kingdom and whose report provides valuable insight into protecting needs of female peacebuilders and is followed by operational guidance that provides precise recommendations. We hope that this initiative will contribute to further operationalization of the women and peace and security agenda.

We acknowledge and value the great impact resolution 1325 (2000) has had on peace processes. It has changed the understanding of peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The agenda that at first blush may stem from the need to ensure greater equality in practice ends up delivering better, longer lasting and more effective solutions in complicated peace and security circumstances. We do hope that the anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) will give a real impetus to better implementation of the resolution's provisions. We know what to do; what we need now is political will and an actual long-lasting commitment.

Annex 69

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Portugal to the United Nations

Portugal thanks the Russian Federation for organizing today's open debate on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) and welcomes the opportunity to follow up on the women and peace and security agenda, discuss in particular the achievements made so far and redefine strategies to increase the implementation of all its pillars. We align ourselves with the statements of the European Union (annex 38) and the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security (annex 27).

Portugal would like to commend the efforts of the United Nations system on this subject and the Secretary-General's recently published report on women and peace and security (S/2020/946), which represents an important assessment of the agenda 20 years after its establishment, and it is ever more relevant considering the impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

This year we also celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which presents us with an important opportunity to reaffirm our efforts aimed at addressing structural gender inequalities, the role of women in peace processes and the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence.

Victims and survivors of conflict-related sexual violence can be subject to discrimination, sexual assault, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, human trafficking and forced marriages. These crimes represent serious violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law. Furthermore, in conflict situations, attacks on schools disproportionately affect girls, thereby jeopardizing gender equality and girls' right to education, as well as increasing the risk of child marriages, early and forced marriages, early pregnancies and sexual and gender-based violence. We must therefore ensure accountability and fight against impunity and maintain a zero-tolerance approach towards aggressors, be they members of terrorist groups, State actors or troops deployed on behalf of the United Nations.

It is urgent that specific strategies against acts of violence in conflict situations be implemented, particularly through cooperation with civil society organizations, youth and women's organizations — including those designed to ensure the security of women peacebuilders and women human rights defenders — and access to information and the use of new technologies. This commitment includes protecting and promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights and providing victims and survivors with access to mental-health care and legal services.

Portugal's holistic approach to the women and peace and security agenda is based on promoting gender equality, the inclusion of women in conflict prevention, the training of armed forces, and the fight against gender and sexual violence. This approach is part of the policies and strategies Portugal has adopted and is included in our operational planning in defence, foreign policy, development cooperation, security and justice.

Portugal has adopted its third National Action Plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in the period from 2019 to 2022. The third National Action Plan is also part of the commitments assumed by Portugal in several international forums, including the Council of Europe and the European Union. We comply with the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, also known as the Istanbul Convention.

The third National Action Plan is based on four strategic objectives: reinforcing the integration of the women and peace and security agenda and the perspective of

equality between women and men in Portugal's interventions at national, regional and international levels; protecting the human rights of all women and girls and punishing all forms of violence against them, including sexual violence; promoting the participation of all women and young people in conflict prevention and in peacebuilding processes; and integrating the women and peace and security agenda in the work of civil society organizations. Follow-up on the implementation of our national action plans is seen in an increase in the number of training courses given on the women and peace and security agenda, particularly for deployed armed forces in international peacekeeping missions.

Some examples of Portugal's good practices in implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) include the approval of the gender-equality strategy for cooperation with partner countries — Angola, Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe and Timor Leste — which involves measures aimed at eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls and at promoting their empowerment, particularly in fragile, conflict and post-conflict States; the approval, by the Ministry of National Defence, in March 2019, of the National Defence Sectoral Plan for Equality 2019-2021, structured across three main lines: equality, reconciliation and training; the Ministry of National Defence's creation, in March 2020, of the Equality Office, the first at the ministerial level in Portugal, proving our commitment to the monitoring and institutionalization of an inclusive gender culture; and, within the scope of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, efforts to ensure the approval of a defence action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), for which Portugal has already forwarded a proposal. In addition, Portugal is committed to greater legal and judicial cooperation in this area. It is also committed to expanding the presence and participation of women in military contingents, security forces and international peacekeeping missions, as women soldiers exercise a key role on the ground.

Portugal reaffirms its support to the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire in response to COVID-19, taking into account his important policy brief on the impacts of the pandemic on women as well. COVID-19 is an added challenge to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

Annex 70**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations, Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani**

[Original: Arabic]

At the outset, I wish to congratulate the Russian Federation on its presidency of the Security Council this month, and I thank you, Sir, for convening this important debate. I also thank the Secretary-General for his valuable briefing and the Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) for her briefing, as well as all those who have taken the floor.

The twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) is being commemorated against the backdrop of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which has had a negative impact on women and girls. The occasion provides an important opportunity to intensify efforts to implement the women and peace and security agenda. There is no doubt that the best way out of this global health crisis is to intensify our joint efforts in a spirit of cooperation and international solidarity to overcome this turbulent time.

In line with the women and peace and security agenda, we stress that it is vital for women to participate fully and meaningfully in preventing conflicts and crises and in devising strategies for conflict resolution and post-conflict recovery. We must use women's strengths in order to address challenges to international peace and security, including by increasing the number of women involved in peace processes. To that end, Qatar supports the Secretary-General's system-wide strategy on gender parity in all areas, including peace and security.

Qatar has supported and implemented the women and peace and security agenda since its adoption, upholding its commitment to the principle of gender equality, the promotion and protection of the human rights of women and the maintenance of international peace and security. Qatar co-chairs, with Ghana, the Group of Friends for Gender Parity at the United Nations and has supported the global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2005) on women and peace and security.

Aware of the need to strengthen the role of women in peacemaking, Qatar strives to ensure that women are involved in the peace processes for which it serves as mediator. In that connection, Qatar strived to ensure that women were fully represented at the Afghan peace talks held in Doha in September 2020. Three Afghan women members of the negotiating team of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan participated in the negotiations. Similarly, participation by women in the negotiations held in Doha in July 2019 was exemplary. Afghan women played an important role in the negotiations and had a significant impact in promoting a productive environment for dialogue.

