



Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

8649th meeting
Monday, 4 November 2019, 3 p.m.
New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Ms. Pierce/Mr. Allen/Mr. Clay	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	Belgium	Mr. Bogaert
	China	Mr. Cheng Lie
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Fiegolo
	Dominican Republic	Mr. Trullols Yabra
	Equatorial Guinea	Mrs. Mbana Makina
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Germany	Ms. Siegmann
	Indonesia	Ms. Handaruningrum
	Kuwait	Ms. Alzouman
	Peru	Ms. Rodríguez
	Poland	Ms. Ruminowicz
	Russian Federation	Mr. Kuzmin
	South Africa	Mr. Davies
	United States of America	Ms. Olsen

Agenda

Women and peace and security

Towards the successful implementation of the women, peace and security agenda: moving from commitments to accomplishments in preparation for the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)

Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2019/800)

Letter dated 8 October 2019 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2019/801)

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The meeting resumed at 3 p.m. on 4 November.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Women and peace and security

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The President: I would like to ask all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable everyone who has asked to speak to be able to do so. As members know, this is a continuation of the debate held under the South African presidency. We have only this afternoon to continue it, and we need to finish by 6 p.m. We have divided 180 minutes by 42 speakers, which allows for speaking time of four minutes each. I would ask colleagues to keep to that time limit. I am afraid I will interrupt in the interest of giving everyone a chance to speak. Delegations with long statements are of course very welcome to circulate them in the Chamber. The red light on the microphone will begin to flash after four minutes. I would invite those sitting behind colleagues who are speaking to keep an eye out for that.

I now give the floor to the representative of Slovakia.

Mr. Mlynár (Slovakia): I will refrain from offering congratulations but you know, Madam President, that we are very happy to see you preside over the Security Council. You can be assured of our full support.

We fully associate ourselves with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union.

Resolution 1325 (2000), along with the subsequent women and peace and security resolutions, affirms the Security Council's responsibility and commitment to strengthening women's meaningful participation,

protection and rights across the span of the conflict cycle. In the past almost two decades, this discourse has shifted significantly. By abandoning the perception of women as victims, the international community has recognized their crucial role as first responders, agents of change and rebuilders of shattered communities. The root causes of women's chronic under-representation in peace talks, and, broadly, in the security sector, include discriminatory laws and practices, institutional obstacles, gender stereotyping and the existence of predominantly masculine structures within the system. Many positive developments in addressing those issues have been achieved.

The Secretary-General's report (S/2019/800) demonstrates that, despite many efforts, a significant amount of work remains to be done. We have to focus on cultivating women's leadership and on working with local actors, which is critical for ensuring a place for women's voices at the peace table. That is also why the shrinking space for women's non-governmental organizations, grass root activists and human rights defenders is such a worrisome trend.

Women remain the target of sexual and gender-based violence. Throughout history, rape has become a tool to punish, terrorize and destroy populations. Sexual violence serves as a weapon in some cases, while in others it is a form of reward. During periods of genocide and ethnic cleansing, sexual violence has been used to systematically attack the lineage of a group — for example, by impregnating or sterilizing women. Major General Patrick Cammaert, former Force Commander of United Nations peacekeeping forces in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, once said that

“[i]t has probably become more dangerous to be a woman than a soldier in armed conflict”.

I would like to emphasize that the protection of women from gender-based violence is inseparable from women's meaningful participation, bodily autonomy and rights. Accountability for violations of fundamental human rights and violent crimes is also necessary to end the reign of impunity, ensure the rule of law and prevent relapse into conflict.

The preparations for the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) are timely, as an opportunity for a national review of the efforts towards the full implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. Let me briefly mention our own national action plan, which is currently being prepared. The

process culminated after extensive collaboration with and within the various ministries, in partnership with the relevant stakeholders. The core aim is to make the national action plan actionable and promote accountability for its implementation through a rigorous system of indicators.

Slovakia also supports gender parity and the United Nations effort to increase the number of women peacekeepers in missions. After conducting the thirty-eighth rotation in the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, Slovakia has exceeded the required United Nations goal for 2019 of 5.25 per cent women serving in military contingents; currently almost 11 per cent of the personnel of the Slovak contingent are women peacekeepers.

The increasingly complex and fractured contexts reflecting the present security challenges require more coherent action across the peace, humanitarian and development nexus, including by providing support to women acting as first responders. In our foreign policy strategies, we aim to increasingly foster those links and mainstream gender in a more systematic way. To illustrate, we fund humanitarian projects with a focus on women affected by conflict, including access to critical health care, in Syria and neighbouring countries.

In conclusion, I would like to once again assure you, Madam President, of Slovakia's strong commitment to the full, effective and meaningful participation of women in United Nations peace operations and peace processes.

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

Mr. Ochoa Martínez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, we would like to thank South Africa for convening this debate on the issue of women and peace and security. We also thank the United Kingdom for continuing it and enabling delegations inscribed on the list of speakers to deliver statements on a crucial subject. We congratulate South Africa on its very successful presidency and wish the United Kingdom an equally productive one.

My Government's foreign policy has been openly declared a feminist policy. Mexico's Congress features equal representation for women and men, while our presidential Cabinet is equally balanced. Almost 20 years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), we acknowledge the progress made in incorporating the

gender dimension into the work of the Security Council. However, major discrepancies remain between rhetoric and reality. It is inconceivable that in 2019 divisions with regard to women's rights and gender equality remain. For Mexico, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are essential, not only for achieving international peace and security but also for achieving sustainable development.

Next year, we will mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action. Against that backdrop, Mexico and France, with the support of UN-Women, will sponsor the Generation Equality Forum — a civil society-led process aimed at reviewing the progress made by the Platform for Action, identify gaps in its implementation and speed up the pace towards substantive equality. Forty-five years will also have elapsed since the first World Conference on Women, held in Mexico under the auspices of the United Nations in 1975.

Neither the United Nations as a whole nor the Security Council itself can forgo the participation of women in conflict prevention or conflict resolution. As key pillars in all societies and communities, their right to equal participation in power structures of the decision-making process at all levels must be guaranteed. In that regard, we welcome the inclusion of approximately 30 per cent women in the meetings of the Syrian Constitutional Committee, whose work began in Geneva on 30 October. We believe that their participation will play a key role in the peace process, as has already occurred in other processes.

In times of armed conflict, it is unquestionable that women and girls are afflicted disproportionately by many types of violence and at greater risk of exploitation, abuse and sexual violence. This is a reflection of the asymmetric power relations that continue between women and men today. Such forms of violence are even more outrageous when attributed to United Nations officials. We therefore fully endorse the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy aimed at eradicating sexual exploitation and abuse in the Organization's missions.

Ensuring access to justice and that perpetrators are punished are essential for the prevention of such crimes. Such access must include effective victim-centred care that meets their biopsychosocial needs and, in a clear and committed way, to their needs related to their sexual and reproductive health. In that

regard, while we welcome the unanimous adoption of resolution 2493 (2019), we would have preferred more progressive language.

Mexico recognizes the leadership of civil society organizations, and especially women human rights defenders, who risk their lives in promoting peace and security in their communities and still face unacceptable misogynistic and sexist narratives, which have driven an increase in violence against them.

We thank the Secretary-General for his latest report (S/2019/800) on this subject. Accountability, financing, work with civil society, conflict analysis with a gender perspective, the appointment of women mediators and negotiators in peace processes and the ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty are crucial steps in the implementation of the resolution.

Mexico promotes the participation of women in peacekeeping operations. Women now account for 15 per cent of contingents. This is obviously not enough. We want to make further progress and have plans for doing so. We hope to participate actively in the Elsie Initiative Fund, promoted by the Canadian Government and UN-Women.

Gender equality is one of the priority issues that my country, if elected to the Security Council, will promote during its membership during the period 2021 to 2022. Women's rights are non-negotiable human rights, and their full realization is an essential precondition for sustainable development in a peaceful world.

The President: I must ask that speakers respect the time limit of four minutes per statement. I will have to interrupt. Otherwise, I am afraid, not everyone, all 42 on the list, will be able to speak.

I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya.

Mr. Amayo (Kenya): I commend South Africa for this initiative and the United Kingdom for further continuing this important discussion to reflect on the achievements and challenges in implementing resolution 1325 (2000) and its subsequent related resolutions in the lead-up to the former's twentieth anniversary. There are still important gaps that need to be addressed, in particular those between rhetoric and actual political and financial investments.

Kenya aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the African Union and UN-Women during 29 October. We also look forward to the Peacebuilding

Commission briefing the Security Council on this important agenda item.

Kenya also takes this opportunity to commend the Security Council for its sustained engagement over the past 19 years on the women and peace and security agenda. We fully subscribe to the theme for this meeting, which calls on all of us positively to move from mere rhetoric to actual accomplishments towards the successful implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

It was a great honour for Kenya to host the first-ever African Women Leaders Network Intergenerational Retreat on Leadership in Africa, held in Nairobi from 16 to 19 August, organized by the African Union, specifically the African Women Leaders Network, and the Office of the African Union Youth Envoy.

Through the various interventions and many reports, including that of the Secretary-General, we have heard of the persistent challenges that continue to inhibit the full implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. Despite that, it is particularly important to recognize that, although the process has been slow, many countries and regional organizations are dedicated and committed on delivering on this groundbreaking resolution.

Beyond reaffirming the significant role of women in the peace and security agenda, we Member States and the United Nations system need to demonstrate support and invest in this agenda, including its linkages to sustainable peace and sustainable development.

Kenya has just finalized the implementation of the first national action plan on resolution 1325 (2000) and is currently drafting the second edition based on the experiences gained and lessons learned from 2016 to 2018. Our mantra continues to be, in Kiswahili, "*Kuhusisha Wanawake ni Kudumisha Amani*", which means "to involve women is to sustain peace". Kenya is proud to be one of the many African countries to have developed a national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), and among the 42 per cent of countries around the world having such a plan.

Our own assessment of implementation phase noted that the national action plan has resulted in more gender-responsive language and messaging among leaders and law enforcement personnel when it comes to matters pertaining to women and peace and security, including women and girl survivors of sexual and gender-based

violence. We also learned the importance of inclusivity in the development and implementation of the national action plan. The women and peace and security agenda must be a whole-of-society enterprise and not just left to women. Partnership with the private sector and civil society has also proved critical in moving this agenda forward. For example, Kenya has endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration to ensure safe education for our women and girls.

In conclusion, we have also noted that it is important to build trust, identify champions, localize national action plans, including in the allocation of resources both locally and through all relevant ministries, and strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

Monsignor Charters (Holy See): My delegation would like to thank the presidency of the United Kingdom for reconvening this important open debate on women and peace and security.

Next year will mark the twentieth anniversary of the landmark resolution 1325 (2000). Progress has been made during the years since its adoption. Women's voices are increasingly heard and, in many places, more space is being given to their unique contributions in the pursuit of peace and reconciliation. However, much remains to be done to increase women's representation in this important area. Pope Francis recently commented on the great differences that still mark the condition of women in the world, which flow mainly from sociocultural factors.

In situations of conflict, women, who are seldom the cause or the perpetrators of violence, are often the first to be victimized. They bear the brunt of the negative effects of conflict. This has a detrimental effect on their health and well-being and that of those in their care. They also find themselves frequently excluded from the conversations and programmes that seek to work out solutions that serve the cause of lasting peace.

We know of the impact of armed conflict on women and girls. Sadly, our attention is all too often drawn to the problem of sexual violence used as a weapon of war. This must be, at all times and in all places, firmly condemned. More effective efforts must be made to ensure that such heinous crimes are not committed. Perpetrators must be brought to justice. Widespread impunity for such actions, as is still the

case in situations of conflict, must be addressed if such crimes are to decrease.

In situations of conflict and tension around the world, however, we must never forget that women are not only victims; women also have an essential and irreplaceable role as protagonists in the promotion of peace and reconciliation at the grass-roots level, especially within the family and local community. Their uniquely feminine sense for the pulse of difficult situations makes them capable of expressing the concerns and aspirations of those communities. It also is important that their irreplaceable genius and expertise be harnessed in national, regional and international decision-making. To exclude the full participation of women at every stage and in every aspect of the peace processes would be to fail on the commitments made since resolution 1325 (2000) was adopted. In that regard, the Holy See takes note of the decision to make United Nations peacekeeping operations more sensitive to the needs of women and girls, both to ensure the protection of those who find themselves in situations of conflict as well as to facilitate the presence of uniformed women within peacekeeping missions.

It has been 40 years since Mother Teresa of Calcutta won the Nobel Prize for Peace. She was known for her selfless work and for her tireless commitment to the poorest of the poor, the abandoned, the unborn, the dying and others whom society leaves behind today. Each day, often in very hidden and humble ways, all around the world, thousands of Catholic women religious work to promote the dignity and advancement of women and girls — an important, albeit unsung, element of building and maintaining peaceful societies. The work of the women in those religious institutes also answers the needs and challenges of the horror of human trafficking and the other abuses that women, men, boys and girls endure. Amid very complex and tragic situations, these women of peace and solidarity, inside and outside of situations of conflict, race to assist those who suffer the consequences of wars and underdevelopment and serve as an example to the entire international community of grappling with the root causes of conflict and inequality.

