

**Mr. Cardi (Italy):**

I thank you, Sir, for convening today's debate.

In the past, even as a non-Council member, Italy has stressed the need for the Security Council to be engaged in human trafficking and the related serious violations of human rights, and to that end, two years ago, promoted resolution 2240 (2015), on countering the business model of traffickers off the coast of Libya in the Mediterranean. As a Council member, we support treating the issue as a priority.

Italy aligns it itself with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union (EU). In my national capacity, I would like to add the following remarks.

First, it is essential, we believe, to follow up on resolution 2331 (2016), which was introduced by Spain. Its adoption represented a big step forward, in particular by highlighting the links between transnational organized crime, terrorism and trafficking networks. Transnational organized crime and terrorist groups make use of human trafficking as a weapon to control territories and as a major source of funding. We therefore strongly support the Secretary-General in following up on resolution 2331 (2016) by systematizing the action of subsidiary organs involved in counter- terrorism and sanctions, specialized agencies and the Special Rapporteur entrusted with preparing a detailed study on the difficulties of establishing guilt and/or responsibilities with regard to crimes of sexual violence and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially in women and children. Italy looks forward to the Secretary-General's report on resolution 2331 (2016), to be submitted at the end of the year, which we believe will further enhance the United Nations and the Council's capacity to address that growing threat.

Secondly, human trafficking requires a comprehensive approach at the national and international levels. At the international level, we need a concerted response grounded on the implementation of international rules and encompassing the aspects of prevention, law enforcement and accountability. In that respect, Italy looks forward to the high-level debate on the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, also known as the Palermo Convention, to be held in the General Assembly in June. At the same time, national jurisdictions bear the primary responsibility to criminalize such offenses and ensure the accountability of the criminals. We stress the importance that all States ratify, fully transpose and implement the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children at the national level as they provide the main internationally agreed legal framework to prevent and combat human trafficking. In that regard, we praise the UNODC-EU initiative, the Global Action to Prevent and Address Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants, to assist the development of national comprehensive strategies to counter trafficking.

Thirdly, the available statistics urgently indicate that we must take more victim-centred, gender-specific and children-sensitive actions. Women account for more than half of all victims of trafficking at the global level. Children are especially exposed to exploitation as they are increasingly compelled to leave their homes alone. In 2016 alone, approximately 26,000 unaccompanied or separated minors reached Italy by sea, thereby more than doubling the numbers recorded in 2015. Empowering women and enhancing their role in peacebuilding is crucial. We are launching the creation of a network of women mediators in the Mediterranean aimed at fostering stability, security and respect for human rights in the Mediterranean, which we think will contribute to combating human

trafficking and all forms of slavery and related abuses. As a first step, we are organizing with the United Kingdom presidency an Arria formula meeting on the subject on 27 March.

Fourthly, we think that legal and safe ways to ensure the movement of people fleeing from conflicts serve an important instrument in the fight against trafficking. The Italian Government is carrying out a project called “humanitarian corridors”, which allows safe and legal entry into Italy to people fleeing from conflict, especially in Syria. It is an act of solidarity and a model that other States, such as France, are following. It is also a means to combat trafficking and the exploitation of the trafficked. In the same spirit, we also welcome the call on the part of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to end statelessness, including through the enhancement and digitalization of a civil registry in the countries of origin, because the lack of documents is one of the main factors that can induce modern slavery.

Large movements of people can facilitate human trafficking and modern enslavement. Being a migrant is itself a vulnerability that can favour the exploitation of people on the move. Let me, in conclusion, reiterate the pillars of Italy’s approach: sharing responsibilities and raising awareness at the regional and global levels; saving lives at sea; addressing the socioeconomic and political root causes of conflict; disrupting the business model of traffickers and smugglers; and upholding the rights of migrants and refugees and international humanitarian law.