Qatar continues to support Afghan peace negotiations and remains convinced that the involvement of women helps to ensure the success of mediation processes, guarantee the rights of women and girls, and promote the advancement of women and their active participation in society, as that is an integral part of any agreements that are negotiated and reached.

As part of our ongoing contribution to multilateral international action, and on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the youth, peace and security agenda, Qatar will host the High-Level Global Conference on Comprehensive Peace Paths for Youth in May 2021 in Doha. The Conference will focus on the participation of young women in peace processes. We have taken pains to ensure gender equality

at all stages of the Conference, from the preparatory stages to the Conference itself to the follow-up of its outcomes. It is our great pleasure to hold this conference in cooperation with our partners from Finland and Colombia, the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and the Education Above All Foundation in Qatar.

In conclusion, Qatar renews its commitment to continuing to cooperate with all stakeholders in the women and peace and security agenda and providing the support needed to ensure its implementation, thereby contributing to international peace and sustainable security.

Annex 71**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations, Cho Hyun**

The delegation of the Republic of Korea fully aligns itself with the joint statement of the MIKTA countries — Mexico, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Turkey and Australia — and has the honour of submitting this statement in its national capacity.

My country reiterates the importance of full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all aspects of peace and security. In particular, we highlight the importance of translating the guiding resolutions and strategies in this area into concrete actions. In 2014, the Republic of Korea established its National Action Plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and, in 2018, adopted its second National Action Plan, for the period of 2018-2020.

Furthermore, the Republic of Korea is exerting its utmost efforts to increase the number of women serving as military observers or staff officers in United Nations peace operations to 25 per cent by 2028, in line with the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy 2018-2028 of the Department of Peace Operations. We have already made steady progress, as the representation of women has increased from 18 per cent to 22 per cent since the Republic of Korea made its pledge last year. As the host country for the 2021 Peacekeeping Ministerial meeting, the Republic of Korea will strive to ensure that the voices of women in peace operations are duly recognized and endeavour to further contribute to the promotion of the women and peace and security agenda.

My delegation would like to highlight the importance of preventing conflict-related sexual violence and protecting victims. In particular, a survivor-centred approach is critical to preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence. Accordingly, my delegation emphasizes the significance of implementing resolution 2467 (2019) adopted last year. Necessary assistance should be provided to all victims, including sexual and reproductive health-care services. To this end, the Republic of Korea, as one of the board members of the Global Fund for Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, is participating in the Fund and will continue to provide support to it, including through financial contributions.

Following the first International Conference on Action with Women and Peace last year, the Republic of Korea, on 24 November, will host the second international conference of this kind, using a virtual platform, with the survivor-centred approach as the theme. We greatly look forward to the Security Council's active participation.

At this historic moment, in which we are celebrating the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), we would like to emphasize that its successful implementation has a very special meaning for Korea. The Government of the Republic of Korea will continue to endeavour to restore the honour and dignity of the victims known as comfort women and turn this painful experience into a lesson from history. The Republic of Korea has been exerting sustained efforts in the advancement of the women and peace and security agenda and will continue to spare no efforts to this end.

Annex 72

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Romania to the United Nations, Ion Jinga

Romania aligns itself with the statement submitted by the European Union (EU) (annex 38).

As we mark the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, it is unfortunate that these momentous occasions are undermined by the coronavirus disease pandemic, which disproportionately affects women and girls by severely affecting their safety and livelihoods, as well as by exclusion and underrepresentation. The full and equal participation of all women and girls is essential and has a direct impact on achieving peaceful and sustainable societies. We must enable and include their voices, perspectives and considerations in all processes and outcomes.

Acknowledging the importance of resolution 1325 (2000), Romania has devised multiple national action plans for the resolution's implementation. The most recent plan, adopted in July this year, established a national implementation group responsible for consolidating cooperation and consultation with international organizations and civil society, as well as with monitoring and increasing the efficiency of Romanian institutions in relation to the execution of the provisions outlined in the resolution.

The renewed support for increasing the representation of women in mediation teams, political transitions and peace processes at all levels, and in close consultation with women's groups at local and international levels, was deemed crucial for the full and comprehensive implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. While there have been notable achievements in this field since the year 2000, more remains to be done, since women and girls are still not adequately represented. Rebuilding societies affected by conflict and crises should be based largely on women's contributions, considering that they are among the most affected.

Peacekeeping and peacebuilding, enshrined in multilateralism and symbols of international solidarity in the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security, are among the most effective tools at our disposal. As an active participant in missions sponsored by NATO, the EU, the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Romania understands and fully integrates gender dimensions in all aspects of national and international security and stability, and, as a result of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), 25 per cent of Romanian police officers and 15 per cent of Romanian military personnel participating in missions around the globe are women.

Their expertise and important role have constantly been acknowledged. Romanian female officers have received the International Female Police Peacekeeper Award and have been appointed to leading roles within United Nations missions. Furthermore, Romania successfully deployed its first female engagement team in Afghanistan where, owing to the status of women in that country, male soldiers were prohibited from interacting with the female population. As a result, female personnel were pulled from other duties and pressed into service to create an interface with the 50 per cent of the local population that is female so as to better understand their needs.

Women peacekeepers have proven that they can perform the same tasks as male peacekeepers under the same difficult conditions and that they can also improve the operational efficiency by engaging with local female communities. Their presence

in sensitive areas may constitute a model for local women and a determinant factor for the latter to get involved in all aspects of decision-making. In this regard, we welcome the recent resolution 2538 (2020), on women in peacekeeping.

We must strive to fully implement the women and peace and security agenda in peacekeeping operations in order to increase performance and accountability, improve the safety and security of peacekeepers and, last but not least, ensure that a policy of zero-tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse is in place, in line with the Secretary-General's strategy to prevent and end this type of misconduct. To this end, on 5 November 2020, Romania will organize an international conference entitled "Gender Equality — 20 years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000): The impact on the security and defence sector". This event will take place under the auspices of the South-Eastern Europe Defence Ministerial Process.