In fulfilling its critical responsibility to promote and maintain international peace and security, the Security Council must ensure that the women and peace and security agenda receives more than verbal commitments, and that policies and programmes are founded and implemented at all levels so as to foster the

incorporation of women into peace processes, and thus bring about deeper, more profound and lasting results for the good of all.

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

Mrs. Chatardová (Czech Republic): We align ourselves with the statements delivered by the observer of the European Union and on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

Let me start by commending South Africa for the apt choice of the full and effective implementation of the women and peace and security agenda as the theme for today's debate. Taking the step from general proclamations to the practical everyday implementation of the women and peace and security agenda abroad as well as in our own countries is crucial to achieving a real-life change.

The Czech Republic is currently working on our second national action plan for the years 2021 to 2025. In the process, we are building on accomplishments of the first national action plan. For example, in 2018, 37 per cent of our military personnel deployed in United Nations peacekeeping missions were women. On the other hand, we are also keeping in mind the lessons learned from the implementation of the first national action plan. That is why we pledged to include specific targets and indicators in the new impact-driven national action plan to strengthen accountability and monitoring of progress. The accomplishment of the women and peace and security agenda remains one of my country's priorities.

Furthermore, we would also like to sincerely thank today's briefers for sharing their insights and the Secretary-General for his latest report on women and peace and security (S/2019/800). Both serve as a timely reminder that, with the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) fast approaching, serious gaps remain in its implementation. The report includes two especially worrisome findings.

First, we share the concern about the record-high levels of political violence targeting women with killings and assaults, sexual violence, harassment, abductions and forced disappearances. The physical security of women politicians, civic leaders and human rights defenders is crucial for their full and meaningful participation in political processes, and therefore also

for progress of the women and peace and security agenda as a whole.

Secondly, the report concludes that, out of nearly 132 million people in need of humanitarian aid and protection, an estimated 35 million women and girls require life-saving sexual and reproductive health services and interventions to prevent gender-based violence and respond to the needs of survivors. Sexual and reproductive health and rights are at the core of the women and peace and security protection dimension, and therefore have to be translated into concrete actions on the ground.

In conclusion, we would like to once again urge all States that have not yet done so to join us and the more than 80 other Member States in adopting and acting upon their national action plans on women and peace and security. The time to act is now.

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

Mrs. González López (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): El Salvador thanks the South African delegation for its presidency of the Security Council during the month of October and the delegation of the United Kingdom for its presidency during the month of November for convening this open debate.

My delegation endorses and associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Canada on 29 October on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, of which we are a member.

I stress my country's commitment to the development and implementation of this agenda. I reaffirm our conviction that women are active agents of peace and key players in the prevention of conflicts and in the search for effective and efficient responses to current crises.

Resolution 1325 (2000) calls for the full participation of women in peace processes so that they can contribute significantly to the maintenance and consolidation of international peace and security. As one of the lessons learned from our peace process, we are convinced that, in order to achieve truly meaningful participation by women, we must go beyond the simple presence of women and young women in peace processes. Not only must their presence be assured, but their voices must be heard and their suggestions included. That is the only way to make peace processes transformative, inclusive and sustainable.

El Salvador has developed a national action plan on women and peace and security for the years 2017 to 2022, thereby reflecting our readiness to fulfil our commitments and define objectives in accordance with the provisions of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions. The plan highlights the role of women in different social spheres, especially in the consolidation of peace and human security. It also seeks to integrate a gender perspective into El Salvador's participation in peacekeeping operations through gender training for members of the security forces and measures to increase the representation of women in national and international security.

As a result of the change in our Government's leadership and in consideration of current efforts to combat violence and insecurity, we will conduct an inclusive dialogue process to update our national action plan, through which we hope to intensify efforts to create a more democratic society.

We believe it is important to create more spaces at the United Nations for countries that have an action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) to share their experiences and lessons learned, which will allow us to not only learn what other States have done to that end but also to establish cooperation initiatives to help promote the women and peace and security agenda at the regional and international levels.

El Salvador has a historic commitment to peacekeeping operations and has this year increased by 40 per cent the participation of women from our armed forces and national civilian police. Those women have specialized training in piloting and crewing helicopters, institutional strengthening, health activities as specialized doctors, to name but a few areas. Recently, we also deployed our very first female military observer, to the South Sudan mission. We welcome the creation of different mechanisms to continue increasing the participation of women in peacekeeping operations. In that regard, we welcome the innovative leadership of the Canadian Government's Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations.

With regard to the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/800), we wish to highlight the progress made in advancing the women and peace and security agenda. However, we are very concerned about the increase in sexual and gender-based violence, the exclusion of women from political and mediation

processes, as well as the number of attacks against women peacekeepers.

Our full statement will be made available online.

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

Mr. Prasad (Fiji): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this resumed debate.

The Secretary-General calls for bold and urgent action in his report (S/2019/800). He has also reminds Member States that commitments have not been matched by action. In his briefing to the Security Council on 29 October, the Secretary-General noted alarming increases in political violence targeting women in conflict-affected zones. He reported an alarming increase in conflict-related sexual violence. The Secretary-General reminded us that deep-seated inequalities meant that women are far less likely to access education, health and economic opportunities than men in conflict-affected areas. The rhetoric and implementation gap is heart-wrenching. The Secretary-General's report confirms that we are facing a growing implementation deficit, the United Nations is facing a trust deficit and both of those trends are fuelling cynicism in our commitment to the women and peace and security agenda. We shall ignore them at our own peril.

There is one aspect of the United Nations women and peace and security agenda related to United Nations peacekeeping that I want to especially highlight. More and more of the peacekeeping interventions are in areas exposed to the climate crisis, whereas more and more conflicts are triggered or intensified by it. Water stress, desertification, depletion of food resources and extreme weather events all fuel and intensify conflict. The Pacific Islands Forum's Boe Declaration of 2018 recognized climate change as the single greatest threat faced by our people and countries — a perspective increasingly shared by many other countries.

Globally, we know that the vast majority of the United Nations peacekeeping operations today, its political missions and its policing missions are in regions severely affected by the climate crisis. One or another expression of the crisis may have fuelled or contributed to a worsening of the levels of conflict. The women and peace and security framework will increasingly need to be a climate crisis-informed one. It is not so today. Food is weaponized in conflicts, water is weaponized

in conflicts, health and education are weaponized in conflicts and gender is weaponized in conflicts. All of those affect women harshly, severely and with greater brutality. United Nations peace operations and the Organizations political interventions in conflict zones will increasingly need to respond to that. There are still far too many steps to take.

The need for the equal participation of women in peace processes, mediation, conflict resolution and peacebuilding cannot be overstated. Peace is more likely to survive stresses if women are centre-stage. We also know that fragile regions are likely to return to conflict and that women suffer disproportionately when they do. When women are brought into the heart of peacebuilding, we find far better integration of humanitarian, development and security interventions. The result is the durability of peace. The chances of sliding back into conflict are reduced as a result. Remarkably, men benefit a lot more when security is returned.

The United Nations is also paying more attention to the role of women in United Nations policing. United Nations policing — this week especially — is already playing important roles in mediating climate-induced conflicts, such as around livestock grazing rights and access to water. That role will only become more pronounced. The increased participation of women in policing is a very important part of the solution, but it is only a starting point. Fiji is proud that women make up over 40 per cent of Fijian police officers deployed in United Nations policing operations today in South Sudan and Darfur. We are close to achieving the 18 per cent target for women in all United Nations peace operations. Those commitments respond to the women and peace and security agenda as well as the Action for Peacekeeping initiative. Far more important, however, they respond to our own insights derived from 40 years of peacekeeping. Women peacekeepers are better at diffusing tensions and identifying early signs of conflict-related sexual violence. Women are always more insightful in identifying early-warning conflict stressors.

The full version of our statement will be circulated promptly.

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

Mr. Hilale (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to thank you, Madam President,

for resuming this open debate on such an important issue as the women and peace and security agenda. I would also like to thank the briefers for their testimony and the important elements provided.

Today's debate is highly symbolic, as it 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 between the announced commitments on gender mainstreaming — in peacekeeping, conflict resolution and prevention — and concrete implementation on the ground due to the multiple hurdles that have developed over the decades. That raises the question of the reasons, which are innumerable and multidimensional, that explain the persistent distance between the stated objectives on the one hand and their implementation on the other. In response to that question, let me highlight a few points.

First, decisive action is needed to prevent conflicts and avoid crises. Conflict prevention is a central pillar of the women and peace and security agenda, but also of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is not just about ending war and violence; the aim is to address the root causes, predictive factors and warning signs of conflict, and to systematically integrate a gender approach into peace processes. Secondly, gender equality must be promoted and the rights of women and girls, which are essential for international peace and security, must be respected. Thirdly, there is a need to fight impunity and strengthen access to justice for victims of sexual violence. Fourthly, a gender perspective must be included in the United Nations architecture for sustainability and peacebuilding.

In order to promote the women and peace and security agenda in accordance with resolution 1325 (2000), the Kingdom of Morocco has launched and actively participates in a significant number of initiatives, including the network of focal points on the theme of women and peace and security, the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, the FemWise-Africa network and the Arab Women Mediators Network, as well as the Global Alliance of Women Mediator Networks. Moreover, Morocco organized an international conference on the theme of women, peace, security and development under resolution 1325 (2000), which examined the issues of the role of women in mediation, conflict prevention and the issue of deradicalization.

In addition, Morocco also organized the training of imams and preachers from several African, European and Arab countries, to give guidelines on the true, peaceful principles of religion, based on tolerance and acceptance of others.

Moroccan female personnel are regularly deployed within Royal Armed Forces contingents. Currently, 37 Moroccan women are deployed in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is important to note that the number of women deployed by the end of 2017 stood at only eight, whereas in 2016 there were none. The rapid deployment force in the Democratic Republic of the Congo today includes a specific unit made up of female personnel. Similarly, Morocco has achieved the 15 per cent of mission experts and military observers target in that category. Morocco also deploys female military observers in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan.

In the context of child protection and conflict prevention, the Kingdom of Morocco recently acceded to the Safe Schools Declaration and the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers.

Finally, I am pleased to announce that the Kingdom of Morocco is at advanced stage of developing its national action Plan on women and peace and security for the period 2020 to 2022, as part of an inclusive process involving all relevant ministerial departments, representatives of civil society and United Nations agencies, including UN-Women.

The President: I suggest to colleagues that they go straight into the substance of their statements. Neither South Africa nor we will mind if they do not pay thanks and tribute to us, as nice as that is.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Croatia.

Mr. Dogan (Croatia): With all protocols observed, Croatia aligns itself with the statements delivered by the observer of the European Union and by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security. I take this opportunity to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

Owing to the specific experience of having undergone war and post-conflict recovery in the 1990s, Croatia can attest that women not only bear a disproportionate burden during a conflict but that they also have an indispensable role to play in ending wars, peacebuilding and post-conflict management.

At the national level, Croatia has taken steps to promote women's participation and leadership and to ensure that the guiding principles of the women and peace and security agenda are integrated into our national policies and practice through the national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The plan's implementation contributed to increased participation and leadership by women in the national security forces and in international missions and operations. Croatia currently exceeds United Nations recommendations on women's participation in peacekeeping operations, having deployed contingents consisting of almost 20 per cent women. In addition, Croatia contributes to the active implementation of the women and peace and security agenda through the implementation of a United Nations integrated international course for foreign women police officers. Furthermore, Croatia has adopted the 2015 Law on the Rights of Victims of Sexual Violence in the Homeland War, providing victims with support, recognition and compensation, which is considered a State responsibility even if the perpetrators are never found or brought to justice.

On the eve of observing the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), we see an opportunity to reflect on what has been achieved and what still needs to be done. As the Secretary-General's newest report makes clear (S/2019/800), we still live in a world where women are excluded from peace and political processes, while grave abuses and violence against women and girls, including sexual violence, continue. Protecting women in armed conflict, in parallel with enhancing their contribution to peace processes and the rebuilding of their communities, remains a crucial challenge.

We strongly believe that the prevention of widespread or systematic sexual and gender-based violence begins in times of peace, when national laws should prevent permissive attitudes in wartime. General recommendation No. 30 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women states that protecting women's human rights at all times, advancing substantive gender equality before, during and after conflict and ensuring that women's diverse

experiences are fully integrated into all peacebuilding, peacemaking and reconstruction processes should be important objectives for all countries. Therefore, we need to improve cooperation, as well as coordination between the women and peace and security agenda and various United Nations mandate holders, including special procedures dealing with the protection and empowerment of women.

In conclusion, I take this opportunity to draw participant's attention to the powerful monument overlooking the East River, which, in addition to being the tallest on the grounds of the United Nations, epitomizes the essence of our women and peace and security agenda. It represents a woman riding a horse, with an olive branch in one hand and a globe in the other, leading peoples of the world towards peace. We have to join forces — civil society and Member States, women and men — to follow her symbolic lead.

