

**Mr. Doualeh (Djibouti): (*spoke in French*):**

I thank you, Sir, for giving me the opportunity to participate in this very important debate on trafficking in persons in conflict situations. First, I express my gratitude and congratulations to the delegation of the United Kingdom for having convened this high-level debate today, which allows us to deepen our understanding of a serious phenomenon and develop a joint analysis of its causes and the increasingly sophisticated methods of terrorists and traffickers, as well as to identify appropriate solutions to sustainably solve the problem. We underscore the judiciousness of the concept note (S/2017/198, annex), which clearly lays out the problem, clarifies what is at stake and asks a number of key questions in a heuristic approach.

I thank the Secretary-General and the Director General of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, as well as Mr. Kevin Hyland and Ms. Ilwad Elman, for their penetrating perspectives and analyses.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Bolivia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Trafficking in persons is a transnational crime that today spares no country. Sadly, we witness all too frequently a tragedy affecting thousands of persons, particularly women and children. In addition to suffering the horrors of armed conflict, they are often the victims of trafficking and sexual violence, crimes that comprise an extremely perverse affront to human dignity and that, in certain circumstances, may well be flagrant violations of international humanitarian law and international conventions on human rights and transnational organized crime.

The issue of human trafficking has been a main priority of the United Nations over the past few decades. The 2000 Palermo Protocol and the 2010 United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons serve as the cornerstones and benchmark documents for all States Members of the Organization. At the same time, in recent years we have seen a shift in the forms of human trafficking, particularly during and after conflict.

In various regions of the world affected by conflict, sexual violence is used to destroy as a tactic of war or terrorism and is a key element of the ideology and activities of extremist groups such as Boko Haram, Da'esh and Al-Shabaab. Those terrorist groups openly advocate human trafficking as part of their military strategy or as a source of funding. As a result, the Security Council must pay particular attention to the links between such phenomena as human trafficking, sexual violence in conflict situations and the activities of terrorist groups.

Djibouti recognizes that the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, represent the core international framework for combating human trafficking. The spirit of the Convention must be embedded in the national legislation of Member States and duly implemented. In that regard, we attach great importance to the assistance provided by relevant bodies to Member States, such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, particularly the guidance provided on legislation and implementation. We hope that they will make further progress on the issue and we support their crucial work.

The Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, highlighted the following in her report:

“It is estimated that 10 to 30 per cent of children in fighting forces are female. Girls who are forcibly recruited or abducted into military service typically face forced domestic labour and sexual violence and exploitation such as forced marriage and/or sexual slavery.” (A/71/303, para. 31)

Additionally, the report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361/Rev.1) highlighted the fact that in the past two years sexual violence has been increasingly linked to the strategic, ideological and financial objectives of extremist and terrorist groups.

In the third report of the Counter-Terrorism Committee on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2178 (2014) by States affected by foreign terrorist fighters (S/2015/975, annex), its Executive Directorate encouraged Member States to develop effective regional strategies to deal with cross-border issues and to cooperate closely with border communities to foster knowledge sharing.

*(spoke in English)*

Indeed, if we are to effectively tackle this scourge, we need to communicate more effectively, share intelligence and mobilize resources. That requires investment, vigilance and cooperation.

Over 90,000 men, women and children from neighbouring countries transit through Djibouti en route to Yemen and other locations in the Middle East. In 2015, during the sixth meeting of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Regional Consultative Process on Migration, held in Djibouti, States members of IGAD decided to redouble their efforts to combat trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants. My Government recently enacted a new anti-trafficking law on the fight against trafficking in persons and illicit smuggling of migrants, repealing Djibouti's law of 2007.

In conclusion, Djibouti is appalled by the commodification and dehumanization of human beings. It reiterates its commitment and its willingness to cooperate with the international community in the global effort aimed at combating this increasingly complex and sophisticated scheme developed by a vast network of facilitators and criminals.