Gender equality, the empowerment of all women and girls and the realization of all their human rights will be essential to overcome current and future crises and build more equal, inclusive and resilient societies for all. Together as the international community, we need to be ambitious and continue to drive the changes needed to create the same enthusiasm that made the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) and the Beijing Platform for Action possible over two decades ago.

Annex 73

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Senegal to the United Nations

First of all, I would like to congratulate the Russian Federation on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month and to welcome the holding of today's open debate on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), on the theme of women and peace and security. This anniversary coincides with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing World Conference on Women and the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations.

In adopting resolution 1325 (2000), the Security Council recognized not only the differential, disproportionate and multidimensional impact of conflict on women and girls but also, and most significant, the importance of their active participation in peace processes. With the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the prevention of violence against women, the protection of their rights and the promotion of their involvement in decision-making became essential markers in all peace policies and strategies at global, regional and national levels. Accordingly, through the Action for Peacekeeping initiative and its subsequent Declaration of Shared Commitments, endorsed by 151 States Members of the United Nations and four regional organizations, which are aimed at revitalizing efforts to make peace missions more inclusive and effective, the international community has renewed its commitment to increasing the number of civilian and uniformed women at all stages of peace processes. Equally important is the Secretary-General's gender strategy, under which important international peacekeeping responsibilities have been assigned to women, including gender-equality and women's protection advisers deployed in several theatres of peace operations.

Despite this significant progress, the results of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) are slow and structural, and cyclical and economic challenges, including in the area of financing and institutional reform, persist, as was so well highlighted in the latest report of the Secretary-General on the subject before us today (S/2020/946). In conflict areas, in addition to being considered as weapons of war, women continue to be victims of all kinds of abuses, including sexual and gender-based harassment by armed groups and regular armed forces. This is compounded by their low representation in the defence and security sectors, as well as in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding processes.

Senegal, believing that nation-building is based on individual freedom and respect for the human person, has consistently reiterated its faith in, and commitment to, strengthening the rule of law and justice in the country with regard to women, as evidenced by the ratification of almost all of the international instruments aimed at the promotion of women's rights.

In keeping with the provisions of resolution 1325 (2000), Senegal has put in place a legal framework as well as policies and strategies for the implementation of its commitments, with the goal of ending gender-based violence and promoting the rights of women and girls, especially in the area of peace and security.

With respect to measures that integrate the gender dimension into issues of peace and security, my country has drawn up and is implementing a national action plan for the eradication of gender-based violence, as well as a gender-related sectoral strategy for the period 2012-2022, whose main objective is to reach the goal of a 10 per cent proportion of women in the armed forces by the deadline.

That reform has made it possible to revise all texts relating to military personnel with the aim of creating conditions conducive to the integration, advancement and

professional development of women. It has also led to the introduction of a gender curriculum in schools and training centres for military and police personnel. The appointment of a female commissioner to head the national police in 2013 was one of the strongest expressions of that policy and provided additional motivation for young Senegalese women dreaming of donning a uniform.

My country's strong commitment to increasing the number of women in its defence and security forces is also evident in its contributions to peacekeeping operations. Senegal currently has 60 female soldiers, 121 female police personnel and three female prison staff, that is, more than 2 per cent, 9 per cent and 14 per cent of the total staff of those components, respectively.

In addition, following its creation in 2011, a monitoring committee on the implementation of the national action plan on resolution 1325 (2000) was set up within the Ministry of Women, Family and Gender, and an interministerial committee on women and peace and security was set up in 2017 under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Senegalese Abroad.

Like many other countries, Senegal has also drawn up a second national action plan on resolution 1325 (2000), this time for the period 2020-2024, on the basis of resolution 2122 (2013), which calls on Member States to assess the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and to identify the strengths and weaknesses of such implementation, with a view to taking new and more ambitious approaches.

Promoting women's participation in peacekeeping also requires the elimination of material obstacles to the recruitment and retention of female personnel in theatres of operation and, consequently, sufficient consideration of their specific needs in the establishment of infrastructures and services related to those operations.

Likewise, the issue of sexual abuse and exploitation deserves to be highlighted once again. By endorsing the declaration of the Circle of Leadership on the prevention of that phenomenon, Senegal is in lockstep with the zero-tolerance policy in that area and remains convinced that an increased presence of women in peace operations is of vital importance in the provision of assistance to victims.

Senegal therefore remains determined to support all international initiatives aimed at ensuring gender equality in the maintenance and consolidation of peace. However, my country believes that the effective implementation of such initiatives must involve an ongoing dialogue between the United Nations and the contributing countries, whose gender policies, it must be admitted, have made fairly uneven progress.

Such an approach will help the Organization support those countries while setting realistic and achievable objectives in terms of promoting the participation of women in peace operations.

Annex 74**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations, Alie Kabba**

Sierra Leone welcomes the convening of this open video-teleconference on “Women and peace and security: twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), focusing on better implementation”. We thank the Russian Federation for this initiative and congratulate it for presiding over the Security Council in this month of October in spite of the extraordinary challenges posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

Sierra Leone takes note with appreciation of the 2020 reports of the Secretary-General (S/2020/946) and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on the issue of women and peace and security, both of which underscore the need for all stakeholders to redouble their efforts to implement the women and peace and security agenda with a sustained focus on commitments to build back better. We also thank all the briefers for their insightful presentations.

Today’s meeting is a time for deep reflection on the status of implementation of the historic resolution 1325 (2000) 20 years on. Indeed, it provides another opportunity for all of us to proffer concrete recommendations on how to address the challenges that have emerged over the years and those that persist.

Sierra Leone continues to demonstrate robust enthusiasm for the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. We have embedded resolution 1325 (2000) into our national policy instruments and programmes. We started with the adoption of a national action plan, which has now been elevated to the level of a second-generation plan and which is also aligned with our medium-term national development plan 2019-2023, which focuses on education for all, with a cluster dedicated to empowering women, children and persons with disabilities.