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

Ms. Quiel Murcia (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Let me begin by welcoming South Africa's leadership in convening this timely debate, as well as the readiness of the presidency of the United Kingdom to conclude it.

Nearly two decades since the unanimous adoption of landmark resolution 1325 (2000), we have certainly made significant progress in the participation of women and girls, but that progress is still uneven and remaining challenges are not inconsequential. Systematic violence against women and girls continues to disproportionately violate their most basic rights, placing them at a disadvantage and leaving them behind. In the face of that situation, States and society in general cannot be lax, let alone indifferent. We welcome the recommendations contained in the Secretary's report (S/2019/800) and his call for concrete measures to bring about genuine changes.

The unavoidable link between the women and peace and security agenda and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires the participatory role and leadership of women be enhanced as a basis for peacebuilding and conflict prevention. The ever-increasing number of social conflicts requires women's participation in particular because maintaining spaces for women's voices is essential to strengthen and keep open the channels of any democratic process. The scope of the development to which we aspire enshrines inclusion and equality as fundamental

values of the process. That is why it is necessary to reverse this ongoing exclusion and recognize the prominent role women play as agents of change, whose full participation in the design, development and implementation of decisions is indisputably positive and conducive to peaceful and constructive processes. It is also necessary and urgent to increase resources for the protection of human rights, so that they are not ultimately insufficient for the situation of vulnerability in which women have been kept.

We have witnessed in different regions of the world how conflicts serve as a context for rape and other forms of sexual violence against women, which are even worse in the case of women rights defenders. It is urgent that we eliminate discriminatory legislation, cultural and attitudinal barriers and gender stereotypes, among other aspects that tend to lessen the rights and value of women in all participatory spaces in society.

As we have pointed out before, violent extremism has intensified and degenerated into the worst forms of violence against women, using sexual violence as a weapon of war. The obligation incumbent upon States to strengthen collective action and national plans and strategies takes on greater meaning when harm and loss are measured in human lives. The empowerment of women will be possible only if we as a society manage to overcome the damage of exclusion and take action to address human rights violations flowing from xenophobia, racism, intolerance and other attitudes that erode any conflict resolution process.

At the present juncture, it is unacceptable to continue debating and questioning neither the leadership of women and their right to hold high-level positions nor the equal participation of 100 per cent of the population in any sphere of political, social and economic life/

In conclusion, my delegation is of the view that progress in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda does not necessarily entail the adoption of new measures by the Security Council, but, rather, the ability to require full compliance, without exception, with existing provisions, including with regard to accountability for perpetrators of sexual violence in conflict situations.

The full text of Panama's statement will be available on the PaperSmart portal.

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

Mr. Khandakar (Bangladesh): The delegation of Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

Our thanks go to the delegation of South Africa for originating this debate and for highlighting the issue of women and peace and security at the Security Council once again by proposing a new resolution (resolution 2493 (2019)), which, what is more, was adopted unanimously.

In October 2000, as a non-permanent member of the Council, Bangladesh played a leading role in the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. The resolution was followed by several others designed to strengthen the process, create consensus about women's extreme vulnerability in conflict situations and promote women's ability to participate in peace negotiations, peacebuilding and peacekeeping.

The Secretary-General's report this month on women and peace and security (S/2019/800) reflects some progress. But many challenges remain, particularly with regard to women's participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations and the increasing political violence targeting women. All of us, the States Members of the United Nations and the Security Council, can facilitate the actions recommended in the report with regard to areas such as accountability, the meaningful participation of women — particularly in decision-making processes — and human rights violations.

The Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace calls for the empowerment of people, particularly women and young people, which is a major element in strengthening international peace and security. That is clearly complementary to the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

Bangladesh's growing contribution of female peacekeepers is consistent with its commitment to the United Nations. We strongly support the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative and laud his efforts towards ensuring gender parity in senior appointments under his system-wide strategy on gender parity.

One particular situation in Bangladesh that is directly relevant to the women and peace and security

agenda and which bears mentioning is that of the devastating accounts of rape, sexual violence and abuse perpetrated against women and girls of the Rohingya community when they fled Myanmar's Rakhine state in August 2017. We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Pramila Patten, for keeping the Council informed on issues of sexual violence against Rohingya women and girls. Members of the Council should take decisive action in response to the various reports on justice and accountability in that regard. That should feature prominently in the Council's future deliberations.

Bangladesh is working to prepare its first national action plan on resolution 1325 (2000). The proposed plan recognizes the adverse effects of conflict on women and girls, prioritizes women's human rights and gender equality in all aspects and ensures women's equal participation and leadership roles in all peacebuilding processes. In preparing their national action plans, many countries face gaps, challenges and limitations. That process could be helped by firm political commitments to transform rhetoric into reality and strong stakeholder partnerships to implement the Secretary-General's report. Commitments in those areas could also form part of the overarching objectives for the twentieth anniversary of the women and peace and security agenda.

Despite our continued best efforts to enhance women's empowerment and participation in all spheres of our lives, much more needs to be done. The increased, sustained and coordinated mobilization of financial resources, including through earmarking, remains of key importance to the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

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

Mr. Jinga (Romania): Romania aligns itself with the statement delivered on 29 October on behalf of the European Union. I would like to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

Next year will mark the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the resolution 1325 (2000) and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The eve of these significant milestones provides an opportunity to reflect on what we have done to place women at the heart of conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts and on what remains to be done. While we

recognize the advancements that have been made over the past two decades, we remain deeply concerned about the rising levels of violent misogyny, the use of sexual and gender-based violence as a weapon of war and the lack of justice and support for the survivors of such violence.

Romania integrates gender considerations into all aspects of its national security and stability. Our allocation of 2 per cent of our gross domestic product to defence and our support for women's representation at all levels of decision-making, both locally and internationally, are some of the measures that my country has undertaken to implement the women and peace and security agenda. We promote fair access for men and women — both military and civilian personnel — to all hierarchical levels, including both leadership and executive positions, while also observing compliance with performance selection criteria. The Romanian Ministry of National Defence has taken the lead in promoting and implementing the women and peace and security agenda at the national level by creating a gender management office, a structure responsible for coordinating with all relevant stakeholders towards the development of the national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). In that regard, we have established a national implementation group consisting of representatives from different Government ministries and civil society representatives. The group concluded the elaboration of the national action plan in September, and the Government is expected to adopt it by the end of December.

Women peacekeepers play an indispensable role in laying the foundations for sustaining peace in conflict zones, and it has been proven that the presence of women in United Nations peacekeeping missions has a positive effect on local populations. As women and children are the most vulnerable to becoming victims of violence, it is easier for female peacekeepers to overcome social and cultural boundaries and provide victims and local communities with a more reliable sense of security and trust. My country is a strong promoter of integrating women into the contingents deployed to peace missions. We have a successful example from Afghanistan, where Romania provided female engagement teams, which managed to regularly interact with local women, building trust and confidence in a very complex environment.

During Romania's chairmanship of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in 2018, listening to the voices of women was high on our agenda. In that regard, the topic of financing the gender dimension of peacebuilding was included in the PBC annual session. In addition, during the working visits I paid last year to the Sahel and West Africa as PBC Chair, I met women's civil society groups and women leaders, which gave me the privilege of better understanding how essential it is to include women in all peace processes and ensure their participation at all levels of society in order to achieve lasting peace. This year, with Colombia as its Chair, the PBC has continued to use its convening and advisory role to provide a platform for women peacebuilders.

Romania strongly supports the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative. I am proud to announce that Romania has already surpassed the 16 per cent target for women's participation in peace operations in 2019. In fact, 17 per cent of Romania's military observers and staff officers, as well as 21 per cent of our police contingents, currently deployed in peacekeeping operations are women. Romania is also increasing the number of security personnel trained to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence and is supporting the Office of the Special Coordinator on Improving the United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by providing it with an expert on military law.

I conclude by saying that there is an urgent need for more action and fewer words. I look forward to taking stock of all our efforts in 2020. Romania remains fully engaged on this issue.

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

Mrs. Tripathi (India): We thank South Africa for convening this open debate, and we thank the United Kingdom for continuing it.

Women's participation is critical to the success of all efforts to build sustainable peace. It is not only about the realization of women's rights, but also about building peaceful societies. There is sufficient evidence that establishes that peace processes are more likely to succeed when women are fully engaged. Yet nearly after two decades of the formalization of the women and peace and security agenda, women continue to face exclusion and their concerns are neglected in peace processes. It is time to walk the talk. Regional initiatives, such as the African Women Leaders

Network, are ensuring that women are at the forefront of building peaceful societies.

The valiant leadership of Afghan women in bringing peace to their communities and to the country needs to be supported. We also need to address challenges with regard to the implementation of gender provisions in peace agreements. Violence against women and girls perpetrated by terrorists remains rampant. The subjugation of women in public and in private spheres continues across situations that are on the agenda of the Security Council. It is 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.

As everyone today discusses our collective action, one delegation has been regurgitating rhetoric about women's rights in my country. That delegation represents a system that has been exporting terrorism and regressive extremist ideologies and stifling women's voices for narrow political gains. That has devastated the lives of generations of women and their families in our region and beyond. Habitually making baseless allegations without any relevance to the agenda under consideration has become a staple for that delegation. That has happened not only earlier during this debate, but also during the open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, that took place on October 28 during the 8648th meeting of the Council (see S/PV.8648). We firmly reject these baseless allegations. The Council has not paid attention to such deceitful narratives in the past and we are confident that it will continue not to do so in order to ensure that this agenda is not used as a ploy for furthering interterritorial ambitions.

The positive impacts of the greater participation of women in United Nations peacekeeping are well recognized in the women and peace and security agenda. 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. This has been complemented by the uniformed gender-parity strategy. Yet, women make up only 4.2 per cent of military personnel in United Nations peacekeeping missions. We ought to encourage the participation of all women units in order to achieve the set targets in this regard.

However, we note that, in order to accommodate those who cannot fulfil their commitment to providing all-women units, mixed units are being given preference by diluting policy frameworks. If this continues, we cannot possibly achieve our set targets. India remains committed to increasing the number of women peacekeepers and deployed a female engagement team to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo earlier this year.

We will continue to work for the meaningful participation of women in peace and security issues. The normative work done outside the Council and India's experience of mainstreaming women's leadership and political participation will continue to inspire our actions.

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

Mrs. Theofili (Greece): Greece aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, and wishes to add the following.

Greece acknowledges that there is an urgent need to consolidate a gender perspective in shaping and implementing the international peace and security agenda, which treats women and girls not only as victims of armed conflict but, first and foremost, as empowered agents of peaceful and democratic change. In this vein, my country reiterates its commitment to enhancing international efforts for the effective implementation of the women and peace and security agenda at all levels and in a coherent and results-oriented way. Greece is currently drafting its national action plan on women and peace and security. The development of the action plan entails a participatory process and is expected to focus mainly on the following priority sectors.

First, due to the unprecedented migratory and refugee crisis by which my country is still affected, it is expected to build on the national policy on refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls who have fled their homes due to armed conflicts raging in their countries of origin. Secondly, it is aimed at enhancing the equal participation of women in decision-making and leadership. Thirdly, being the first national policy instrument of its kind, it endeavours to spread the word on the women and peace and security agenda by educating, training, building capacity and raising the awareness of policymakers and public administration

officials, as well as the general public, on the holistic nature and various aspects thereof.

Furthermore, with a view to enhancing policy coherence, Greece continues to focus on the protection of media freedom from violations and abuses, placing particular emphasis on the safety of women media professionals working in conflict environments. This aspect is reflected in the Third Committee resolution on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity (A/C.3/74/L.45), to be submitted once again this year by my country, along with Argentina, Austria, Costa Rica, France and Tunisia. In addition, as a strong supporter of multilateralism, Greece continues to address issues related to gender equality, women's empowerment and the women and peace and security agenda at the United Nations and other regional forums.

In conclusion, allow me to underline the fact that conflict prevention, sustainable peace and the consolidation of inclusive, resilient, just and gender-equal democratic societies are the ultimate goal. Therefore, it is only by giving women and girls a voice and enhancing their meaningful participation in decision-making that we can make sure they are not left behind.

The President: I wish to thank the representative of Greece in particular for keeping to the time limit because, as some delegations will have heard before, we are limited to four minutes per speaker. If we do not do that, then not every country and organization will be able to speak today. I remind representatives that their microphone will flash after four minutes and it would be great if their colleagues could bring it to their attention should they not see it. I will have to ask representatives to bring their remarks to a close if they do not.

I now give the floor to the representative of Djibouti.

Mr. Moussa (Djibouti) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, the Djiboutian delegation joins previous speakers in congratulating the United Kingdom delegation on having quickly organized the resumption of the debate on the women and peace and security agenda so early on in its presidency. This demonstrates the United Kingdom's deep commitment to the matter.

