

Ms. Flores Herrera (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, allow me to thank the delegation of Spain, Sir, for convening this open Council debate on the topic “Women and peace and security”.

I would like to reiterate the message of the President of the Republic of Panama, His Excellency Mr. Juan Carlos Varela Rodríguez, during the general debate:

“In today’s world, women are the ones who suffer most from the effects of inequality, poverty, war, forced displacement due to conflicts, trafficking in human beings and inequality in terms of opportunities. Consequently, the role that we, Heads of State, and the United Nations are called upon to play to defend and promote the rights and freedoms of women is of paramount importance.” (A/70/PV.19)

We reiterate the appeal made at the Global Leaders’ Meeting on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, held on 6 March 2015, for more resources to be given to address femicide and all human trafficking, especially violence against women.

Panama aligns itself with the statement made earlier today by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Human Security Network. Panama is a sponsor of resolution 2242 (2015), adopted by the Security Council today, which reflects the complexity and scale of the issue. The numerous armed conflicts we see at the global level unfortunately have demonstrated that women have available to them few resolution resources to protect themselves, yet, together with their sons and daughters, they represent the majority of the displaced and refugee population. Women have also claimed space and, in some cases, led peace movements that promoted the recovery of their communities following conflicts. Yet, women have remained invisible, which is a historical failure we must overcome. That exclusion has limited women’s access to opportunities for recovery, their ability to obtain justice for violations of their human rights and their participation in legal and institutional reforms.

It is up to the States, therefore, to continue to work to promote the greater participation of women at all stages of peace and security processes. Similarly, resolution 1325 (2000), which brings us together today, on the occasion of its fifteenth anniversary, is the first resolution to establish a connection between the experiences of women in conflicts and the international agenda for peace and security and to highlight the fact that conflicts have a disproportionate impact on women. This resolution becomes even more relevant today, as we see the violence levelled against women by extremist groups that violate their rights, their dignity, their integrity and their very lives. Consequently, it is essential that the Security Council call upon all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and sexual abuse, and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict.

Fifteen years have passed, and women's contributions are still undervalued and underutilized. The claims and spaces created through women's participation in the prevention and resolution of conflicts should be enhanced to guarantee them the primary role they have been called on to play. The post-2015 development agenda (General Assembly resolution 70/1), recently adopted by our Heads of State, follows that path. It is an important step towards achieving the goal of women's broad and equal participation, without discrimination. The world needs such a fundamental transformation. We cannot continue to do what we have been accustomed to doing; that is no longer an option. The issues of peace and security are a commitment that is intrinsically related to the promotion of human development, seen as people-centred sustainable development, in the context of governance, into which women's presence and actions must be interwoven. From the home to public life, the State must ensure the empowerment of women and men alike so as to build better citizens, better fathers, better mothers, promoting a platform of education that helps to raise children who are peaceful and non-aggressive.

Today, the Administration of our country depends on a significant number of women who work for the Panamanian Government, including the Vice-President and Foreign Minister of the Republic, other ministers, deputy ministers, agency director and heads of diplomatic missions. Similarly, the creation of a gender unit in the police force under the law on prevention of femicide is another example of the integration of women into the security agenda of Panama.

A couple of days ago on 11 October, we celebrate the International Day of the Girl Child, a generation that must empower so as to effectively break the circle of poverty, violence, inequality and exclusion. The girls of today will inherit the world of tomorrow, and we must deliver them a safe and peaceful environment. In the same vein, Panama favours the election of a woman as Secretary-General because we support and will continue to support all efforts of that organ to ensure that a woman occupies that position of world leadership and guidance.

In conclusion, if we are to achieve the development we desire, we need a more feminine vision of the world. Yes, such a vision will come mainly from women, but also from engaged and informed men. The participation of 100 per cent of our people in every last phase of the search for lasting peace and security will finally release the human potential to resolve the most pressing issues we face. Perhaps the most important reference in the resolution adopted today is its last line — the Security Council “decides to remain actively seized of the matter”.