We are giving women not only space to fulfil their potential but also a voice in governance. The adoption of a resolution on women and peace and security by our Parliament in 2019 created additional leverage for the increased participation of women in issues related to peace and security. We currently have a female Deputy Inspector General of Police. There has also been an increase in the effective participation of women in Sierra Leone’s contingent for peace operations globally.

In 2019, the armed forces of the Republic of Sierra Leone recruited 332 female military personnel, including 62 cadets — 42 in the infantry and 20 specialists — and 270 recruits. That will help to promote peace processes, as Sierra Leone is a nation that contributes to peacekeeping missions around the world. Affirmative action on the part of the Sierra Leone police has been taken to accelerate the promotion of women in the police force and the increased participation of women in peacekeeping operations, particularly in the police component.

We could not agree more with the Secretary-General on COVID-19 having the potential to reverse the limited progress made on gender equality and women’s rights. In that connection, we have put women and girls at the centre of our national COVID-19 response and recovery strategy. Sexual and gender-based violence is being combated at the highest political level. In 2019, His Excellency President Julius Maada Bio declared himself a HeForShe Champion. Since then, he has spared no effort to fight sexual and gender-based violence in our communities. He spearheaded the launching of one-stop centres on sexual and gender-based violence and the first-ever Sexual Offences Model Court for rape proceedings — a practical way of addressing the scourge of rape by efficiently dealing with the backlog of cases.

Sierra Leone will continue to promote women's full and effective participation in national and community initiatives on peace and security issues throughout the country. We are partnering with international and local organizations to conduct leadership trainings and community awareness-raising sessions on women's human rights across the country. We are refining legal processes in support of women's political empowerment as well as their inclusion in conflict-resolution processes. We are making use of the newly established women's situation room, a platform set up to address the issue of violence and intimidation against women, especially during electoral processes. We fully agree with the call of the Secretary-General for increased support for and the protection of women peacebuilders against all forms of violence and abuse, be it physically or online.

Financing the women and peace and security agenda remains a major challenge for many of our countries. There is an urgent need for more investment in that area and not in militarized State security, which exacerbates violence, including sexual and gender-based violence. We urge States with national action plans to adopt more realistic resource-mobilization strategies, such as fully costing every plan, public-private partnerships, developing localization guidelines to ensure that local development plans are incorporated into activities related to women and peace and security, the mapping of women peacebuilders' and women-led peacebuilding organizations, and engaging bilateral and multilateral partners for funding and partnerships.

We are aware of our constraints and will continue to address them with informed robust policies and concrete evidence. We wholeheartedly welcome the creation of the Generation Equality Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action. We are eternally grateful to the Generation Equality Core Group for having selected us to serve on the Board of the newly established Compact. We reiterate our commitment to the guiding principles of the Compact. We equally welcome the efforts of the African Union to adopt the Continental Results Framework, a mechanism that will monitor and report on implementation of the peace and security agenda in Africa.

Let me conclude by affirming that better implementation of the women and peace and security agenda requires a renewed determination to ensure that every commitment on paper is matched in practice. It also means paying close attention to the key gaps in effective implementation, such as militarized investments, discrimination against women in peace leadership and a strong focus on women as victims of conflict with no context-specific or gender-sensitive analysis. We will remain proactive in our fund-raising responsibilities. We will explore every reachable source of funding, because there is nothing like "small money", especially from the perspective of ownership through local contribution.

Annex 75

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations, Michal Mlynár

Slovakia aligns itself with the statement submitted on behalf of the European Union (annex 38).

Allow me to express my gratitude for the holding of this open debate on women and peace and security on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), focusing on its better implementation. In our view, it is essential that the Security Council continue to systematically and consistently advance, advocate for and promote a holistic women and peace and security agenda in its work and decision-making.

It is significant to contemplate the fact that, in the first five years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), only 15 per cent of Security Council resolutions included explicit references to issues related to women and peace and security. Between 2017 and 2019, however, that number increased to approximately 70 per cent.

I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his 2020 report (S/2020/946) on women and peace and security and to commend his leadership and commitment to this important agenda. My delegation shares and supports the Secretary-General's view that all approaches to conflict prevention, resolution and recovery efforts must have at their core women's full, equal and meaningful participation and rights, including respect for bodily autonomy. This, however, requires more than tackling discrimination. Placing women at the centre of peacebuilding efforts must involve ensuring that there is a solid foundation on which to build for the inclusive participation of women.

I am glad to share that my Government approved the first national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) for 2021-2025, and we therefore joined the 86 other States Members of the United Nations that have national action plans on resolution 1325 (2000). This is yet another tangible example of our commitment to the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. As I stated last year, increasing the number of women in our armed forces has been and continues to be a long-term policy on the part of Slovakia, which, despite the numerous challenges associated with the current global pandemic, remains active in peacekeeping around the world. The United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, for example, includes 241 members of the armed forces of Slovakia, including 25 women. I would also like to draw the Council's attention to Slovakia's standing in the Global Peace Index. As of 2020, my country has maintained its standing in the top 25, with a score of 1.57.

Allow me also to reiterate the importance of having gender-sensitive security-sector-reform strategies throughout all planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation phases. We believe that Member States should redouble their efforts in that respect in order to not only address but also prevent sexual and gender-based violence. Women must continue to be promoted as equal leaders, and discrimination against and the stereotyping of women must be firmly and publicly denounced. Women are capable of so much if given the opportunity. It is our collective responsibility to provide and safeguard those opportunities.

Reforming the security sector must focus on recruitment processes and an improvement in the delivery of security services to address and prevent sexual and gender-based violence. The discussions also underscored the fact that women must be promoted as equal and strategic leaders, barriers must be broken down and

stereotypes about women's roles in societies, including their participation in peace processes, eliminated.