We welcome the unanimous adoption of resolution 2493 (2019). We also express our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his annual report on resolution 1325 (2000) (S/2019/800) and for his keen interest in the

women and peace and security agenda. We take note of his recommendations at the end of the report.

(*spoke in English*)

Long before the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), Djiboutian women, as well as many other African women across the continent, had demonstrated great political leadership and powerfully articulated a vision for women's rights and gender equality. We deem it important to memorialize and document their meaningful contributions to peace in Africa for the benefit of future generations.

The participation of women in peace processes was crucial to the Somalia National Peace Conference, or the Djibouti Conference, which was held in Arta, a resort city in the south of Djibouti, six months before the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). At the initiative of His Excellency Mr. Ismaël Omar Guelleh, President of the Republic of Djibouti, and in contrast to previous reconciliation conferences on Somalia, the Arta Conference included the extensive participation of Somali women. The inclusion of women concerned was likely to further the outcome of the Conference. In fact, the Arta declaration enabled the formation of the transitional Government and then the rebirth of the Somali Government in 1991, which allowed Somalia to reoccupy its seat at the United Nations and in regional bodies.

In the Horn of Africa, we pride ourselves on being a Member State active in the inclusion of women in political leadership through reforms to eradicate the obstacles that women face. This year began with the enactment of a bill increasing the quota of Djiboutian women from 10 to 25 per cent in the National Assembly. Quotas make questions of inclusion more visible and constitute an effective and meaningful way of ensuring that equality is taken seriously within political institutions. Today, women represent 3 per cent of Djiboutian military personnel deployed in peacekeeping operations in Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Darfur. We are cognizant of the fact that it is a modest number, but we are committed to further implementing the agenda and measures to increase the number of women in future peacekeeping operations are being considered.

We welcome the recent joint United Nations-African Union (AU) women and peace and security solidarity mission to Djibouti, led by Deputy Secretary-General Ms. Amina Mohammed and the AU Special

Envoy for Women, Peace and Security, Ms. Bineta Diop, which took stock of achievements in the area of women's empowerment. The tenth AU high-level retreat on the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa also took place in Djibouti last month. It was focused on identifying concrete actions to ensure good governance in the security sector and its effective reforms, which are critical to the achievement of peace and security in Africa and to the women and peace and security agenda.

Conflict in Africa has been one of the main drivers of forced displacement overall. Women are the main victims of human smuggling and trafficking as a result of these movements. A recent publication by the Africa Center for Strategic Studies raises concerns about the fact that violent extremist groups and criminal networks have sought to control these trafficking routes and revenues, estimated at \$765 million annually for the trans-Sahara route.

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

Mrs. Pejanović Đurišić (Montenegro): Montenegro aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (EU). In addition, as a member of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, Montenegro joins in the statement made by the representative Canada on behalf of the group of 56 States. I would, however, like to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

Next year we will mark the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the landmark resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. Although numerous activities have been undertaken, they have not translated into real changes on the ground. Practical and institutional barriers continue to prevent women from fully and meaningfully participating in all peace processes. In today's globalized world, with very complex and fast-changing security threats and strategic challenges, the active and equal participation of women and men is a prerequisite for overall security, lasting peace and stability.

As emphasized in the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/800), this is a critical time for bold and urgent action to ensure that next year's anniversary gives rise to concrete commitments and impactful action rather than empty rhetoric. We must reinvigorate our efforts to address persistent obstacles causing failures with multigenerational consequences. In that regard,

Montenegro supports the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General and calls upon all stakeholders to take steps towards accelerating progress in implementing that important agenda.

Montenegro is strongly devoted to the implementation of all resolutions derived from the women and peace and security agenda. Greater attention has been paid to ensuring women's full and meaningful participation in the security sector. As a result of numerous reforms in that area, the overall strategic framework has been improved, for example by bringing the army into closer proportion with the younger female population.

Last August, the Government of Montenegro adopted its second plan of action for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) for the period 2019-2022. The action plan clearly defines measures and actions for achieving three priorities: increasing the participation of women in decision-making and peacekeeping processes, the protection of women and girls in conflict zones and the integration of gender perspectives and gender education in peacekeeping operations, as well as mechanisms for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and its accompanying resolutions. In addition, the Government of Montenegro adopted its third action plan for achieving gender equality for the period 2017-2021; it defines additional integration of resolution 1325 (2000) into the security sector.

An informative page on women in the armed forces has been established on the website of the Ministry of Defence, containing all activities on achieving gender equality. In addition, media campaigns and open-door events, including school visits for making the armed forces more visible to young men and women, have been conducted. Those activities have resulted in increasing interest among young female candidates in military academies and voluntary military services.

At the level of the defence sector, the total number of women employed is 12.82 per cent. At the Ministry of Defence, that number is 42.48 per cent, while 9.19 per cent of the members of the armed forces are women. Those numbers are not sufficient, but they reaffirm our strong commitment to addressing societal gender stereotypes and the low interest of women in military professions, on the one hand, and to fulfilling United Nations, NATO and EU standards and pursuing overall reforms and transformational changes of the defence sector, on the other.

In the coming 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 affect all professions. That is above all our moral and human obligation, apart from implementing international standards and successfully conducting military operations.

As we approach a landmark year for the women and peace and security agenda, let me once again confirm our readiness to fully implement the agenda, thereby ensuring women's meaningful participation in peace and security processes.

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

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

We would like to thank the Secretary-General and all the briefers for their contributions. We welcome the focus of our discussion on the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and its related resolutions.

The issue of women and peace and security was brought to the Council's attention 19 years ago, owing to the concrete realization that women needed to be included and addressed if its objective of ensuring peace and security was to be effectively achieved. Since then, the Council, together with all stakeholders, has continued to develop the normative framework for the consideration of the women and peace and security agenda, improving data collection and identifying tools to implement resolution 1325 (2000). Yet, as the Secretary-General notes, the divide between rhetoric and reality remains stark. The approaching twentieth anniversary of the women and peace and security agenda is therefore the moment to focus on further action and continue to build on what we have established to date.

In marking the anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), we also need to keep in mind the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which addressed women and armed conflict as one of its 12 critical areas. We should aim to achieve greater synergies among those agendas. After all, the realization of all human rights for women and girls and ensuring gender equality are also the cornerstones of the full and effective implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, including

the full and meaningful participation of women in peace processes and ending gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence.

The Secretary-General's report (S/2019/800) summarizes in detail our achievements and shortcomings, as well as a number of concerning trends. Those include record levels of political violence targeting women, persistent patterns of sexual violence and continuing violence against women peacemakers and human rights defenders.

As an incoming member of the Security Council, Estonia will continue to pay special attention to the women and peace and security agenda. We welcome the recommendations of the Secretary-General addressed to various stakeholders, as laid out in his latest report. We need to ensure the continued systematic implementation of Security Council resolutions, and we need to ensure the availability of gender-disaggregated data, gender analysis, gender expertise, leadership and accountability in implementing resolution 1325 (2000). We need to be able to better monitor and track progress. We welcome the work of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security in support of the integration of the women and peace and security agenda in specific country contexts and thank UN-Women for its support in that regard.

Perpetrators of sexual violence need to be held to account. Support to the survivors of violence, including by ensuring comprehensive health services relating to sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as psychosocial support, are crucial in that regard. Sexual violence needs to be consistently established as a stand-alone designation criterion for sanctions. We should continue to strengthen the participation of gender advisers and women's protection advisers in United Nations missions. Estonia is currently preparing its third action plan on women and peace and security. We believe that it is a key tool to guide and accelerate action to implement resolution 1325 (2000).

The overarching aim of the twentieth anniversary in 2020 should be the full and effective political commitment to action. The inclusion of all stakeholders, in particular women, human rights defenders and grassroots organizations, is crucial in that respect. While all of us can provide critical support, the main difference in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) will, in large part, be made by dedicated people working in the field, who often face risks and threats

to their security. We remain ready to work with the Council and all partners to bridge the gap between rhetoric and reality and to implement the objectives that we jointly set in 2000.

The President: May I ask all colleagues to excise a couple of paragraphs from what they are planning to say? Otherwise, countries will not be able to speak at this debate.

I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mrs. Furman (Israel): Women and girls around the world are often those who suffer most from conflicts but are among the last to be included in peace processes and decision-making. They make up half of the world's population, they are also proven catalysts of change and still they are not yet equal partners in the pursuit of their own peace and security.

Peace and security is not an isolated issue. Conflict prevention and peacebuilding are greatly influenced by the advancement of sustainable development, and we cannot hope to achieve sustainable peace without due regard for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5. Young women and girls, elderly women, women with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender women must all have a voice if we are to effect long-term change.

My country has been striving for peace and security since its inception, with women playing a vital role. Israel has demonstrated repeatedly its commitment to the women and peace and security agenda and, although we have not yet achieved full gender equality in that regard, we have been working towards it on many fronts. In fact, we were among the first to integrate part of resolution 1325 (2000) into our national legislation and a number of our civil society organizations have been at the forefront of efforts to implement the resolution in Israel.

Promoting women and girls into leadership roles begins with an investment in education, promoting involvement in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, prioritizing women's political and economic empowerment and changing harmful societal norms and perceptions. The Israeli Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women has been increasingly active in promoting the participation of women of all backgrounds in education, the economy and political processes.

Israel welcomes the steps taken by the Secretary-General to promote gender equality, gender parity and the inclusion of women, not only in the context of peace and security but in the leadership of the United Nations system as a whole. As an international role model, it is imperative that the United Nations conduct itself in accordance with the SDG 5 and the women and peace and security agenda.

As we work together to reform the United Nations system and improve its ability to live up to its mandates, we are encouraged to see initiatives such as the creation of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs new women, peace and security policy, the Department of Peace Operations new policy on gender responsive peacekeeping operations and the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative, last year. We are also heartened by the reported achievement of gender parity among resident coordinators.

However, while we welcome those positive developments, we also recognize that many challenges still remain. As stated by the Secretary-General in his latest report (S/2019/800), gender expertise has to be strengthened across the United Nations system and gender perspectives need to be taken into account more consistently.

An integral part of promoting the women and peace and security agenda is creating a safe and encouraging environment for women and men everywhere to work together towards peace. Implementing the agenda without addressing the challenges posed by a culture of sexual harassment and sexual abuse is like trying to build a building in the middle of an earthquake. As long as women are the targets of violence and harassment, they cannot freely participate in public or political life. As part of our efforts to assist in that matter, Israel, along with other Member States and the Secretariat have been working to eliminate those practices. We are encouraged to see that the United Nations Member States and civil society alike are increasingly aware of those issues and working to confine them to the pages of history.

We cannot expect to achieve true peace and security as long as women and girls are excluded from the process and their abilities to influence the outcomes are limited. Until the day comes when the full and equal participation of women in decision-making is a given, we must all commit to come together to advance the women and peace and security agenda.

Mr. President: I now give the floor to the representative of Costa Rica.

Mrs. Villalobos Brenes (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): The full text of our statement is available on PaperSmart.

We are very concerned by the findings of the independent evaluation contained in the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2019/800), which reflects the fact that with respect to resolution 1325 (2000), we have achieved only half of the proposals. For 40 per cent of the recommendations, further work needs to be done, while 10 per cent have not progressed or have even regressed.

We recall that in 2000, we recognized the importance of women's participation in all conflict-related processes, ranging from prevention to peacekeeping. Costa Rica wishes to highlight the following aspects on which we must focus efforts in areas that are lagging, as per the report of the Secretary-General.

First is the issue of the protection of women. Just as our discussions on peace and security emphasize the importance of the protection of civilians, we must insist that the protection of women and girls is always taken into account, both in its humanitarian aspect and with regard to the use of sexual aggression and sexual violence as weapons of war.

The second aspect is the participation of women in peace negotiations. The inclusion of gender perspectives is new but it is no excuse for doing nothing. The Secretary-General notes the new challenges posed by conflict, such as the proliferation of non-State actors and, specifically, the challenge of gender inequality as an objective of conflict itself. To that end, Costa Rica believes that we must redouble our efforts to empower women so as to ensure that they are fully involved in the restoration of peace and reconstruction processes.

A third aspect is related to impunity. Bringing culprits to justice helps to prevent the resurgence of atrocity crimes against women. Costa Rica is concerned by references in the report of the Secretary-General on deficiencies in responses to sexual violence and the lack of access to security and justice institutions women face because of their gender.

The fourth aspect is inclusiveness in special political operations and peacekeeping operations. The specific needs of girls and women must be included in the strategies of those missions. Missions must

incorporate women as a way of building trust, ensuring understanding and facilitating rapprochement during reconciliation and reintegration processes.

Fifth is compliance with conventions on human rights and international humanitarian law. So long as the universally recognized rights of women continue to be denied, the women and peace and security agenda cannot be fulfilled. All recommendations will become dead letter until inclusive policies are adopted.

It is necessary to put an end to gender-based violence and to discrimination against women and girls, which impede their right to express themselves, socialize, learn, enjoy freedom of movement and the possibility of exercising their political rights, among others, so that they can be part of the agenda.

