

Ms. Rossignol (France) (*spoke in French*):

Allow me to begin by thanking the Secretary-General, Mr. Kevin Hyland, Mr. Yury Fedotov and Ms. Ilwad Elman for their briefings.

France associates itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union.

The actions committed by Da'esh in the Middle East and by Boko Haram in Africa are a dramatic illustration of the links that exist today between threats to international peace and security and human trafficking. At the global level, trafficking in persons and trafficking in drugs and counterfeit currency are among the most profitable. Their annual profits are estimated at \$32 billion. It is one of the most extensive forms of trafficking. Sexual exploitation, forced labour, servitude, kidnapping for forced prostitution, rape — the list of atrocities committed in armed conflict is, unfortunately, long. Deriving profits from human beings and considering them as merchandise, the traffickers, as well as consumers and users and the clients of sexual exploitation, clearly and brutally violate their victims' human rights and further stoke the causes of conflict.

The international community has invested heavily in this problem since the beginning of this century, but further efforts are needed in order to address the scourge of human trafficking. I therefore welcome the initiative of the United Kingdom during its presidency of the Security Council and thank that country for giving us this opportunity to have an exchange on this very important subject.

For France, the issue of trafficking in human beings and slavery, especially that of women and children, is of major importance. The statistics are, unfortunately, well known, but we must constantly point them out: 80 per cent of the victims of trafficking are women and children. The challenges are also well known: the identification of victims is still in its infancy, and organized mechanisms for fighting this scourge vary greatly between countries. Despite progress since the entry into force of the Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, still too few prosecutions have been initiated in cases involving the crime of human trafficking. The victims themselves do not always assert their rights and very often are insufficiently protected. In that context, international cooperation must be stepped up so as to increase the geographic coverage of the legislation providing effective protection against networks and to improve international cooperation aimed at dismantling those networks. Prevention, protection and the fight against impunity are the three priorities of French diplomacy in the fight against trafficking in human beings.

Since human trafficking is now an integral part of the strategy of certain terrorist groups and it fuels transnational organized crime, the Security Council has a special responsibility in combating this scourge. The adoption of resolution 2331 (2016), last December, at the initiative of Spain, was a major step forward towards better addressing the link between trafficking in human beings, sexual violence and terrorism. France very much looks forward to the report to be prepared by the Secretary-General by the end of the year.

We have in place a robust international legal framework and appropriate tools, in particular the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, which is doing sterling work in this field.

On International Women's Rights Day, the President of the French Republic also announced that France would propose an additional protocol to the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. That protocol would address violence against women in order to complement the existing international framework. But we must ensure that the obligations arising from that legal framework are effectively implemented. Our words must now be translated into action.

Rest assured, Mr President, that France will continue to play its full part in those efforts.