

**Security Council**

Seventy-third year

8234th meeting
Monday, 16 April 2018, 10 a.m.
New York*Provisional***Statement by the Representative of Mexico, Mr. Sandoval Mendiola:**

Mexico affirms that sexual violence in conflict, whether it is a tactic of war, an act of terrorism or criminal violence, is an abhorrent act and a flagrant and unacceptable violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. We appreciate Peru's convening of today's open debate, given how urgent it is that we analyse the most effective and sustainable ways to prevent and address sexual violence in conflict, such as through the empowerment of women, the promotion of gender equality and efforts to ensure access to justice and accountability for the commission of such crimes.

Sexual violence in conflict does not occur spontaneously, and can therefore be prevented if States make full use of all the tools at their disposal to empower women and girls and strengthen their protection and access to justice. In investing in women as essential promoters of peace and security, we must bear in mind that from a prevention perspective, every national and international effort to address sexual violence in conflict should be made in recognition of the virtuous circle that exists between sustainable peace, development, the rule of law and human rights.

Sustainable peace is not possible without the comprehensive participation and consideration of the needs and perspectives of women and girls. The systematic exclusion of girls from schooling leads to discrimination and is at the root of women's marginalization in political, economic and social life. Such marginalization is one of the most obvious structural causes of conflict and creates fertile ground for sexual violence. Girls must be empowered in the family and in school in relation to boys; women must be empowered with equality in relation to men and to society in general.

Empowered women, respected in their society, are crucial to building a healthy, equitable and inclusive social fabric in which the same human rights for all are promoted and respected. Communities based on gender equity will always be more resilient in the face of every kind of conflict or expression of violence.

Mexico has integrated a gender perspective into its national development plans as one of its main directions for action, enabling the necessary resources to be allocated to it in the national budget. Our long-term national initiatives include a national programme for equality and non-discrimination aimed at mainstreaming a gender perspective into all Government programmes, actions and policies with a view to guaranteeing women's rights. At the federal level, our Government is coordinating efforts with local authorities, the private sector, civil society and academia aimed at advancing the Goals of the 2030

Agenda for Sustainable Development in a comprehensive and timely manner, including all the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 5.

Crises do not discriminate with regard to gender, and armed conflict has a particular impact on women and girls. Mexico recognizes the importance of including them in mediation processes and process for building, strengthening and sustaining peace, and believes that it is vital to ensure they participate in prevention, reconstruction and national reconciliation efforts. Their access to justice is crucial, and establishing protection mechanisms for women and girls should therefore be a norm in every legal system.

The resolutions adopted by the Security Council on women and peace and security have helped to strengthen the normative architecture of that agenda. The challenge now lies in achieving its effective, consistent and cross-cutting implementation across the entire United Nations system and by Member States in order to eliminate the marginalization of women that still exists when it comes to making decisions on peace and security.

Mexico has joined the Secretary-General's voluntary compact on preventing and addressing sexual abuse committed by United Nations staff on the ground. In that regard, we should point out that the privileges and immunities of the Organization cannot and must not be seen as a factor in impunity. That is why we call on the Council to implement a stronger and more effective mechanism for monitoring national proceedings related to sexual violence committed by staff deployed under the United Nations flag, as well as other officials and experts on mission, in order to combat impunity.

As an international community, we must acknowledge that sanctions are one of the most effective ways of punishing perpetrators of sexual violence and ensuring that they never commit such acts again. However, sanctions imposed by the Council will continue to have a limited impact when it comes to combating sexual violence in conflict if they are not strengthened through cooperation, both within and outside the United Nations system, on investigating and documenting these types of war crimes in an impartial and effective manner.

Prevention, as the Secretary-General has pointed out on several occasions, involves the empowerment of women and girls in society. A society cannot be healthy when the needs of half of its members are ignored. There can be no sustainable peace without women's full participation in our societies.