Costa Rica hopes that in 2020, the commemoration of 20 years since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) will focus on practical and concrete actions that will result in gender parity, where the voices of women and girls will be heard.

Mr. President: I now give the floor to the representative of Lebanon.

Ms. Chidiac (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank the United Kingdom presidency for reconvening the open debate on women and peace and security, and to take this opportunity to the adoption of resolution 2493 (2019) last week. It is the latest in a series of related resolutions, starting with resolution 1325 (2000) and resolution 2467 (2019), on conflict-related sexual violence.

In that respect, we reiterate the importance of all resolutions on women and peace and security and emphasize Lebanon's commitment to the implementation of all their provisions without selectivity and in their entirety. Those resolutions consecrate the concept of social equality and seek to establish more just societies enjoying stability and the prospects of peace and security, where rights are secured and equal and women are ensured fair opportunities to become partners to men at all levels. We see women starting revolutions everywhere today, standing up for their freedom and the security of their society, while demanding their rights and dictating to Governments their duty to ensure peace, stability and a decent life.

In September, the Lebanese Government adopted the first national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The plan was drawn up by

the National Commission for Lebanese Women, in consultation with governmental and non-governmental parties, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society, to ensure the broadest and most effective participation in its implementation. We note the constructive and effective role of civil society in all its components, particularly with respect to human rights defenders, both male and female, along with NGOs.

The operationalization and integration of partnerships between the Governments and civil society are crucial and necessary to developing the plan's mechanisms, as well as its implementation. Lebanon reiterates through the national plan its commitment to actively involving women in peacebuilding efforts, conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction, as well as maintaining security by encouraging their participation and representation in local and national governance structures.

In recent weeks, Lebanon has witnessed a peaceful and democratic movement, led by women who have taken to the streets to defend their living, social, civil, political and personal rights. They have taken to the streets to safeguard a democratic society that believes in individual and social freedoms, gender equality, pluralism and all human rights for all human beings. They have taken to the streets to create a barrier between security forces and protesters with a view to maintaining peace and security. They have taken to the streets because they believe in equal and fair participation in decision-making. Theirs is the most beautiful voice, reflecting with courage, care and sincerity the concerns, aspirations and dreams of the entire society. They have taken to the streets so as not to miss their date with destiny.

Only women can determine their own future. Only women can chart their own path. Only women can write their own destiny. Only women can create their own objectives. Only women can forge their own agendas in all areas. Women are entrusted with ensuring peace and security. They must be able to determine for themselves what is possible and what is not. Women everywhere will be granted their rights, not because of someone's choice, but because no one should have that choice.

The President: We are halfway through our list of speakers and halfway through our time. I am grateful to all delegations for limiting their statements to a maximum of four minutes.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Al Habib (Islamic Republic of Iran): Ensuring the security of women in armed conflict and promoting their role in conflict prevention and resolution are indeed noble objectives. The realization of those goals requires a comprehensive approach as well as realistic and pragmatic solutions. Principally, the most effective way to ensure the security of women in armed conflict is to prevent the occurrence of those conflicts in the first place. That is of essential importance to our region — the Middle East — where women and girls continue to suffer from the vicious cycle of armed conflict.

The most severe case is the situation in Palestine, where women bear the brunt of foreign occupation. The Council's inability to protect Palestinian women and girls has resulted in their death, detention, torture and displacement and the systematic violation of their basic rights. No institution can end the suffering of women in armed conflict if its resolutions and decisions remain unimplemented. Terrorism and violent extremism also have serious adverse effects on women's lives. Genuine efforts are therefore needed to protect women against such menacing issues. Similarly, women are the main victims of sexual violence as a tactic of war and terrorism. In order to end that brutal and atrocious crime, accountability must be seriously and strongly promoted.

In all cases, we must not ignore the importance of women's empowerment as an essential factor in conflict prevention and resolution, as well as in our broader efforts to maintain international peace and security. In that context, we must not lose sight of the devastating effects of unilateral coercive measures, which make no distinction between men and women, violating the basic human rights of both and ultimately undermining the constructive role that women can play in promoting peace and security. As a victim of aggression, foreign military invasion, terrorism and unilateral coercive measures, we attach great importance to the role that women can play in building a secure, stable and prosperous society.

In conclusion, women are active partners in the social, economic and political life of our societies and have made great achievements so far. With that in mind, my Government is determined to ensure the empowerment of women and girls in all walks of life.

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

Ms. Bassols Delgado (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): The women and peace and security agenda has been and remains a priority for Spain. We are committed to advancing towards a sustainable peace, convinced of the fact that a lasting peace will be possible only with the effective participation and leadership of women.

We have made progress on this matter since the year 2000. However, data and the recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/800) both concur in indicating that we are still far from the full and effective implementation of this agenda. Secretary-General Guterres refers in his report to the “stark contrast between rhetoric and reality” (*ibid.*, para. 5) on this issue. Much remains to be done. If we really want to ensure progress, we are obliged to take concrete and measurable steps. Therefore, Spain and Finland jointly launched the Commitment 2025 initiative in September. It contains concrete and ambitious commitments to accelerating the effective participation of women in peace and mediation processes. Our aim is to submit, in 2022, a follow-up report on our commitments, in line with the Secretary-General’s recommendations, in order to reduce the rift between rhetoric and reality. In brief, we are seeking very concrete results to ensure that we move forward.

Through the Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network — a Spanish initiative in operation since 2016 — 11 countries have so far joined the 2025 Commitment, while others are expected to do so soon. All States Members of the United Nations are invited to join. The implementation of the women and peace and security agenda crucially requires regional, national and local policies. Therefore, strategic instruments such as national action plans represent a fundamental mechanism. Spain is currently reviewing its second action plan. From the lessons learned through its implementation, we hope to glean a set of good practices to share with all Member States and the Organization. We are facing a challenge that requires a transformative and sustained effort over time.

Before I conclude, allow me to refer to education — a fundamental tool for the political, economic and social empowerment of women. Spain this year hosted the third International Conference on Safe Schools, which, among other issues, addressed the impact of attacks against education on women and

girls. The 87 participants agreed that it is essential to forge synergies between the safe schools agenda and the women and peace and security agenda. I encourage other States represented here to adopt the Safe Schools Declaration as an instrument to prevent attacks on access to education.

Today’s debate is the last major event on this issue in this forum before 2020, when we will commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). There is still a long way to go. There are still rights to be defended in the face of attacks and even in the face of inaction. Spain will remain heavily involved in pursuing a change that guarantees genuine equality in the exercise of women’s rights and in their participation in all decision-making and peacebuilding processes. We will engage at the national level, we will cooperate with those who wish to cooperate and we will share the lessons learned to the benefit of peace.

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

Mr. Woldeyes (Ethiopia): Over the years, we have heard a number of pronouncements from the United Nations and the African Union and seen various regional and national policies, strategies and action plans, all aimed at mainstreaming gender issues. There has been some progress registered, but despite all those efforts, there is still a significant gap between our aims and ambitions and the actual political support and financial commitment provided to the women and peace and security agenda. Much more work and real and practical commitments are needed to bridge the gaps in implementation and to support countries in developing policies and strategies that align with the agenda. We can deliver on those commitments only if we place the prevention of violence against women, the protection of women’s rights and the full participation of women in decision-making at the centre of national policies. Neither peace nor prosperity can be achieved or sustained without the equal, active and meaningful involvement of women throughout society.

Let me take this opportunity to reaffirm Ethiopia’s commitment to promoting the women and peace and security agenda, and to illustrate it if I may. Over the past 18 months, Ethiopia has taken a number of bold steps to increase the participation and representation of women in decision-making. The Administration of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has attained gender parity in the Cabinet, appointed our first woman Head of State

and assigned women as heads of the Supreme Court and the National Election Board. We have also set up a new ministry, led by a woman, with a specific mandate for peacebuilding and oversight of the country's security sector. In addition, we have significantly increased the numbers of women in leadership and decision-making positions at different levels of Government and across public institutions. Our Constitution guarantees rights to land use and equal rights to property acquired during marriage.

As a leading troop-contributing country, Ethiopia fully understands the importance of women peacekeepers in overcoming social and cultural barriers to build trust in the communities they serve. They provide victims and local communities — specifically those women and children most vulnerable to conflict and violence — with a sense of security and confidence. Women peacekeepers play a critical role in helping refugees and others who have been subjected to violence in the absence of justice. Victims of sexual and gender-based violence respond more positively to their support, which facilitates rehabilitation, justice and reparations. In Ethiopia, we have been seeing grass-roots self-help women's groups provide the essential support in the national response to recent internal displacement and resettlement, as well as in reconciliation efforts.

As we look forward to marking the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), it is high time that we recommit ourselves to fully implementing the resolutions we have adopted and the declarations we have made in the past. Women must be central to policy-making, political participation and conflict prevention. We call upon members of the Council to use the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) to mobilize support and resources so as to fully implement the women and peace and security agenda in its entirety.

This was a shortened version of our statement. Our full statement will be available online.

The President: I thank the representative of Ethiopia also for reminding colleagues that a fuller statement can be placed on websites and circulated.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Ms. Elsheikh (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank South Africa and the United Kingdom

for convening this open debate on women and peace and security under the theme "Towards the successful implementation of the women and peace and security agenda". I would also like to thank all the briefers.

Sudanese women have played an important role in the glorious December revolution that has swept the country since the beginning of this year and have been an integral part of it. Women have been actively participating in protests and demonstrations, galvanizing and ensuring their peaceful nature. Women also genuinely participated in the negotiations on the Constitutional Declaration signed in August, as well as the negotiations to establish the structures of the new transitional Government. Four Sudanese women are currently ministers in the new Government. They are the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Social Development and Labour, Youth and Sports and Higher Education. There are also two women in the Sovereign Council — the highest authority in the country — one of whom is a Sudanese Christian Copt. The Sudan has also set a quota of 40 per cent women in the transitional legislative council, in a clear sign of the political will to empower women and to ensure their participation in high positions, taking into consideration geographical and religious diversity in the Sudan, and in the development and reconstruction process.

The current transitional period in the Sudan has genuinely and tangibly transformed the situation of women. The Constitutional Declaration calls on the State to promote the rights of women, including their social, economic and political rights, as well as the right to equal wages and other benefits. The Declaration also commits the State to combating all forms of discrimination against women while considering provisional preferential measures in peace and war. Such benefits are necessary to ensuring women's participation in public life and maintaining peace and security in the country.

Addressing violence against women is a priority for the new Government, as it is one of the main obstacles to the empowerment and advancement of women. Efforts are being made to revoke all laws that restrict women's freedoms, rights and participation in political and economic life, especially in rural areas and those areas affected by the conflict in Darfur. We note that women played a significant role as arbiters in Darfur, thereby contributing effectively to achieving peace and participating in the disarmament campaign.

Since coming to power in early September, the new transitional Government has sought to promote human rights. On the margins of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session, the Government signed an agreement to open a new office on human rights in the Sudan under Law No. 74 of 25 September. The aim is to improve the situation of human rights and to provide the necessary technical assistance in this regard. That step is important to supporting the rights of Sudanese women and their participation in peace and security efforts.

The Sudan is committed to implementing resolution 1325 (2000) by adopting a national action plan for women, security and peacebuilding. It is currently under review to bring it in line with recent developments in the country so that it can be adopted by the end of this year.

The delegation of my country seizes this opportunity to thank Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Commission, for instructing the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security to lead a solidarity mission to the Sudan during the period 26-30 August to ensure the commitment of the new Government to addressing the concerns of Sudanese women with respect to peace and security and to ensure that their voices are heard, their rights are guaranteed and their participation in decision-making is ensured, in order to enable them to lead on an equal footing with men.

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

Mr. Baati (Tunisia) (spoke in Arabic): I would like to thank the United Kingdom presidency for organizing this resumed open debate under the theme, “Towards the successful implementation of the women and peace and security agenda: moving from commitments to accomplishments in preparation for the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)”.

I would also like to sincerely thank the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of UN-Women, as well as the African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, for their informative briefings. I appreciate the contents of the annual report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/800) on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), including its commitments and recommendations, which Tunisia supports and is keen to implement.

I also thank the representatives of civil society for their important contributions to discussing this topic. We agree with them that now is the time to act and effectively implement the texts of the adopted resolutions.

The empowerment of women and their participation in decision-making are pillars of Tunisia’s policy, as they are important to social cohesion and society’s ability to meet security, economic and development challenges. Based on our belief in the important role that women play in times of peace, conflict or war, Tunisia has therefore sought to engage constructively in all international efforts to consolidate peace and security, including by participating in peacekeeping operations throughout the world and ensuring women’s participation in them. We also played a role in the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) during our non-permanent membership of the Council in 2000.

On 8 August 2018, Tunisia adopted a comprehensive national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent relevant resolutions. That was the culmination of efforts that began in 2016 with the establishment of a national committee made up of Government, constitutional and civil society representatives, and more than 50 per cent representation of women.