Our support for gender equality and women's empowerment is also reflected in Slovak development cooperation projects. Slovakia is financially supporting the implementation of the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons regional project aimed at strengthening gender equality in the Ministries of Defence and Armed Forces of selected countries of the Western Balkans.

Slovakia is currently in the process of drawing up three key strategic documents on strengthening the role of women in society: the national strategy for equality between women and men and equal opportunities 2020-2025, its action plan and the national action plan for the prevention and elimination of violence against women 2020-2025.

The whole world is currently facing a surge of unprecedented crises engendered by the global coronavirus disease pandemic, which undoubtedly has impacted and continues to impact the peacekeeping work of the United Nations around the world. Nonetheless, the challenges that we faced prior to the pandemic but did not manage to resolve remain with us. It is our sincere hope that as an Organization we will centre our approach on solidarity and the protection of the most vulnerable, including in particular women and girls.

In conclusion, my delegation believes that the United Nations must be equally representative of, and responsive to, the needs of not only all countries but also all human beings. In order for us to be successful in tackling the current health and socioeconomic crises, responsible, inclusive and emphatic leadership matters. We need to unite and work together and in solidarity to not only protect the women and girls of our world today but also to ensure the full enjoyment of all human rights for future generations as well.

Annex 76

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Slovenia to the United Nations

Slovenia aligns itself with the statements submitted by the European Union (annex 38) and by the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security (annex 27).

The year 2020 marks important milestones for gender equality and women and peace and security. Women's meaningful participation must be at the centre of all peace-related activities. Without women as equal and fundamental partners in decision-making processes, there can be no equal and inclusive society and, without resilience, which only equal and inclusive societies can provide, there can be no sustainable peace.

Looking at the Secretary-General's report (S/2020/946), we recognize that certain progress has been made but that it has been too slow. Twenty-five years after the international community's commitment to achieving gender equality and 20 years after the essential role of women in securing and maintaining peace were recognized, an equal and meaningful place at the table is still out of reach for too many women. We must do more, and we must do it faster.

As we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the coronavirus disease pandemic has revealed the structural inequalities and devastating consequences of undelivered promises and unachieved goals. The central role and power of women's leadership have proved to be essential for effective and human-rights-based response and recovery. However, the increase in all forms of violence against women, including political violence targeting women, remains of concern. Women's organizations on the ground play a crucial role in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, and we condemn all threats and violence against women peacebuilders, political leaders, activists and women human rights defenders. We reiterate our support for the Secretary-General's calls to end violence everywhere, in war zones and at home.

Our national efforts and achievements in implementing the women and peace and security agenda over the past 20 years include the following.

The post of the Slovenian Minister of Defence has twice been occupied by a woman, and women have been appointed as heads of the General Staff of the Slovenian Armed Forces and of the Police. Slovenia also had the first woman to command a contingent of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

Currently, women constitute 33 per cent of employees in the Slovenian Police; female soldiers represent 17 per cent within the Slovenian Armed Forces; and 61 per cent of Slovenian Ministry for Foreign Affairs employees are women. Furthermore, 41 per cent of Slovenian Ministry for Foreign Affairs employees at the rank of Ambassador are women.

Slovenia has integrated the gender perspective into a number of national strategies, such as on national security and countering terrorism and violent extremism. We have adopted our second national action plan on women, peace and security, for the period 2018-2020, and established a centre for education and training for participation in peacekeeping operations and missions, which provides training on women and peace and security.

In November, the Slovenian Ministry of Defence, together with the Slovenian Peacekeeping Operations Training Centre, will host a virtual conference to mark the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). Together with Norway, we will host a meeting of experts on women and peace and security in January 2021.

We have been given the opportunity to build back better, and it is our responsibility to seize that opportunity. To preserve the hard-fought gains of the past 20 years and accelerate progress on achieving our commitments and goals, we need to act together, and we need to act now. Slovenia stands ready to do its part.

Annex 77

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Spain to the United Nations

[Original: Spanish]

Twenty years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), we still face enormous challenges in ensuring that women fully participate in all areas of society on an equal basis. Over those 20 years, we have seen a fundamental shift from considering women as victims of armed conflict, in particular sexual violence in conflict, to seeing them as essential actors in conflict prevention and resolution and post-conflict reconstruction. The path that we have already travelled should encourage us, but there is still work to be done in the coming years.

Spain is determined to fulfil its commitments to gender equality and the women and peace and security agenda, both at the national level and in the context of international multilateral initiatives. We are aware of the many difficulties in implementing the resolutions and the women and peace and security agenda in terms of security and women's participation in all stages of conflict and peacebuilding. But we cannot forget that there can be no sustainable peace without the participation of women, in all their diversity and without discrimination of any kind, both in its definition and agreement and in its implementation.

The number of women participating in peace processes and the commitment of the negotiating parties to women's participation clearly remain insufficient. We know for sure that in many countries of the world women are making significant efforts to lead their societies towards peace. Their voices show us that our action and support are even more pressing. Placing women's organizations and women peacemakers and mediators at the centre of decision-making must be a genuine and cross-cutting priority for all. That is what the Secretary-General's report (S/2020/946) on this issue points out, seeing that as one of the obstacles to the effective implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

That is the underlying reason that Spain is a member of the Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action Compact of the Generation Equality Forum. It is also the reason that, in 2015, Spain launched several international initiatives, including the Women and Peace and Security Focal Points Network. In 2019, together with Finland, we launched the Commitment 2025 initiative to ensure that the inclusion and meaningful participation of women in peace processes becomes a reality by 2025. Political, operational and financial commitments are directly linked to women's effective participation in peace processes. We must follow up on those ambitious commitments if we are to ensure that transformative and genuine change takes place in peacebuilding and negotiation processes.

In that conviction, together with Australia, Finland, Azerbaijan, Tunisia, Argentina and Iraq, Spain submitted at the Human Rights Council resolution A/HRC/45/28, entitled "Promoting and protecting the human rights of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)", which was adopted by consensus at the 45th session of the Human Rights Council.

