

Ms. Oehri (Liechtenstein): We reiterate our strong support for the women and peace and security agenda. The adoption of eight resolutions on the topic by the Security Council reflects the important progress we have made in this area. However, we are still very far from achieving the goals we set for ourselves, and have to tackle a significant gap between decisions on paper and the reality on the ground.

The data in the latest report (S/2017/861) of the Secretary-General point to significant barriers in women's meaningful participation in mediation processes. The full participation of women in mediation is essential to achieving sustainable peace. Root causes to conflicts cannot be fully addressed, and societal traumas cannot be overcome, when half of the population is excluded from peace processes. In addition, women often shoulder a large share of responsibility in communities during conflict and recovery, which makes their participation even more important.

Access to justice is a crucial component of peaceful, just and inclusive societies, as reflected in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16. But structural inequalities, poverty and discrimination often hinder women's access to justice and security, as well as transitional justice processes. Gender-responsive legal and judicial systems are fundamental for building and sustaining resilient societies. Liechtenstein is proud to be a member of the pathfinders for peaceful, just and inclusive societies, which lead on the implementation of SDG 16 and provide a basis for exchange of best practices in that area.

The latest report (S/2017/249) of the Secretary General on conflict-related sexual violence documents 19 situations, involving 46 parties to conflict, of committing or instigating patterns of rape and other forms of sexual violence. While women and girls are particularly vulnerable to becoming victims of such violence in conflict situations, men and boys are also targeted. It is well documented that, among other purposes, armed forces or groups, including groups involved in violent extremism, recruit both girls and boys for sexual purposes. Moreover, men and boys often represent the majority of detainees during armed conflict and are highly vulnerable to sexual violence. A prevailing culture of silence and harmful stereotypes often prevent male victims from coming forward, which further reduces the prospects for accountability.

Transitional justice mechanisms often adopt a gender-binary interpretation of sexual violence, identifying women as victims and men as perpetrators. As a consequence, male survivors face limited or no access to important reparations and psychosocial and medical services. At the same time, stereotyping women as victims can hinder them in fully using their potential to live life in dignity.

Sexual and gender-based violence can constitute crimes against humanity and war crimes and, in specific circumstances, elements of genocide. Those are the core crimes under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which is the centrepiece of our common fight against impunity for serious crimes under international law. The most efficient protection against conflict-related sexual violence is ensuring that it does not happen in the first place.

Liechtenstein commends the Secretary-General for his focus on prevention and would like to recall that 114 States have signed the code of conduct of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group on Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes — pledging to support timely and decisive action to prevent and end such crimes. We call on the remaining States to join the code of conduct, and thereby help ensure that the Council delivers on its mandate to protect civilians from mass atrocities.