Conflicts directly affect women and girls, who are exposed to abuse, violations and inequality. Tunisia has therefore participated effectively in initiatives and efforts to settle conflicts and contain their devastating effects on women and girls. We are also committed to implementing international and regional laws on gender equality.

Tunisia is currently sparing no effort to implement the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially Goal 5 on gender equality in duties and rights, pursuant to our national action plan, which promotes women’s participation at all decision-making levels. Tunisia attaches particular importance to programmes for the training and capacity-building of women in order to prevent and resolve conflicts, achieve sustainable peace, safeguard society from extremism and terrorism and ensure human rights in practice and in culture.

In conclusion, the national action plan and the aforementioned sectorial plans are part of a comprehensive approach that Tunisia adopted following its independence. Those efforts have seen renewed

momentum since 2011 in ensuring gender equality, the empowerment of women and the rejection of all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination.

The full version of my statement will be made available online.

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

Mrs. Koçyiğit Grba (Turkey): At the outset, I would like to express our appreciation to the South African presidency for convening the annual Security Council open debate focusing on the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. I would also like to thank the presidency of the United Kingdom for the resumption of the open debate today. Our appreciation also goes to the Secretary-General for his latest annual report (S/2019/800), which provides a valuable assessment on the implementation of the relevant resolutions, as well as pertinent recommendations to further advance the women and peace and security agenda.

As we prepare to mark the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), which laid the foundation for the women and peace and security agenda, we need to reflect on our achievements and address the remaining gaps and challenges in realizing our overall objective in a unified manner. In that understanding, Turkey co-sponsored resolution 2493 (2019) adopted on 29 October.

Turkey has placed gender equality at the heart of its foreign policy and therefore considers the increased use of the women and peace and security agenda across all its four pillars as a critical tool for conflict prevention and resolution, as well as for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Through resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent related Security Council resolutions, a solid normative framework has been established to that end. We also welcomed the adoption of resolution 2467 (2019), on sexual violence in conflict, in April and see it as a further concrete enhancement of the framework.

We are pleased to see that these resolutions have encouraged the United Nations system and Member States to step up their efforts and develop programmes to increase women's participation as leaders in the military and law enforcement and as peacebuilders in treaty and peace agreement negotiations. There has also been deeper awareness of and more serious

attention afforded to the asymmetric impact of conflict on women and their vulnerability.

In that context, Turkey considers the work of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security, as well as the development of the Secretary-General's uniformed gender parity strategy 2018-2028, as important steps towards strengthening the role of women in maintaining peace and security.

Turkey remains committed to contributing to the advancement of the women and peace and security agenda by taking into account the specific protection needs of women as a result of armed conflicts. We continue to provide assistance and psychosocial support for women and girls affected by armed conflict in our region. As such, Turkey deploys multifaceted services to offer dignified living conditions to more than 3.5 million Syrians who have taken refuge in Turkey, fleeing the conflict in Syria. Of those people, 1.6 million are women.

Women's health centres established by the Turkish Ministry of Family, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and the United Nations Population Fund, offer health training, comprehensive support and empowerment programmes for those women and girls. Since 2014, the programme has delivered multidimensional support to almost 400,000 refugees in and outside temporary refugee centres. For the years 2020 and 2021, we will further strengthen the service capacity and expand the coverage of that project.

While we work hard to mitigate the countless negative effects of displacement on women affected by armed conflict, we regret that earlier in this open debate, this platform was abused to disseminate falsehoods about my country's limited cross-border counter-terrorism operation. Turkey's views on that issue were amply presented to the Security Council on 24 October (see S/PV.8645). We flatly reject and condemn any misrepresentation of Turkey's counter-terrorism efforts. It is clear that we do not have any moral lessons to learn from those who have refrained from doing their part in shouldering responsibilities related to the refugee crisis.

Despite measurable progress, much work remains to be done to fully translate the women and peace and security agenda into action. That requires additional concerted efforts by not only Member States, but also United Nations entities, as well as regional

organizations and civil society. It is imperative to directly address the root causes of conflicts, including through the promotion of gender equality and the greater and meaningful participation of women in all forms of mediation, conflict prevention, United Nations peace operations, post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding processes.

Needless to say, further efforts are required to see more women assume positions of leadership at the negotiating table, thereby enhancing their engagement in political and economic decision-making. As we look forward to the twentieth anniversary of resolution 2325 (2000), Turkey stands ready to play its role.

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

Mr. Rutikanga (Rwanda): This open debate comes at an opportune time to reflect on the achievements, challenges and remaining work ahead on issues related to the women and peace and security agenda, as we mark 10 years since the establishment of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and nearly 20 years since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000).

The issues related to women, peace and security are a core foundation of lasting peace. The full implementation of the women and peace and security agenda involves the meaningful participation in the full spectrum of conflict mediation, conflict resolution and the negotiation of peace agreements and peacebuilding. Since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) in 2000, 19 related resolutions have been adopted, similarly highlighting the suffering that women face as a result of armed conflict and recognizing that women carry the heaviest burdens related to conflicts.

Unfortunately, despite all those resolutions, atrocities against women and girls in armed conflicts have continued. Today's wars continue to be fought on women's bodies in acts of terror with the aim of destroying beyond recovery the social fabric of targeted communities. There remains a great deal of work for us to advance women's empowerment in the area of peace and security. In that respect, I would like to make the following recommendations.

The political will of Member States, the United Nations Secretariat and the commitment of all parties to a conflict are critical to creating the necessary environment for meaningful women's participation. It is

particularly hard to understand the absence of women in negotiations for peace agreements supported by the United Nations, as was reported earlier by the Executive Director of UN-Women in her briefing (see S/PV.8649).

The women and peace and security agenda should be central in all peacekeeping missions with a protection of civilian mandate. Effective implementation calls for increased investment in women and peace and security advisers in peacekeeping missions and regular reporting. The protection of civilians is and will continue to be the driver of Rwanda's engagement in United Nations peacekeeping. As the third top troop-contributing country, we are fully committed to the women and peace and security agenda in United Nations peace operations.

It is essential to raise awareness and build the capacities of local communities, as they are the first line of response to conflict-related sexual violence. During Rwanda's reconstruction period, the role of local communities was central to effective prevention, timely reporting and accountability.

Turning to the focus on a survivor-centred approach, there is a need to reinforce the protection and rehabilitation of victims of sexual abuse in armed conflicts by providing services, including medical care, psychological support, the protection of victims and legal aid. In that regard, we commend Ms. Pramila Patten, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, for putting the focus on survivors during last week's event to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the mandate on sexual violence in conflict. We welcome the launch of the Global Fund for Survivors of conflict-related violence by Nobel Peace Prize laureates Dr. Denis Mukwege and Ms. Nadia Murad and encourage more members to support the Fund.

Supporting countries in need by strengthening the legal and policy framework that advances the rights of women and children is vital. Prevention of sexual violence starts with strong institutions and comprehensive legal frameworks during times of peace. Holding perpetrators of sexual violence to account is crucial to delivering justice to victims and to deterring future crimes.

At the national level, it is vital to adopt and implement national policies and national actions plans and to make efforts within regional frameworks aimed at raising public awareness of women's rights

and the importance of their role and participation in peace processes.

Regarding all the aspects I have mentioned, including others in my written statement, Rwanda will hold the 2019 Global Gender Summit from 25 to 27 November under the theme “Unpacking constraints to gender equality”. All Member States are welcome.

The President: As we are a little behind time, I once again urge speakers to limit their statements to four minutes. I remind them that the collar of the microphone will begin to flash after four minutes has elapsed, at which time one of my colleagues will come around to encourage the speaker to finish. Otherwise, I regret that I will be forced to cut the speaker off.

I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Sparber (Liechtenstein): Since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), remarkable progress has been made in the women and peace and security agenda. However, gender inequality and discrimination against women remain major challenges of our time. To allow women to be agents of change and to contribute to a more peaceful, sustainable and prosperous world, we need to ensure that they can fully enjoy their rights and realize their potentials. We need to create an environment that is enabling, inclusive and free of discrimination and unfair social norms and attitudes. Only then can we hear the voices of women human rights defenders, women political leaders, women justice and security sector actors, women peacekeepers and mediators, women journalists, activists and civil society leaders, and these voices are indispensable to sustaining peace and security.

We call upon the Security Council to invite more female briefers, including from civil society. We welcome efforts to integrate gender perspectives and promote women’s meaningful participation and representation in the United Nations work on conflict prevention, conflict resolution and sustaining peace, including the Secretary-General’s Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy 2018-2028. As part of our pledges for the upcoming twentieth anniversary of the women and peace and security agenda, Liechtenstein will sustain the strong focus on the participation, prevention and protection pillars in the context of its international humanitarian and development cooperation.

Gender inequality, including harmful gender stereotypes and abusive power dynamics, is at the root of sexual and gender-based violence. While women and girls are disproportionately affected, there are also men and boys among the victims. The annual report of the Special Representative of Sexual Violence in Conflict (S/2019/280) and reports by the Liechtenstein-based non-governmental organization All Survivors Project document rape, gang rape, forced nudity and other forms of inhumane and degrading treatment of men in Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, Sri Lanka and the Syrian Arab Republic, primarily in detention settings. The most recent report by the Secretary-General on children in armed conflict in Afghanistan (S/2019/727) documents that the majority of reported cases of sexual violence affected boys.

Among the most recent achievements of the women and peace and security agenda is resolution 2467 (2019) and its survivor-centred approach. It focuses on groups that are particularly vulnerable or may be specifically targeted in conflict-related sexual violence. It requests that the monitoring, analysis and reporting focus more consistently on the gender-specific nature of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations against all affected populations in all situations of concern, including men and boys. That is of utmost relevance, as sexual violence against men and boys continues to be underreported owing to a lack of legal frameworks, cultural taboos and fear of stigmatization. In addition to implementing resolution 2467 (2019) and the resolutions it builds upon, we call for the inclusion of conflict-related sexual violence as a designation criterion in sanction regimes.

Accountability is an essential part of the fight against conflict-related sexual violence. The international criminal justice system has done groundbreaking work in that regard. Earlier this year, the International Criminal Court (ICC) found the warlord Bosco Ntaganda, of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, guilty of 18 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity. It is a milestone verdict, as sexual violence crimes committed against men were held to the same standards as those committed against women. It clearly affirms that such crimes constitute acts of rape and were not classified under labels of lesser severity. While the verdict brought justice to survivors in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in other countries affected by conflict, including Syria and Myanmar,

perpetrators of sexual violence continue to enjoy impunity and victims and survivors are left alone. We call upon the Security Council to refer these situations to the ICC and we will continue our strong support for the accountability mechanisms created by the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, respectively. We remain committed to strengthening criminal justice and accountability for sexual and gender-based violence in conflict, including by supporting the important work done by UN-Women and Justice Rapid Response.

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

Mr. Rai (Nepal): The adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) was a watershed moment, which established women and peace and security as an important security agenda and clearly recognized the importance of women's role in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Since then, some progress has been achieved both on the part of the United Nations and of Member States. Yet even today the world faces the deliberate exclusion of women from different walks of life, and the recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/800) stated that grim fact.

We need to do more to reverse that situation. It is egregious that sexual exploitation and abuse are used as a tactic of war to destroy the dignity of women, confidence of families and fabric of society.

Let me share what Nepal has been doing to implement resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008).

In 2011 Nepal adopted its first national action plan, for five years. It was the first country in South Asia and the second in Asia to do so. Nepal has recently finalized a second such plan for three years, and we are committed to adopting that second plan as early as possible.

Nepal has its own unique experience of making and building peace in a sustained manner, as it went from armed conflict to peaceful transformation. Women have played a significant role in our peace process, and Nepal stands ready to share its experiences and lessons learned through the constructive engagement of women in conflict prevention and resolution, post-conflict restructuring and rebuilding, all geared towards the timely achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Our Constitution was given a new trajectory by the mandatory 33 per cent representation of women at the federal, provincial and local levels. It guarantees the empowerment of women in all walks of national life and has created an independent and powerful National Women's Commission to monitor and safeguard the rights and interests of women in the country. Nepal's Constitution requires that the President and Vice-President of the country be of different genders or communities; similarly, either the Speaker or the Deputy Speaker of the Lower House and Chair or Vice-Chair of the upper house must be a woman. To ensure women's participation in Government machinery, 33 per cent of positions under reservation in Government services, including in the security forces, have been reserved for women.

Nepal, as the fifth-largest troop-contributing country, is committed to increasing the number of female peacekeepers on the ground. As a responsible Member State, we are committed to taking action in that respect to fulfil our responsibility.

To conclude, peace cannot be achieved and sustained without the equal and effective participation of women in the making, keeping and building of peace. Nepal is committed to accelerating its journey to ensuring women's effective participation in all walks of life and will join hands with the international community to make this twenty-first century world safer and prosperous through women's dignified participation in society.

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

Mr. Sacco (Malta): Malta aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union.

