

Mr. Bessho (Japan): I would first like to thank the presidency of France for convening today's meeting on a very important topic. I am also grateful to all the briefers for their very insightful and powerful statements.

Despite the fact that 17 years have passed since the Security Council's adoption of its landmark resolution 1325 (2000), the normative framework has still not been fully put in place. Exactly two years ago, in October 2015, some 100 countries announced their commitment to promoting the women and peace and security agenda. We were one of them, of course. At the time, Japan made a number of commitments that included, first, our determination to steadily implement our national action plan and ensure its effective monitoring. The second was increasing our financial support to UNWomen and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. The third was investing in developing human resources and the education of displaced women. We like to think that Japan has faithfully fulfilled those promises.

This year we completed the first evaluation report on our national action plan, and are steadily implementing its commitments. Our cooperation with UN-Women is growing. In 2016, Japan became its second-largest contributor, with those contributions largely directed at efforts to support human-resource development and education for displaced women in the Middle East and Africa. We also continue to be one of the top donors to the team of experts of the Office of Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and we affirm our ongoing support for their work.

According to the World Bank, as many as 90 per cent of conflicts between 2000 to 2009 were relapses. Women's meaningful participation and leadership are key to preventing conflict, sustaining peace and avoiding relapses into conflict. Today I will focus on the areas of peace negotiations and peacekeeping missions, in which Japan has been actively involved and has some expertise. While the reality represented by the reported figures is a stark one for both areas, we strongly believe in their potential to drive the women and peace and security agenda significantly forward.

Past experience has shown that women's effective participation and influence in the peace negotiation process are closely linked to the eventual achievement of sustained peace. In that regard, I commend the efforts of the regional networks of women mediators in the African, Nordic and Mediterranean regions, a subject that the representative of Italy already touched on. Japan is ready to work to apply this positive trend to other regions, including Asia. Training is central to our efforts. For example, Japan supported UN-Women's technical training on peacebuilding, mediation and conflict prevention for 230 women through the Peace Support Training Centre in Kenya in 2016, which significantly changed the mindset of the whole community, including its male leaders, and promoted women's participation in traditionally male-dominated local peacebuilding committees. It genuinely helped to mitigate tensions between communities.

Making a peacekeeping mission as gender responsive as possible is directly linked to its success. It is key to the consolidation of peace on the ground. The United Nations system-wide strategy on gender parity is an excellent guide and, needless to say, we must ensure its full implementation. Pooling and training mission staff are crucial. We were pleased to join the collective effort to support the Department of Field Support's senior women talent pipeline project. In that connection, we will hold an outreach seminar for the project in Tokyo this very weekend, inviting potential senior women candidates. Improving the gender-responsiveness of peacekeeping missions will contribute significantly to eliminating sexual exploitation and abuses by peacekeeping personnel.

Finally, in the wake of UN-Women's HeForShe Champion movement, we should note the importance of mobilizing men's active engagement in efforts to establish gender parity and the equality and empowerment of women, which of course includes the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. Japan will continue to work with members of the Council and the United Nations to promote that agenda further.