

Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Conflict, June 24th 2013, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Amrani, Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations.

I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for your presence here today and for organizing this important debate. Your presence among us denotes a strong commitment to the fight against sexual violence in armed conflict.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon; Ms. Zainab Bangura, his Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict; Ms. Angelina Jolie, Special Envoy of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; and Ms. Jane Adong Anywar, of the non-governmental organization Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice, for their insightful briefings.

Sexual violence continues to destroy, scar and traumatize the lives of millions around the world, both victims and survivors, as well as families and communities. Regrettably, women and girls are the most affected by such deplorable acts.

Over the years, a number of tools and mechanisms have been developed to ensure that action is taken against the scourge of sexual violence in armed conflicts. The Security Council, through its growing focus on women and peace and security, has played an important role in establishing a solid framework to prevent and address conflict-related sexual violence. In that regard, civil society has also contributed to this noble goal and shed much-needed light on one of history's greatest silences. Yet more needs to be done.

Today we have a legal and moral responsibility to act collectively in order to prevent the recurrence of such crimes, to strengthen the repressive measures against perpetrators of these horrific acts and to ensure that they do not remain unpunished. My delegation would like to make the following five points.

First, the commitment of the national Governments concerned in the fight against sexual violence in armed conflict and their ownership of the process are crucial to preventing and putting an end to this phenomenon. That requires an innovative approach on our collective part, one that builds upon the gains achieved so far, enhances national ownership in the process and tackles the root causes of conflicts, namely, weak institutions, poverty, marginalization, social discrimination and exclusion, while ensuring adequate technical assistance and financial support to help States meet their commitments.

In that regard, Morocco recognizes the important role played by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and her team in increasing the international visibility of this important issue, and for the valuable support she brings to concerned countries and subregional and regional organizations.

It is crucial that the United Nations system and the international community continue to support and assist Member States, while fully respecting their sovereignty, in the elaboration of relevant national legislation, action plans and codes of conduct, as well as in the strengthening of their institutions and the rule of law.

Secondly, it is important to adopt a comprehensive approach in dealing with sexual violence in armed conflict. Success will be achieved only if the countries concerned are also able to address the root causes of this scourge. To that end, a coordinated approach is needed, not only at the national level but also at that of the United Nations, notably through strengthening national institutions in order to

prevent conflicts. In that regard, we highly value the goals of the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict and recognize the need for its implementation.

Thirdly, the fight against impunity should be a priority. We need to break the existing cycle of violence and prevent the recurrence of such acts in armed conflict by ensuring that those responsible of committing crimes against women and children are brought to justice.

Fourthly, particular attention and priority should be given to the vulnerability of refugee populations, namely, women and children, living in the proximity of combat zones or unsecured borders or territories. Restriction of access to vulnerable groups, including women and girls, who often have no registration documents, poses major risks to the efforts of the United Nations in the fight against sexual violence in armed conflict. It is important that all parties ensure that there is access to refugee camps in order to reduce their suffering, promote their rights and ensure their optimal protection.

Lastly, the involvement of public authorities, national institutions for human rights, civil society and non-governmental organizations, including local women's associations, in raising awareness to enhance the protection of women in conflict situations, as well as the involvement of the donor community, should be encouraged, as they make a positive contribution to our common endeavour.

Finally, I cannot conclude without thanking the delegation of the United States for introducing the resolution on this important issue. I also commend the constructive spirit of compromise that made it possible for us to adopt it today.