Finally, we firmly believe that the women and peace and security and the Safe Schools agendas are closely linked. That is why Spain organized, in 2019, the third International Conference on Safe Schools, which addressed the gender impact of attacks on access to education, since girls and women are especially vulnerable to such attacks and their effects are particularly harsh and widespread over time.

We have made a joint effort to ensure women's participation in the area of conflict resolution. We strive to incorporate that agenda in each country so that

every woman can contribute with her voice and her ideas to building peace and rebuilding their societies wherever they live.

Annex 78**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations**

[Original: English and French]

I extend my congratulations. Twenty years ago, the Security Council made history by acknowledging that the increased representation of women at all levels of decision-making was essential to preventing, managing and resolving conflicts. By adopting resolution 1325 (2000), the Council responded to the calls of women's rights defenders, who continue to be crucial actors in any progress on women's rights.

Over the past two decades, significant progress has been made in empowering women and protecting their rights. Switzerland welcomes such developments and notes encouraging measures around the world. In Colombia, former female combatants engaged successfully with the authorities to include gender and reintegration commitments in development plans. In Mali, despite being severely underrepresented in the transitional Government, women leaders of all political persuasions play a key role in the pursuit of inclusive solutions. Finally, in the Sudan, women have assumed a central role and have worked tirelessly for peace in the ongoing political transition.

However, more needs to be done. The coronavirus disease pandemic has revealed the fragility of the progress made over the past two decades. As the Secretary-General pointed out in the report that forms the basis for today's discussion (S/2020/946), gender equality is at risk of reversal. The Council can, and must, do more to maintain the women and peace and security agenda across the various items on its agenda. This agenda is a key driver for change on the ground, and the Council is its most positive enabler. We need resolute action to increase women's meaningful participation and leadership in decision-making, combat sexual and gender-based violence and promote women peacebuilders and human rights defenders. Among the priorities for our collective action in the coming years, Switzerland emphasizes the following.

First, the Council should systematically address the issue of women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace and security, not only in its thematic work but also in all the country situation-related items on its agenda. The Security Council must take a strong position on the importance of recognizing, supporting and protecting women in their work in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and the promotion of respect for human rights. The inclusion of civil society is essential both in the Council and in implementation on the ground. In 2007, Switzerland was one of the first countries to adopt a national action plan to implement the women and peace and security agenda. Over time, we have learned the importance of inclusive and participatory processes to strengthen this agenda. Women's groups and civil society have played an important role in improving our national action plan. We even have a group of Swiss parliamentarians who act as ambassadors for the agenda. They are all partners who are closely involved in the implementation of the national action plan.

Secondly, the Council should use the tools at its disposal to strengthen measures to combat sexual violence. To end impunity, it should promote a culture of deterrence. Sexual violence is too often used as a weapon of war. The Council's decision to establish stand-alone designation criteria related to sexual violence in the sanctions regimes against the Central African Republic and South Sudan reflected a paradigm shift. The Council must use all the targeted measures at its disposal against recidivist perpetrators of sexual violence and ensure the protection of all survivors.

Thirdly, we need more women in peace operations. Switzerland, for example, encourages the participation of female police officers in United Nations missions and supports them during their recruitment, training, deployment and return. We know that diversity makes peacekeeping through civilian and military measures more effective, allowing better access to communities. We welcome the Council's unanimous adoption of resolution 2538 (2020), on the role of women in peacekeeping, in August. We also welcome the efforts of the United Nations to increase the number of women in peacekeeping missions, especially in leadership positions.

Next year, Switzerland will further strengthen its commitment by assuming the co-chairmanship of the Women and Peace and Security Focal Points Network. Switzerland will remain strongly committed to the women and peace and security agenda. It is our collective responsibility to always keep our shared vision alive, redouble our efforts and take concrete action to implement this ambitious but indispensable agenda.

Annex 79**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Thailand to the United Nations**

This is a significant year for women, and Thailand joins the international community in celebrating not one but two milestones, namely, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action and the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. Thailand welcomes this year's Security Council open debate's timely focus on reflecting on achievements and challenges in implementing resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent related resolutions over the past 20 years.

While the international community recognizes that women are effective agents of change in society and can contribute significantly to durable peace, their representative numbers in United Nations peace operations and in peace processes worldwide remain low at all levels.

The challenges in implementing the women and peace and security agenda will only be compounded by the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) global pandemic, where women and girls are being disproportionately affected. This year's annual report (S/2020/946) of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security reiterates the linkages between elements of the agenda and international peace and security and focuses, among other things, on the current and predicted setbacks with regard to the agenda, partly due to the effects of the pandemic.

Gender-responsive COVID-19 response and recovery must therefore form part of the full and effective implementation of the women and peace and security agenda beyond the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000). The effort will need to be mutually reinforcing of all the elements of gender equality from both the Sustainable Development Goals and the women and peace and security agenda.

Sustainable peace can be achieved only when there is an integrated and inclusive approach that incorporates development and human rights for all, including women. The empowerment of women and girls and gender equality are key elements in conflict prevention and the promotion of international peace and security.

On our part, Thailand has continued to increase the participation of women in peace and security. Thai women personnel continue to contribute positively to our peacekeeping missions. Their ability to access communities and build trust reflects their valuable skillset. We are pleased to have reached a high ratio of women peacekeepers to male peacekeepers. We will continue our work to further promote their participation at higher levels.

It is with our firm belief that, with political will and moral obligation, we can — and we will — narrow down that gap with the robust implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the women and peace and security agenda in a holistic manner.

Annex 80**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Timor-Leste to the United Nations**

Timor-Leste would like to congratulate the Russian Federation on its leadership as President of the Security Council for the month of October and to commend all its efforts in convening this important annual open debate. Timor-Leste also thanks the Secretary-General and the other briefers for all their insights.

Timor-Leste regards the role of women in peace and security and their involvement in decision-making at all levels in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts as being of paramount importance. As we commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), it is important to reflect on how far we have come with the implementation of that resolution and the impact that it has had on our daily life, particularly towards the advancement of women and their important role in the area of peace and security.