I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having resumed this meeting today to discuss the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, which contributes to the preparations for the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), next year.

We are aware that much remains to be done in the area of the participation of women and girls in matters related to peace and security, such as their involvement in decision-making and in terms of the prevention of and protection from conflict-related violence.

Violence against women and girls in conflict situations continues and is exacerbated by the peace and security challenges that the international community faces, including mass migration and displacement, rising violent extremism and terrorism, conflict and the proliferation of arms. Our efforts to change this must continue.

Since Malta announced its commitment to adopt our first national action plan on women and peace and security in April, work has been well under way. We remain convinced that it is important to ensure that women and girls in conflict, post-conflict and fragile situations can, on an equal basis, participate in all political, economic, security and social aspects of their societies. This is a prerequisite for the creation of inclusive and peaceful societies, sustainable development and peace. By embarking on our women and peace and security journey, Malta is doing its part to close the implementation gap. We fully support the United Nations in its work on this agenda.

The twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) will provide us all with an opportunity to take stock of not only the achievements made but also the challenges facing us as we look ahead to the women and peace and security agenda.

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

Mrs. Azucena (Philippines): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 10 States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and my own country, the Philippines.

ASEAN Member States share the view that women's equal, full, effective and meaningful participation is of great importance at all stages of the peace process given their indispensable role in the prevention and resolution of conflict, peacebuilding and peacekeeping, as embodied in resolution 1325 (2000) and many subsequent resolutions. Pursuant to that conviction, in November 2017 ASEAN leaders issued a joint statement on promoting women and peace and security in ASEAN that encourages the inclusion of the women and peace and security agenda in policies and programmes for the protection of women and girls, among others.

In August, another ASEAN joint statement was issued on the women and peace and security agenda under the ASEAN Regional Forum. Last September ASEAN held the Senior Officials Conference in Gender Mainstreaming in the ASEAN Political-Security Community. The conference is the third in a series of conferences organized to mainstream gender across all three ASEAN community pillars. The first conference was held in June 2018 for the ASEAN Socio-Cultural community, while the second was held in December 2018 for the ASEAN Economic Community. Among the issues discussed at the latest conferences was the promotion of women's empowerment and participation in post-conflict situation and the implementation of the joint statement in promoting women and peace and security in ASEAN.

Also in 2018, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the ASEAN Charter and pursuant to the functions of the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation, ASEAN established the ASEAN Women and Peace Registry. The Registry is a compendium of women leaders in ASEAN with expertise in the various aspects of peace processes and reconciliation, including as negotiators, mediators, facilitators and researchers. The establishment of the Registry is in line with the objective of strengthening the capacity of women as peacebuilders, encouraging a more gender-balanced approach to peace and conflict and harnessing the capacities of ASEAN women experts in the field of peace and reconciliation.

ASEAN believes that increasing women's participation in decision-making with respect to conflict management and resolution will help to overcome the societal divide while enabling women to work in creating a sustained dialogue that builds links to peace and stability.

ASEAN believes that peace and security are essential to the achievement of sustainable development. To that end, ASEAN recognizes and promotes the indispensable role of women at all stages of the peace process, including in peacebuilding efforts and conflict prevention. ASEAN reiterates its commitment to the women and peace and security agenda and will continue to work closely with other Member States, the United Nations and regional organizations to implement and realize its goals.

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

Mrs. Sulimani (Sierra Leone): Owing to time constraints, I will just say all protocols observed; permit me to cut the opening courtesies. That said, we will submit our detailed statement to PaperSmart.

Since the adoption of the ground-breaking resolution 1325 (2000), country has remained committed to the implementation of the spirit and letter of this and other relevant resolutions, including the one that was adopted six days ago, resolution 2493 (2019). As we resume discussions today to assess the progress made so far, ahead of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), my delegation is pleased to update Member States on how far we have come on the road to implementation.

Soon after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), Sierra Leone joined Member States that were ready to take the lead in implementing that forward-looking resolution. We were the fourth country in West Africa, the seventh in Africa and the seventeenth globally to adopt a national action plan for the full implementation of the resolution. Our first national action plan highlighted our commitment to, as well as accountability in, ensuring the security of women and girls and enhancing their direct participation in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding efforts in the country.

Building on those gains and in keeping with the commitment we made to UN-Women in April this year, we have developed and adopted a second-generation national action plan, which underscores the core values of the prevention of violence, protection, participation and recovery. The plan deals with issues ranging from the prevention of conflict in communities to addressing its root causes at all levels.

Cognizant of our reporting obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), we have developed and finalized our seventh periodic report. We await its submission to the CEDAW Committee. As part of our commitment to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, we have dedicated cluster 5 of our medium-term national development plan for the period 2019-2023 to empowering women, children and persons with disabilities.

Sierra Leone will continue to provide the policy and legal environment for the protection of women and girls and their inclusion in decision-making, peacebuilding and development processes at all levels.

We recently enacted the Sexual Offences Act 2019, which is an amendment to the Sexual Offences Act 2012, to include elements of deterrent penalties against the perpetrators of rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence.

As a country that experienced a civil war, during which sexual violence was extensively and systematically used against defenceless women and girls, the issue of protection from abuse, exploitation and violence will remain a top priority on our development agenda. The Government of Sierra Leone will continue to give the issue the attention it deserves. The Parliament of Sierra Leone, for instance, adopted the women and peace and security agenda on 14 February, which is an important milestone in moving the women and peace and security agenda forward in Sierra Leone.

We believe that violence against women and girls has no place in our society and will do our utmost to intensify efforts to build prevention and response mechanisms. The official declaration of a national emergency on rape and sexual violence made by our President, His Excellency Mr. Julius Maada Bio, on 7 February, is one such major prevention mechanism, with various elements, including life imprisonment for the sexual penetration of minors and the creation of a special division for the rape and sexual penetration of minors.

The role of women in peacebuilding cannot be overemphasized in our contemporary world. The Government of Sierra Leone values their contribution to nation-building, especially in peacemaking and peacebuilding initiatives. Our women will therefore continue to play critical roles in the attainment of peace and sustainable development.

My delegation is delighted to note that much has been achieved by our individual countries, the United Nations and other relevant institutions towards the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Our army recently recruited all-female military personnel. The recruitment of females in the police and other law enforcement agencies has also increased over the years. That, we believe, will increase female participation in peacekeeping missions around the world where we have personnel.

We will continue to support the Council's call in resolution 2242 (2015) for the doubling of the number of women in the military and police contingents of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Let me conclude by saying that resolution 1325 (2000) was adopted three years before the civil war Sierra Leone was officially declared over. We therefore believe in the core tenets of that and other relevant resolutions and will continue to consolidate the gains made by ensuring the inclusive participation of all stakeholders.

The President: I would like to remind delegations to stick to four minutes if they can, so that all speakers will have a chance to speak before 6 p.m.

I now give the floor to the representative of Ecuador.

Mr. Gallegos Chiriboga (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to deliver a statement on the theme “Towards the successful implementation of the women, peace and security agenda: moving from commitments to accomplishments in preparation for the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)”. That was a landmark resolution, as it was the first time that the Council addressed the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women; acknowledged the undervalued and underutilized contributions that women make to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peacebuilding; and stressed the importance of women’s equal and full participation as active agents in peace and security.

The State of Ecuador has a solid legal framework that guarantees the validity, exercise and enforceability of women’s rights, based on two fundamental pillars: the Constitution, which makes explicit provision for gender equality, and binding international instruments ratified by Ecuador. In September 2018, Ecuador became the fifth country in the world to ratify the 18 United Nations conventions on the protection of human rights. In the same vein, the country has signed and ratified all international conventions concerning the promotion and protection of women’s rights, such as the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in October 1981, and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, also known as the Convention of Belém do Pará, in June 1995.

Ecuador has gradually shouldered its responsibilities, not only through the periodic submission of reports to the committees established under those international instruments, but also through the formal and tangible implementation of the recommendations of those committees. We are also committed to the 2030 Agenda

for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals and promote compliance with Goal 5 on gender equality.

We welcome the progress made in securing the rights of women and girls in various fields around the world. However, we are aware that women continue to face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. In Ecuador, we are aware that, with regard to equal rights for women and men and the eradication of discrimination, much remains to be done, but we redouble our efforts day by day.

Ecuador is committed to the political and economic empowerment of women and acknowledges their contributions to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peacebuilding, as well as the importance of meaningful and active participation in the quest for peace. The Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador establishes that Ecuador is a constitutional State of rights, which will adopt affirmative action measures that promote genuine equality for rights holders who face inequality and establish priority protection in the public and private spheres for the victims of sexual violence.

The Constitution also establishes that the armed forces are an institution for the protection of citizens’ rights, freedoms and guarantees. The incorporation of women into the armed forces has grown since 2009, when female soldiers accounted for 1.1 per cent of the total. By 2012, that percentage had doubled to 2.11 per cent and by 2018, it was 3.5 per cent. Ecuador currently contributes female officers as observers in the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara and is in the process of incorporating women into our national police force and United Nations peace missions.

The Ministry of National Defence incorporates the concept of defence as a public good and, within that framework, the gender perspective is included in its defence policy agenda. The defence policy focuses on human rights and promotes gender equality, practices for peaceful coexistence and respect for the cultural identity of the various members of the armed forces, as well as the effective implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1889 (2009).

In conclusion, we welcome forums where we can discuss the achievements and goals to be met with respect to recognizing women’s contributions to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. We express our sincere desire to join

efforts towards a productive and successful dialogue that promotes gender equality and the advancement of women, in all areas, as essential elements for honouring the commitment to leaving no one behind.

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

Ms. Mehdiyeva (Azerbaijan): At the outset, we would like to thank the United Kingdom presidency for reconvening today's open debate on women and peace and security, whose significance cannot be overemphasized as we move collectively towards a number of important milestones next year.

We also thank the Secretary-General for his annual report on the implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2122 (2013) (S/2019/800).

At this juncture, converting commitment into action should be an obvious choice and all women and girls, regardless of their situations, must be guaranteed equality and inclusion. Societal norms and stereotypes that underpin gender inequalities must be countered through education, dialogue, participation and other effective measures. As conflicts around the world become more complex, with record levels of forced displacement and the lack of durable solutions, the challenges women face and their vulnerabilities are further exacerbated. We support the participation of women at all stages of conflict prevention and conflict resolution.

As a country with a large part of its territory under military occupation, with ethnic cleansing and other grave crimes committed against its population, we consider the safety of civilians to be of the utmost importance. One million Azerbaijani refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), half of them women, have been displaced from their homes and have continued to experience uncertainty for more than three decades. The international community cannot remain silent in the face of atrocity and blatant violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

As we push for concrete actions to be taken in order to advance the women, peace and security agenda of the Security Council, we would like to highlight the fact that respect for international law and the implementation of the ensuing obligations, including those contained in the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, are

prerequisites for effectively upholding the rights of internally displaced women in Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan has taken extensive measures to improve the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). In 2018 alone, 156,000 IDPs were provided with new housing. The State Committee for Family, Women's and Children's Affairs, together with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, has carried out two projects over the past five years to prevent and eliminate gender-based violence among refugees and IDPs.

The most effective strategy to empower women and girls is to pre-emptively address barriers limiting their ability to reach full their potential. In this regard, enacting gender-responsive policies and mechanisms can create an environment that is supportive and conducive to women's success. We concur with the Secretary-General that the economic empowerment of women as a prevention strategy in conflict and post-conflict phases and as a prerequisite for sustainable development must be prioritized. Women are critical to economic growth and community stability.

Azerbaijan attaches great importance to the empowerment of women. By identifying barriers through improved data collection in recent years, we have been able to implement policies and programmes tailored to the specific needs of women and girls. In 2016 and 2017, the State Committee for Family, Women's and Children's Affairs, together with the United Nations Population Fund, carried out a project on the elaboration of the national action plan on women, peace and security. A working group on women, peace and security, representing various stakeholders, was established for this purpose and oversaw the preparation of the draft national action plan. The draft plan is currently under consideration.

In May 2018, the State Committee held the fifth Women's Forum, dedicated to the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage in Azerbaijan. This event marked one of the most important milestones in the history of Azerbaijan, which granted women the right to vote in 1918.

Women account for 48.2 per cent of the workforce. We have made great strides in achieving gender parity in State institutions. The proportion of women appointed to key Government positions has significantly increased in recent years. The representation of women in the National Assembly grew from 11 per cent in 2005

to 17 per cent in 2015. At the municipal level, women represent 35 per cent of elected candidates.

Azerbaijan is a party to all major international agreements in the field of women's empowerment and gender equality. We remain committed to advancing the rights of women and ensuring their full and effective participation in the decision-making processes.

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

Mr. Itegboje (Nigeria): We thank the United Kingdom for agreeing to resume this debate and South Africa for having highlighting the women and peace and security agenda.

