

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*):

On behalf of my delegation, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for giving us the opportunity to discuss an issue of such significant impact and importance in today's world, namely, trafficking in persons in conflict situations. We also wish the United Kingdom every success during its presidency of the Security Council for the remainder of the month.

As everyone will recall, just three months ago, we met in this same Chamber and adopted resolution 2331 (2016). My delegation sponsored it because we believed that it contributes to rendering more visible the horror in which thousands of men, women and children live as victims of forced labour, slavery and other similar practices, committed by terrorist organizations that are linked in networks of transnational organized crime.

As part of the priority given by the Government of Peru to combating this scourge, on 6 January the Peruvian Congress enacted a law incorporating in our Criminal Code the crimes of sexual exploitation and slavery and other forms of exploitation, with sentences of 10 to 15 years imprisonment. The crime of forced labour will be subject to a sentence of 6 to 12 years in prison. That is a major effort that has been complemented by the establishment of a national policy against trafficking in persons and other forms of exploitation.

Peru, which respects human rights and fundamental freedoms, believes it is essential that we combat trafficking in persons with an integrated, comprehensive and coordinated crime strategy. By integrated, we mean that there should be a holistic approach to prevention, to the prosecution of those responsible and to assistance to their victims, particularly the most vulnerable, such as children, adolescents and women.

By comprehensive, we mean that we should consider trafficking in persons as a crime related to others such as drug trafficking and trafficking in migrants, which also require effective action in line with the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols Thereto, to which we encourage adherence.

By coordinated, we mean coordination among the national agencies concerned, which also involves strengthening bilateral, regional and global cooperation at the international level. In that regard, I would like to highlight Peru's initiative of legal protective zones, which seeks to establish a bloc of bilateral agreements that the Peruvian Foreign Ministry is already implementing with neighbouring countries. So far we have already signed agreements with Colombia, Bolivia and Ecuador, and negotiations are under way with Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Paraguay.

We welcome the work of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons, and we trust that we can continue to rely on the assistance and steady support of the United Nations, especially the Office on Drugs and Crime. I would like to reaffirm Peru's energetic condemnation of human trafficking in conflict or any other circumstances, as well as of forced labour, especially for children, and to assure the Council of my country's strong support in dealing with this serious problem.