

Mr. Deghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, and the Spanish presidency of the Council for convening this open debate. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General and to UN-Women for their valuable contributions to the discussion of women and peace and security.

Fifteen years ago, the Security Council adopted resolution 1325 (2000), focusing on the specific effects of armed conflict on women, the positive role that women can play in conflict prevention and resolution, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and the indissoluble links between the empowerment of women and international peace and security.

Women are a key resource for promoting peace and stability. Research has shown that women's participation and inclusion make humanitarian assistance more effective, strengthen the protection of civilians, contribute to the political settlement of disputes and the maintenance of sustainable peace, and accelerate economic recovery. Today, we find ourselves at a turning point in the cause of women and girls. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1), the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action and the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, all remind us that there is a strong, direct relationship between sustainable peace and security and sustainable development, and that women and girls must be at the forefront of programmes designed to encourage development, peace and security.

Conflicts in recent years, especially in the Middle East, have assumed new and abhorrent forms and dimensions, and constitute an unprecedented challenge to stability in our region. In some parts of the region, women are grappling with the scourge of terrorism and extremist violence. The spread of violent extremism and takfiri ideology threatens the lives and rights of women and girls in our region in an unprecedented way. News accounts and other reports in the past few years have shown that women and girls have suffered the most at the hands of extremists and terrorists and have been targets for systematic sexual violence, slavery and rape. The international community should make it clear at every step of the way that there will never be leniency for those who subject women and girls to such inhumane acts of violence, physical and mental.

At the same time, it is already evident that this dangerous ideology and its consequences cannot be contained in a single region and in one way or another can easily affect other regions near and far. It is very unfortunate that women and girls have also been disproportionately victimized by bombings in Yemen and violence in Syria and elsewhere. Iran strongly condemns the barbaric acts of terrorist and

violent extremist groups and indiscriminate attacks on civilians, including women and children. We support the Secretary-General's commitment to preparing and presenting his

promised plan of action to prevent violent extremism and his intention to cite the participation, leadership and empowerment of women as key factors in addressing the drivers of extremist violence.

In closing, I would like to stress that my delegation believes that organizing a debate such as this in the Council should not undermine the work of the United Nations bodies that are most relevant to the consideration of women-related issues, that is, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.