

Mr. Sobral Duarte (Brazil):

I would like to begin by thanking the Russian Federation for organizing this debate. I also thank the Secretary-General, the Executive-Director of UN-Women and Ms. Lopidia for their briefings.

Many positive steps have been taken to implement the resolutions on women and peace and security. However, despite those efforts, women are still a minority in peace and security negotiations and in peacekeeping operations. Our challenge remains to fully implement the eight Council resolutions on women and peace and security, including the landmark resolution 1325 (2000). Women are proven agents of change and should be able to do even more. Today's conflicts continue to have a tragic feature in common. Women and girls suffer their impact disproportionately more because they are also targets of specific forms of violence and abuse, including sexual violence and exploitation. Efforts to resolve conflicts and address their root causes should aim to empower all those who have suffered from them, especially women.

Brazil was honoured to participate in the foundational meeting of the women and peace and security national focal points network that took place at the margins of the General Assembly recent general debate. As discussed at that meeting and underlined in the global study for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), Member States and regional organizations remain the most influential actors regarding the women and peace and security agenda. We commend Spain for its leadership in the creation of the network.

Women should play a crucial role in bolstering conflict prevention. In the short-term, they can lead efforts aimed at promoting pre-emptive dialogue and early warning systems. In the long-term, they can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the causes and contribute to solutions to conflict. It is also important to explore the synergies between the women and peace and security agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly regarding the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 5, without losing sight of their specificities and the integrity and universality of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Over the past few years, the women and peace and security agenda has been integrated into the political mainstream of the United Nations. United Nations entities, including UN-Women, the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Commission on the Status of Women, have contributed in that regard. Likewise, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and several rapporteurs of the Human Rights Council have diligently worked to strengthen that vital agenda. It would be inconceivable today to establish a peacekeeping operation without deploying gender advisers, without including a mandate to protect women or without training peacekeepers to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and abuse, as highlighted by many countries in September during the peacekeeping defence ministerial in London.

The complex humanitarian crises arising from conflicts highlight the plight of women and girls who have been subject to various forms of sexual violence and forced abandonment of their homes and communities. They have become refugees and internally displaced persons. In that context, we should ensure that we give particular attention to women and girls who belong to more vulnerable groups, including indigenous or older women, those with disabilities and members of ethnic or religious minorities. Brazil remains strongly engaged in the advancement of gender equality and women empowerment issues at all levels and areas of work of the United Nations.

Protection and empowerment are inseparable aspects of the women and peace and security agenda. At the international level, that includes formulating and implementing the mandates of peacekeeping operations and special political missions, conducting peace negotiations and handling peacebuilding, recovery and humanitarian initiatives. At the domestic level, Governments should be ready to redesign and improve gender-sensitive policies.

Brazil has made considerable progress in the past decade and remains a vocal advocate and staunch supporter of United Nations efforts to advance the women and peace and security agenda. Our South- South cooperation is closely aligned with that agenda. We have, for instance, supported projects to assist victims of sexual and gender-based violence in Guinea- Bissau, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Haiti. The Brazilian Peace Operations Joint Training Centre in Rio de Janeiro regularly holds workshops and courses to train peacekeepers on gender issues and the protection of women. Rigorous standards regarding the conduct and discipline of personnel are upheld.

We are confident that our national efforts will positively influence all of our activities in the international arena. We are also finalizing our national action plan on women and peace and security. It will comprise measures, such as fostering the participation of women in peace missions, that will further enhance the relationship between troops and civilians, particularly women and girls, in peace operations and provide humanitarian assistance and technical cooperation to post-conflict countries concerning gender issues. That initiative will strengthen and build upon the provisions of our national policy plan on women, which already embraces several recommendations contained in resolution 1325 (2000).