As we approach the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), introduced by the delegation of Namibia, we need to take stock of the progress made in the development of policies and strategies for the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. It is a well-known fact that women rarely initiate violent conflicts, yet they suffer its worst consequences, on multiple fronts —physically, psychologically, economically, socially and politically. Often, women fall victim to predatory warlords who systematically use rape and sexual violence as weapon of wars. Their suffering is compounded by their exclusion from key decision-making process that might lead to peace and stability.

In this regard, it is our expectation that this debate will reflect on the achievements and challenges in implementing resolution 1325 (2000) and its follow-up resolutions, as well as offer suggestions to address the prevailing challenges and gaps in acquiring the necessary resources to advance the role of women in the context of the global peace and security architecture and in the lead-up to the twentieth anniversary.

We acknowledge that the Security Council has provided the necessary leadership to give impetus to involving women in the peace and security agenda, beginning with resolution 1325 (2000), which set up the framework for subsequent Council resolutions. In Africa, the African Union has been a useful platform for the advancement of women in the peace and security agenda by placing emphasis on the engagement of women and youth in the continent's development. This is clearly reflected in Agenda 2063 of the African Union. The African Union currently has more than 14 instruments relating to women, peace and security.

At the subregional level in West Africa, the Economic Community of West African States, in collaboration with the United Nations Office for West Africa, in September 2010 developed an integrated plan of action for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The plan of action emphasizes the importance of the role of women in conflict prevention and resolution, mediation and peacebuilding efforts, as well as the rebuilding of post-conflict societies.

Building on regional and subregional efforts, in 2013 Nigeria launched a national action plan to fully implement the relevant provisions of resolution 1325 (2000). The plan was relaunched in 2017 to re-emphasize the Government's commitment to ensuring the security of women and girls during armed conflicts and to enhancing their active and direct participation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The objectives of both plans were prevention and disaster preparedness; protection and prosecution; participation and representation; crisis management; and partnerships, coordination and management.

We are already familiar with Boko Haram's activities in north-eastern Nigeria. Within the framework of the Multinational Joint Task Force, Nigeria, in partnership with Cameroon, Chad and the Niger, is collaborating to take out the remnants of the Boko Haram terrorist group, which has been targeting women and girls. Our experience in the Lake Chad region today is evidence that, with determined international collaboration, much can be achieved.

It noteworthy that 80 per cent of the internally displaced persons in the north-east of Nigeria are women and girls. We are taking concrete steps to meet their humanitarian needs and establishing the conditions necessary for the voluntary return of many displaced persons to their places of origin in safety and dignity. We are also catering to the needs of the victims of Boko Haram — including victims of rape and other sexual violence against children, the abduction of children and other grave violations — by putting in motion several legal and social remedies, such as the diligent prosecution of many of the detained Boko Haram terrorists in competent courts of law, as well as reintegration, reorientation and rehabilitation programmes designed to meet the needs of each victim of sexual violence. Some of the victims are also back at school in Nigeria and across the globe.

In conclusion, it is my delegation's belief that to achieve the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), Member States, regional organizations, the media, civil society, women and young people all have important roles to play in working together to implement the women and peace and security agenda and holding one another accountable with regard to their commitments. While inclusivity remains the key, there is also a need to focus on not only processes but also on the establishment of mechanisms for accountability and budgets for the real implementation of national action plans. Nigeria remains firmly committed to promoting and protecting the rights of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations. In this regard, we will continue to work assiduously to enhance the participation of women in peace and security initiatives.

The President: I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the of the Observer State of Palestine.

Ms. Abdelhady-Nasser(Palestine): As we approach 2020, a year of significant benchmarks and anniversaries — 75 years since the creation of the United Nations, 25 years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and 20 years since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) — we must reflect on progress made and commitments yet unfulfilled. Despite many strides, there remains a considerable gap between promises and pledges, and their faithful implementation.

Informed by the facts, years of research experience and lessons learned on the indispensable role of women in all aspects of society, whether political, security, economic or social, we must invest all possible efforts in implementation, knowing that it is vital for the genuine advancement of our nations and for the peace, stability and prosperity we all seek.

Alongside the rest of the international community, Palestine continues its efforts to implement resolution 1325 (2000) despite many obstacles, none more fierce than the 52-year illegal foreign occupation imposed on the Palestinian people, depriving them of their most fundamental human rights and affecting every dimension of life, with women disproportionately affected. While resolution 1325 (2000) emphasized the need to ensure the safety of women and girls in conflict, Palestinian women continue to be exposed to all forms of violence and human rights violations under occupation, measures of colonization, dispossession, collective punishment and blockade being the most

virulent. Daily acts of violence gravely impact women and girls, impairing their rights, lives and livelihoods in countless devastating ways.

Since the start of the occupation, an estimated 10,000 Palestinian women have been arrested and/or detained under Israeli military orders. As of September 2019, 43 women remained among the thousands of Palestinians imprisoned or detained by the occupying Power. The majority of women prisoners report being subjected to some form of ill treatment and even torture, including sexual, physical and psychological harassment, intimidation and assault. Palestinian women continue to be targeted by the occupying forces and extremist settlers, who continue to cause death and injury to our civilians, destroying homes and other properties and terrorizing Palestinian families.

Peaceful women demonstrators in the weekly protests of the Great March of Return in the Gaza Strip also continue to be targeted by the occupying forces. Of the more than 300 Palestinians killed and more than 30,000 injured by the Israeli occupying forces, one in four have been women or children. We call once more on the international community, and particularly the Security Council, to assume its obligations to bring an end to these violations and this prolonged conflict, underscoring, *inter alia*, the clear provisions of resolution 1325 (2000) on the responsibilities for resolving and preventing conflicts.

Despite that dismal backdrop, Palestinian women's resilience and resourcefulness have also been well documented, underscoring their capacity and the pivotal roles they play, not only in the daily functioning of our society, but also in the long-running building of our nation and the struggle for freedom and a just, peaceful solution to the conflict. Their many contributions must be recognized, along with specific initiatives undertaken by women civil society groups, leaders and activists to implement resolution 1325 (2000).

At the same time, women continue to mobilize to address the challenges posed by gender inequality, gender-based domestic violence, patriarchal societal norms and the need for legal reforms. As shown in recent protests by Palestinian women, while demanding liberation from occupation, they are also demanding liberation from patriarchy, racism and sexism, seeking full justice and equality.

Serious Government efforts are also ongoing to reform and repeal laws that discriminate against women.

The State of Palestine is committed to empowering women and girls and implementing resolution 1325 (2000), and we remain committed to making such strides hand in hand with the rest of the international community, imploring all, including the Security Council, to uphold their respective obligations.

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

Mr. Alrowaie (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the delegations of the United Kingdom and South Africa for resuming this important open debate on women, peace and security. Our meeting today is being held as we approach a number of anniversaries, including the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted at the fourth World Conference on Women, and the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), which calls for the central participation of women in conflict resolution and prevention.

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/800) on women and peace and security. We also welcome its important recommendations, including concerning the adoption of national action plans on women and peace and security, coupled with the necessary resources, the monitoring of their implementation, their localization and the appointment of women as mediators and negotiators in all formal peace processes.

The Kingdom of Bahrain is committed to strengthening cooperation with the United Nations and its agencies in supporting women and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In 2017, we inaugurated the UN-Women office in the Kingdom as part of our cooperation between UN-Women and the Supreme Council for Women. The Kingdom of Bahrain has sought to promote the leadership role and participation of women in national structures and legislation, pursuant to one of the priorities of the national action plan adopted in 2005. That is part of the reform approach launched by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

We have seen many achievements by Bahraini women, including the election of Ms. Fawzia Zainal as the First Speaker of Parliament. In 2017, Her Royal Highness the King's wife launched the Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa International Award for Women Empowerment. Her Royal Highness chairs

the Supreme Council for Women in Bahrain. This is the first award of its kind in the world. It recognizes institutional and individual efforts to promote women's advancement and contribution to development. In 2014, the Kingdom of Bahrain established a gender parity committee to ensure that women are given equal opportunities in the labour market.

In line with our belief in the importance of education for empowering women and girls, especially those affected by conflict, the Kingdom of Bahrain has established a number of schools in Syrian refugee camps in Jordan, as well as in Gaza. The Kingdom of Bahrain is committed to combating all practices that prevent the empowerment of women, including human trafficking. For the second year in a row, the Kingdom of Bahrain has been ranked in the top category, according to the United States Department of State report on trafficking in persons, as one of the leading countries in combating this illegal practice.

In conclusion, we stress the importance of all efforts aimed at promoting the empowerment of women and their advancement in all areas as an effective partner for maintaining international peace and security as well as achieving prosperity.

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

Mr. Duarte Lopes (Portugal): Having co-sponsored resolution 2493 (2019), Portugal welcomes its adoption. We are pleased with the achievements identified in the Secretary-General's report (S/2019/800). But, as the report also underlines, the women and peace and security agenda is still held up by many challenges, including the growth of violent misogyny and the persistence of sexual and gender-based violence as a weapon of war and terror. In that respect, Portugal will continue to fight the threats against women's and girls' human rights worldwide and to support efforts to strengthen them, especially in conflict and post-conflict areas. We will continue to push back against the pushback on women's rights.

We cannot forget that conflict also adversely affects the education of millions of children. In countries affected by conflict, the situation is extremely hard for all children, but girls are often left even further behind. For the majority of them, that means the end of school. Empowering women and girls through education is the best way to guarantee equal rights and full participation in society. Portugal reiterates the importance of the Safe

Schools Declaration as a fundamental tool to prevent sexual violence and encourages more Member States to adhere to it.

In the beginning of this year, we adopted our third national action plan to implement resolution 1325 (2000). The strategic objectives of the action plan include, among others, promoting equality between women and men in matters of security and development, protecting women's and girls' human rights and combating all forms of violence and sexual violence, increasing the number of women participating in international missions and supporting the work of civil society organizations in women, peace and security matters.

In conclusion, sustainable development cannot be achieved without safeguarding women's and girls' human rights. We cannot leave one half of humankind behind.

The President: I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States.

Mr. Abdelaziz (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we thank the Security Council presidencies of South Africa and the United Kingdom for providing the opportunity to assess the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

The League of Arab States welcomes the new policy adopted by the United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs on promoting the political analysis of conflicts, taking into account gender perspectives and encouraging the participation of women in all stages of peace operations, including field operations. The League of Arab States also commends the tireless and relentless efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Envoys to promote the presence and participation of women in mediation work and peace operations. The results of that work have been seen in various regions throughout the Arab world, including the establishment of the Yemeni Women's Technical Advisory Group, whose advice can be used to support peace operations, and the establishment of the Syrian Women's Advisory Board and the Syrian Civil Society Support Room for reaching a permanent political settlement in Syria, which contributed to reaching an agreement on the participation of women in the Constitutional Committee's membership at nearly 30 per cent. We also note the effective participation of women parliamentarians, representatives and ministers in the Libyan delegations that attended the Palermo conference in November 2018, along with the establishment of the Women's Advisory Group

on reconciliation and political affairs in Iraq, among other activities.

Significant gaps remain with respect to gender-equality, however, as explained in the Secretary-General's report (S/2019/800), despite the Organization's progress in terms of implementing the resolution. There are still significant challenges within the Arab world that undermine the effective participation of women in peace and security activities. In order to address such challenges, it is important to ensure the integrated and simultaneous implementation of the recommendations of the 2015 review and to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, and regional organizations and Member States.

At the regional level, the Ministerial Council of the League of Arab States adopted the Strategy for the Protection of Arab Women in 2015 as a regional strategy and an implementation action plan for the protection of Arab women, and as a significant step towards raising the awareness of officials and actors in connection with regional and international resolutions with a view to implementing them through the provision of protection for women and girls in the Arab region. The strategy includes four pillars for supporting the effective participation of women and girls: promoting their roles in leadership, ensuring conflict prevention, protecting against conflict and all forms of violence against women and guaranteeing that all women and girls in the Arab region have their relief needs met.

The League of Arab States has also maintained constructive cooperation with the United Nations, as epitomized by the outcome of the first Arab Ministerial Council on Women, Peace and Security in the Arab region, which was held by the League of Arab States in late 2018. In March 2019, the conference adopted important recommendations at the ministerial level on implementing the agenda, including the establishment of an emergency committee for protecting women in armed conflict in the Arab region and the creation of the Arab Women Mediators Network as one of the mechanisms of the aforementioned committee. Within that intensive campaign, Iraq, Palestine, Jordan, Tunisia and Lebanon reiterated their commitments to implementing resolution 1325 (2000) by declaring and carrying out their national action plans. Other Arab States will follow suit in coordination with the League of Arab States.

In conclusion, and in the context of commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the League of Arab States reiterates the need to optimize the use of presidential statement S/PRST/2019/5 of 13 June, on the promotion of cooperation between the Security Council and the League of Arab States. That included areas such as early warning, preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping

operations and the sustainability of peace. We can be successful in none of those areas without the participation of Arab women in the maintenance of peace and security. The League of Arab States looks forward to the consultations that will take place with the United Nations towards reaching a consultative framework in that regard.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.