

Mrs. Gatto (Italy):

I would like to thank the Russian presidency for organizing this important debate on women and peace and security.

Italy aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union and the statement made by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women and Peace and Security. Furthermore, we fully support the statement made by the representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the light of our cooperation related to the upcoming split mandate in the Security Council. As a member of the Security Council for the split term in 2017 and 2018, Italy, together with the Netherlands, will continue its sustained efforts to put gender at the heart of peace and security issues and encourage other countries to join us.

There is clear evidence that no sustainable and lasting peace is possible without women's active involvement in peace processes. That is why Italy is at the forefront in supporting the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and enthusiastically co-sponsored resolution 2242 (2015), which encompasses concrete steps to further promote the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), especially in the area of introducing new working methods for more focused attention of the Security Council on the issue.

Despite all the achievements of the women and peace and security agenda over the past 16 years, much remains to be done. It is inconceivable that half of our societies continue to be excluded from efforts to bring, restore and maintain peace and stability, and that half of our communities should continue to bear disproportionately the cost of conflict. If we are to move further away from words and towards actions, the promotion of women in peace and security must be achieved in the areas of prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding agendas, in general and throughout the United Nations. The following are several concrete examples.

Nearly half of all peace agreements say nothing about women's rights or needs. In the majority of peace processes, the presence of women is still treated as an afterthought, although to date it has been proven as a fact that involving women in conflict prevention and resolution increases our chances of success. That is why we are implementing the commitments made at the peacekeeping defence ministerial in London in September, which recognized the indispensable role of women in peacekeeping and in conflict resolution as a whole. Italy is particularly interested in increasing the participation of women in uniformed roles, including police roles, and in promoting the integration of women's needs and gender perspectives into all aspects of peacekeeping and in efforts towards conflict prevention and resolution. In this period, Italy has committed to supporting the initiative of UN-Women on the role of women in mediation.

Secondly, women and girls are increasingly victims of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and violence. Such risks increase in emergencies, conflicts and post-conflicts situations. The women and peace and security agenda seeks to address such risks, giving the issue of sexual violence in conflicts the centrality it deserves, alongside the economic and political empowerment of women and their vital role in peacebuilding. Italy is strongly committed to preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based crimes in conflict. We are especially active in training Blue Helmets on those issues, and we fully support international initiatives for preventing sexual violence in conflict at both the political and at the operational level.

Thirdly, we believe that special attention to a comprehensive strategy is needed to prevent the radicalization of women and girls in order to ensure a viable alternative to nihilists and extremists, which has a dramatic impact on all our communities.

Let me conclude by saying that these are important priorities for Italy and that we are cognizant that efforts are needed in all countries, not just developing or conflict-ridden ones. That is why we are currently reviewing the third iteration of our of action plan on women and peace and security with a view to promoting the paradigm of the empowerment of women as agents for change. At the same time, we are aware that especially fragile States can greatly benefit from a joint effort to shape national-level policy-making and to generate strategic cross-national partnerships for gender equality. That approach is at the core of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which recognizes the need to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies that are based on respect for human rights for all.

We look forward to working with all States, members and non-members of the Security Council, the United Nations and regional organizations to turn that agenda into reality.