

Ms. Kadare (Albania) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank the French presidency for convening today's open debate on such an important subject.

(*spoke in English*)

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report and recommendations (S/2017/861), and the Executive Director of UN-Women and the Secretary General of the International Organization of La Francophonie for their briefings, as well as Ms. MinaRojas for the reality check that she brought to the Chamber from the real world.

Albania aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union, and I want to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

We now have accumulating evidence that achieving gender equality and empowering women contribute to the success of peace talks and the achievement of sustainable peace, accelerate economic recovery, improve humanitarian assistance, help counter violent extremism and prevent human rights violations. There has been genuine progress since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), and Member States are progressively integrating their principles and obligations into their national legal frameworks.

However, the implementation of the normative framework is lagging behind. Despite the international community's commitment, the meaningful inclusion of women in preventing conflicts and negotiating peace processes is still inadequate. Women continue to be sidelined during peace negotiations, and even when they are present it is always the men who decide when and how to make peace. We Member States should strengthen our resolve to fully implement the women and peace and security agenda in order to effect real change on the ground.

Albania has made significant progress in empowering women and achieving gender equality. Today women in Albania constitute 28 per cent of Parliament and 50 per cent of the Council of Ministers. Although we have not yet adopted a national action plan for resolution 1325 (2000), gender is mainstreamed across the security sector under the umbrella of our national strategy on gender equality and fight against domestic violence. We have also integrated the objectives of resolution 1325 (2000) into our strategies for human-resources management in the armed forces and for public order in Albania's State police.

As a result, women's participation in the armed forces has increased, and today 17 per cent of our military personnel are women. Albania's current Minister of Defence is a woman, as was her predecessor. In addition, policies and regulations have been developed with a view to facilitating the promotion of women in their careers and through the ranks. The State police has instituted a temporary 50 per cent quota for women in their recruitment policy in order to accelerate the increase in women's representation. Women now represent 14 per cent of the State police,

while specific training programmes have been introduced to promote them in operational command roles.

We are currently drafting our national action plan with the support of our Dutch partners, UN-Women, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union delegation. We are making sure that the drafting process brings together not only the relevant Government stakeholders, but also civil society and women's groups, as that is the best way to increase ownership and political will for its future implementation. Regional action plans also play an important role in promoting peace and security. In that context, Albania has pledged its full support to the Italian initiative of creating a Mediterranean women mediators network, which is a concrete mechanism that aims to prevent and mitigate conflict through the increased participation of women in peace processes.

Finally we encourage the United Nations system to ensure that gender perspectives are integrated across all its activities. Albania strongly supports the SecretaryGeneral's efforts and personal commitment to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. I shall conclude by quoting his wise words: "Our world needs more women leaders. And our world needs more men standing up for gender equality."