

Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia) (spoke in Spanish):

I would like to thank the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN-Women and Security Council members for their statements in support of the participation of women in my country's peace process. I would also like to thank Ms. Rita Lopidia and her organization for having shared her testimony. She can rest assured that her appeal to the international community on behalf of women from Colombian civil society who are seeking to build peace to make sure that the agreement reached in Havana is safeguarded will not fall on deaf ears.

My delegation thanks the Russian presidency for convening this open debate, almost 16 years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). The President's concept paper (S/2016/871, annex), which his delegation disseminated for the debate, states that all of the studies that the Secretary-General commissioned last year point to a significant link between the participation of women in conflict prevention and resolution and the effectiveness and sustainability of the subsequent rebuilding. That conclusion was reflected in last year's resolution 2242 (2015). We must continue to prioritize the participation of women in conflict prevention and resolution and peacebuilding, and States must fully assume the responsibility of safeguarding and guaranteeing women's rights in a safe and suitable environment.

In Colombia, as we close a difficult chapter of the hemisphere's most protracted conflict, we understand that women and girls play a fundamental and proactive role in the building of the peace we so desire. We can say that the process has been a new, almost unprecedented experience. It is the first time that a gender focus is expressly included, not only through the participation of women as fully empowered members of both the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia guerrillas and the Government, but also through the creation and work of a gender subcommission — that the Secretary-General and many of delegations recognized this morning — which, through often difficult but respectful dialogue, bore fruit as all resulting chapters of the final peace agreement provide concrete gender-specific provisions.

As the Secretary-General's report (S/2016/822) on women and peace and security indicates, women accounted for up to a third of the participants at the table, approximately half of those participating in the consultations and over 60 per cent of the victims and the experts that visited the negotiation table in Havana.

We recognize that civil society, especially women's organizations, have spurred that rebuilding and the future adherence to the agenda for women's rights. That is why they are now strategic State partners in the search for that shared goal. Although challenges remain, the Government's resolve to overcoming them is underpinned by its commitment to offering women reparations for the injuries they have suffered, guarantees that the abuses will not recur and preventive measures. My country will continue to promote a culture free of all forms of discrimination and violence. To that end, we have signed on to the recently created Women, Peace and Security National Focal Points Network, an initiative led by Spain and other regional countries.

In conclusion, in spite of the difficult results of the 2 October referendum, the Government has called for a national dialogue to bring together all parties to help reach an agreement and its implementation as soon as possible. The commitment to gender equity and peace was strengthened on 21 October when President Santos and 109 women's organizations reaffirmed their support for the peace agreement and welcomed the fact that victims' rights were at the heart of the agreement and that the

fundamental role of women and girls in peacebuilding was recognized. The President of Colombia will continue to strive for peace until the very end of his mandate.