

**Ms. Jean** (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I should like to commend France for its initiative to convene today's high-level open debate. I am particularly grateful to you, Sir, for inviting me here to reiterate, for the second time, the crucial importance of the implementation of the provisions of resolution 1325 (2000), of 31 October 2000, as well as resolutions that have complemented it year after year. Seventeen years ago, we agreed to turn obvious truths into words.

Seventeen years ago, we agreed to recognize the importance of women's participation, on an equal footing with men, in the areas of crisis prevention, mediation and the maintenance and strengthening of peace and security.

Let us start by recognizing that women did not wait for the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) to translate these truths into action. We saw it in Liberia. Ms. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was one of those women who stood up to the warlords and mediated between the warring parties. We saw it in Bosnia. Within communities, women are always the first to seek reconciliation and return. We saw it in Rwanda. Women who had been physically harmed took the lead in reconciliation and reconstruction efforts at the local and national levels. In Mali, as everywhere else, when women get to the bargaining table, their influence is real and they achieve noteworthy results.

I am also thinking of the Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement of April 2012, which was written by four women who had initially not been invited to speak. However, faced with their insistence and the value and content of their proposals, they ended up being admitted to the negotiating table — yes, admitted without having been officially invited.

Those are just a few examples among many that speak to the real capacity of women and all the forceful actions they take every day that contribute to peace and security and that are wrongly overlooked. And that is without counting the achievements of women engaged in peacekeeping operations. I remember listening with the greatest admiration to cohorts of women trained in Ghana and Mali at the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, whose closure in 2013 I bitterly deplore.

How many resolutions, studies, meetings of independent high-level groups and groups of experts must there be before we do away with that abysmal and unacceptable figure of 9 per cent of women participating in some 30 major negotiations over the past 25 years? I ask myself: What are we afraid of? Being more effective? It has been shown that women's participation increases by 20 per cent the probability of reaching a peace agreement that will last at least two years, and by 35 per cent the chances of reaching a peace agreement that will last 15 years.

We — international organizations, States and Governments, together with civil society — must commit ourselves resolutely to identifying and mobilizing women in a more systematic and coordinated way to sit at all negotiating tables and lead or take part in dialogues and national processes. That is also one of the central recommendations of the Abidjan seminar on the promotion of women's participation in peace processes in Francophone Africa, which we

organized almost a year ago, in partnership with UN-Women and the Francophone Network for Gender Equality. Our countries, our networks are full of remarkable women. Let us mobilize them.

What are we waiting for to put an end to the derisory and unacceptable figure of 3 per cent of women participating as military personnel of United Nations missions? What are we afraid of? Being more productive? It has been shown that the presence of women in those sectors contributes to improving security forces and increasing the credibility of missions, especially in their dealings with the population. Women inspire confidence.

The Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) holds fast to the commitment, undertaken at the Francophonie Summit in Dakar of 2014, to investing in women and young people, who are the vectors of peace and development actors. Our organization, which has been involved for more than 15 years in strengthening the French-speaking contribution to United Nations peacekeeping operations, is also mobilizing on the ground in order to encourage the participation of female staff in missions and to train security forces in women's rights.

I will insist in a few days on all of these points at the Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial in Vancouver, Canada. OIF will once again sensitize its members to that problem at the meeting that we are organizing in the framework of the Boutros-Ghali Observatory in late November in Paris, in partnership with the United Nations. I do not want to see us forget the rule of law dimension, because the banalization of excessive State violence against citizens, the climate of impunity and the persistence of areas of lawlessness also affect the women and peace and security agenda.

It is clear that we need to do more. We must do more for women's economic and social integration, because peace, stability and security also depend on shared and inclusive economic development. That is the message that I will bring in five days to Bucharest, where the World Forum of Francophone Women will be held under the theme, "Creation, innovation, entrepreneurship, growth and development: Women make their mark!"

We also must do more to fund women and peace and security. What is the point of pleading our case if the sums granted to fragile States to address issues of equality between women and men still represent only 6 per cent of the total aid package and only 2 per cent of aid reserved for peace and security, not to mention the funding rate for local women's organizations, including women's rights organizations, which could be described as miniscule?

We must do more to guarantee the full recognition of all forms of discrimination and crimes against women, which are crimes against humanity. We must do more to end impunity. How can one imagine genuinely recognizing the role of women as vectors of peace while leaving unpunished those who trample their bodies and dehumanize them? Year after year, resolution after resolution, we agree to put into words the horrors that are inflicted on women by men, even more cruelly and more systematically in times of hostilities, conflicts and war. It is primarily

women who are targeted when men decide to annihilate a people or a nation. The abduction and rape of women, girls and little girls have become weapons of mass destruction and their bellies have become battlefields.

I cannot forget the tears of the seven year-old girl, her mother and all the women tortured by militiamen in the Goma region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where I visited in 2010. And what is happening these days? We see massacres in Kasai province and hear stories of mutilated women, some of whom were pregnant, who are found disemboweled. It is unbearable.

I am thinking about what happened to women in the neighbouring countries of Rwanda and Burundi. I am thinking of the thousands of refugee women in the Niger, on the border with Nigeria, 70 per cent of whom have fallen prey to Boko Haram and been subject to the most horrendous attacks. Lest we think that it is merely a question of Africa, I would say that it is not. Barbarism and inhumanity know no borders, And when there are reports of sexual abuse by United Nations personnel, the facts are equally damning. The men in this Chamber today are commended for not looking the other way and for resolutely supporting us.

Today's meeting provides us with an opportunity to affirm a real desire to act together, to continue to act and to do more. Let us take up the challenge of ever-increasing consultation and synergy of efforts. This is what we decided, the four women leading, respectively, OIF, the Ibero-American General Secretariat, the Commonwealth and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, which comprise 167 States and Governments, or 61 per cent of the world's population. This strategic alliance also exists to serve the women and peace and security agenda, because nothing without women is or ever will be possible.