Timor-Leste is committed to its efforts on the empowerment and the advancement of women. The Constitution of Timor-Leste guarantees protection against discrimination based on gender and ensures equality of rights and obligations and the fact that men and women must be treated equally in all aspects of life. Timor-Leste is also a firm believer in the United Nations as a key multilateral organization and in the fundamental role of the Security Council in upholding international peace and security.

Since the restoration of our independence on 20 May 2002, Timor-Leste has made remarkable progress in the empowerment and the advancement of women. Timor-Leste has the highest proportion of women parliamentarians in the Asia-Pacific region. Timor-Leste's Law on the Elections of the National Parliament, as amended in 2011, established a quota that requires one out of every group of three candidates in political party lists to be filled by a woman. In 2016, the Government of Timor-Leste approved a national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, to include women in decision-making positions. Those positive developments have placed women at the core of policy and decision-making processes.

Recently, the Government of Timor-Leste approved a project against gender-based violence aimed at contributing to the prevention of gender-based violence and to the implementation and monitoring of legislation and policies on gender-based violence in public spaces, with special attention to women in the most vulnerable situation. The policy also aligns well with the spirit of article 7 of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

While the issue of women and peace and security has been on the Security Council agenda for the past 20 years, we continue to witness growing discrepancies and gaps between the rhetoric and the reality in terms of the implementation of the women and peace and security resolutions. That is despite the number of resolutions on women and peace and security, as well as the normative frameworks, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Beijing Platform for Action, which guide us on the advancement of gender equality. It is regrettable that, despite the countless commitments that we have made as Member States over the past 20 years, war, violence and instability continue to exist and ravage humankind in many parts of the world and women, children, the elderly and the most vulnerable continue to be disproportionately affected.

That should serve as a call to attention on all of us as Member States to work together to ensure that the Security Council can effectively exercise its fundamental

role in upholding international peace and security, particularly in promoting and protecting the rights of women and the most vulnerable.

Our experiences have also taught us that exclusion greatly contributes to conflict and the violation of basic human rights should be an early warning. Hence Timor-Leste would like to announce its endorsement of the Safe Schools Declaration to ensure safe education for women and girls. Timor-Leste is committed to ensuring the promotion of peaceful, just and inclusive societies, where women are able to reach their full potential by having their voices heard and being part of decision-making at all levels, as well as living a productive life, free of violence.

Annex 81**Statement by the First Deputy Foreign Minister of Ukraine, Emine Dzheppar**

We commend the Security Council for holding this important debate and thank Secretary-General António Guterres (annex 1), Under-Secretary-General Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and the other speakers for their briefings.

Ukraine aligns itself with the statements submitted by the European Union (annex 38) and by the Group of Friends of resolution 1325 (2000) (annex 27).

As a State that participated in the drafting and the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) during its membership of the Security Council in 2000-2001, Ukraine has committed to promoting the women and peace and security agenda. For us, this issue gained new importance after 2014 with the beginning of an armed aggression against my country.

Today's anniversary provides us with a good opportunity to consider future steps to better implement the women and peace and security agenda. Maintaining and seeking the avenues for strengthening our commitments, enshrined in resolution 1325 (2000) and other pertinent documents, will be the centrepiece of our efforts to that end.

Against the backdrop of crimes committed by the Russian occupation forces and their proxies in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, the conflict-related provisions of resolution 1325 (2000) gain special significance for our country.

We are convinced that a commemorative recommitment throughout the women and peace and security agenda should be developed into an action-oriented follow-up, in particular with regard to the calls on all parties to armed conflict to respect international law applicable to the rights and protection of women and girls and take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, as well as to the need to exclude the crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes from amnesty provisions.

Women and girls remain among the most vulnerable groups in the occupied Donbas. Those whom the occupation forces suspect of supporting Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity face intimidation, detention and ill-treatment, as well as physical and sexual violence. The occupied territories have become a home for discriminative cultural practices, cherishing gender inequality.

Oppressive policies against Crimean Tatar women, in particular activists, lawyers and those whose relatives have been illegally detained, constitute another dire consequence of the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

Nevertheless, Ukraine remains committed to the four pillars of resolution 1325 (2000), aimed at ensuring the equal participation of women in the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, providing protection for women during and after conflicts and giving them an important role in conflict prevention, as well as addressing gender-specific needs in delivering humanitarian aid and relief.

We continue to implement resolution 1325 (2000) in accordance with the national action plan for the period from 2021 to 2025, which was adopted just on the eve of this meeting. The national action plan is aimed, inter alia, at achieving the greater participation of women in decision-making, in particular in the areas of national security and defence, and peacemaking, as well as ensuring the protection of women and girls, including the prevention of and response to conflict and gender-based violence.

Ukraine continues to work on ensuring an equal gender approach and guaranteeing the proper conditions for all women serving their country in the armed forces. The active integration of gender equality into the activities of the Armed Forces of Ukraine fostered changes to the list of military specialties and positions open to women candidates. It speaks volumes that the number of women serving in the Ukrainian army has been increased by more than 15 times since 2008, from 1,800 to 29,760, with 900 of them being senior officers. Women are also among the peacekeepers who represent Ukraine in six peacekeeping operations throughout the globe.

Commemorating the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), Ukraine reiterates its commitment to continuing efforts aimed at promoting the women and peace and security agenda and strengthening its implementation, at both the national and the international levels, including within the United Nations.

Annex 82

Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations, Lana Nusseibeh

The United Arab Emirates thanks the Russian Federation for convening this year's annual open debate on women and peace and security, which continues to be one of our priority topics. We thank the Secretary-General for his recent report (S/2020/946) on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

We are observing the twentieth anniversary of the landmark resolution 1325 (2000) today under exceptional circumstances as the world is currently unified in halting the spread and overcoming the consequences of the global coronavirus disease pandemic. These past months have once again demonstrated the detrimental effects of crises on women and girls worldwide, at the same time highlighting how crucial their positive contributions in such contexts are, as they make up the majority of front-line workers.

Over the past two decades, the women and peace and security agenda has been pivotal in recognizing the disproportionate effects of conflicts on women and girls, but it has particularly contributed to their recognition as active agents and the meaningful role that they play when it comes to conflict prevention and resolution and post-conflict recovery processes.

While it is our duty to protect the progress made and to ensure that gains will not be lost and inequalities further deepened, the advancement of the women and peace and security agenda is a key priority for the United Arab Emirates and will remain as such during its recently announced candidacy for an elected seat on the Security Council for the 2022-2023 term, with its focus on the full and effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and the subsequent nine resolutions.

The United Arab Emirates firmly believes that women's active engagement is a peace and security imperative, and 20 years after the inception of the women and peace and security agenda, we can no longer allow for women and women's issues to be sidelined. As we strongly believe that multilateral efforts are essential to achieving this goal, the United Arab Emirates and the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security will launch, as a result of our panel series on the role of women in post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding throughout the past year, a United Nations action plan that will outline concrete priority actions and reforms, encouraging Member States and United Nations agencies to introduce and extend measures that ensure post-conflict activities are gender-mainstreamed.

The number and influence of women uniformed personnel are an essential part of building sustainable peace, yet numbers of female peacekeepers remain persistently low. Through the Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak Women, Peace and Security Initiative, the United Arab Emirates, in cooperation with UN-Women, has enabled the successful graduation of over 300 women from Asia, Africa and the Middle East to facilitate their effective contribution to peacekeeping, conflict resolution and all aspects of building peace. The third round of trainings will commence next year. Through this, the United Arab Emirates anticipates contributing to closing the gaps related to gender-responsive security sector reform and therefore calls on all Member States to identify and address barriers that women peacekeepers face.

While the focus on promoting women's participation is essential, we cannot dismiss the fact that the number of cases of sexual and gender-based violence remains unwaveringly high and continues to increase. The United Arab Emirates strongly condemns these crimes, as they pose a serious threat to peace and security, and holding perpetrators accountable is a critical component of preventing and deterring

these crimes. Funding allocated to sexual and gender-based violence is still far from covering the actual needs and the United Arab Emirates continues to contribute to international efforts in this regard. Only last month, as a follow-up to last year's Oslo conference, the United Arab Emirates reiterated its support through additional financial contributions to the Gender Standby Capacity and Protection Standby Capacity Projects, as well as to Nadia's Initiative. We call on all Member States to ensure their foreign aid specifically targets such indispensable programmes and to closely work together with United Nations entities and other organizations with a view to ending sexual and gender-based violence.

It is without question that, for our shared ambition in preventing conflicts and achieving safer and more peaceful societies, we must deliver on the commitments made since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). The United Arab Emirates will remain a committed partner, together with other Member States, United Nations agencies and civil society, to facilitate enabling environments for women and girls, in all parts of the world, for them to realize their full, equal and meaningful participation.

Annex 83**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Uruguay to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

Uruguay thanks the Russian Federation for convening this open debate during this extremely meaningful year, marking the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

To make progress in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, we must first strengthen the rights of women and girls, eliminating structural obstacles that impede their equal participation in society. Empowered women are formidable agents of change, essential to achieving sustainable peace and development.

Education plays a crucial role in the political, social and economic empowerment of women, equipping them to overcome discrimination and violence, to defend their rights and freely take decisions, making them architects of their own destinies and protagonists of peace. Uruguay underscores the importance of the Safe Schools Declaration to protecting the education of women and girls, especially in conflict settings, and encourages more Member States to join it.

States have the responsibility to ensure that the rights of women are protected and to facilitate the participation of women in decision-making and conflict mediation, in prevention and resolution processes and in peacekeeping activities, as articulated in resolution 1325 (2000). Women's skill in rapprochement, negotiation, understanding and empathy has been amply demonstrated.

Uruguay supports the presence of women in peace operations and has continuously improved the quantity and quality of such participation, deploying, in this regard, military observers to monitor ceasefires, disarmament and access to humanitarian assistance. Uruguayan women contingents have participated in operational units negotiating with armed groups and carried out prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence and human rights violations. Such activities have confirmed the unique capacities of women in interacting with local communities and fostering trust, especially in dealing with situations involving the most vulnerable.

At the domestic level, the Government of Uruguay has implemented national policies to make the armed forces and police more accessible to women and to facilitate their integration into peacekeeping operations. Despite the challenges posed by the fight against the pandemic, Uruguay has been able to complete its national action plan, which will include targets relating to the training and deployment of women in such operations and their contribution to the protection of civilians.

At the same time, Uruguay is supporting and developing strategies, in coordination with the United Nations and other Member States, such as the Elsie Initiative, promoted by Canada, under which Uruguay has conducted a study on barriers to the deployment of women and to their capacity development for such operations.

It is clearly more crucial than ever to unite the efforts of States, the United Nations, regional and subregional organizations and civil society to step up the long-awaited and necessary implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, especially in the current circumstances, beset by new challenges from the coronavirus disease pandemic, which threatens to undermine progress to date.

The Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network is another example of effective cooperation. Uruguay is co-Chair of the Network, together with Canada. The co-chairmanship began last December with a workshop held in Montevideo on opportunities for the women and peace and security agenda in the Americas, which brought together representatives of 17 countries of the region. That workshop allowed for the deeper application of the agenda to the regional context and to the specific security issues impacting the Americas. Other activities have been organized throughout the year, focused on implementing the agenda during the pandemic, supporting and protecting women peacebuilders, promoting national action plans, the importance of intergenerational dialogue, and leadership and targeted action to realize the agenda.

In conclusion, Uruguay recognizes the invaluable contribution of civil society to upholding the rights of women and therefore calls for the protection of women human rights defenders and peacebuilders and an end to threats against them and their persecution.

Since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the women and peace security agenda has garnered significant normative strength. The time has come for its implementation. Uruguay reiterates its commitment to this agenda and will continue working tirelessly, together with the United Nations, other Member States and civil society, to realize its full and effective implementation.
