

**Mr. Sandoval Mendiola (Mexico) (spoke in Spanish):**

I thank the Russian Federation for convening this annual debate on women and peace and security. I also thank the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN-Women and the representative of civil society for their briefings.

The report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (see S/2015/446), the report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture (see S/2015/490) and the Global Study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) mandated under resolution 2122 (2013) can only give new momentum to the role played by women in conflict situations, the inclusion of a gender perspective in all phases of peace processes and the importance of increasing women's participation in the prevention of, and response to, conflict and in post-conflict reconstruction.

Although we acknowledge that progress has been made in implementing the agenda, it has not been widespread, owing to geographical and political limitations. It is therefore important that we take this opportunity to review the peace agenda to renew the commitment of the membership and advocate for women and the gender perspective as core aspects in international peacekeeping and security, and, above all, the role of women and development in peacebuilding and sustainable peace.

The adoption of General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) has served to establish a paradigm shift in the United Nations international peace and security agenda with regard to the concept of sustainable peace. Sustainable peace requires comprehensive and long-term approaches that link political action, security, justice, development, and the promotion of human rights in support of national efforts, in which women play a central role. In particular, we recognize the need to foster greater participation by women in United Nations initiatives relating to conflict prevention, mediation, the cessation of hostilities, disarmament and the monitoring of peace agreements.

In that regard, Mexico highlights the successful case of Colombia, where the negotiations process leading up to the peace agreement in that country was marked by the significant presence and participation of women. We also acknowledge the efforts of the United Nations Mission in Colombia to maximize the number of women as observers and in all other roles. The approaches followed in Colombia must become the norm. Accordingly, we support calls upon the Secretary-General to appoint more women mediators and women leaders of mediation groups and to ensure that United Nations-launched mediation processes incorporate a gender perspective. Similarly, gender perspectives and the specific needs of women must be comprehensively included in all peace agreements.

It is essential that the activities carried out by a peacekeeping or special political mission take into account the specific needs of women and girls and recognize the importance of their participation in interactions with local communities. We therefore support the idea of peacekeeping operations integrating a gender perspective, starting from the planning phase and in all other phases, and we support the integration of gender advisers into such operations so as to provide specific and differentiated attention to women and girls who fall victim to conflict and violence. We acknowledge that 16 peacekeeping operations already have units or focal points dedicated to gender issues, and we call for the same effort to be made in special political missions, as there are gender experts in only 6 out of the 10 ongoing missions. In that regard, we also underscore that the deployment of a greater number of women on the ground,

as well as an increase in the number of female personnel in the national armies of States Members, continues to be a priority.

Crises are not neutral in nature from a gender perspective. Armed conflicts affect women more because, unfortunately, sexual abuse and exploitation have become a weapon of war. Mexico condemns in the strongest terms the violence and sexual exploitation to which women and girls have been subjected in situations of armed conflict. For that reason, our country is a regional champion of the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative.

My country commends the actions taken by the Secretary-General to prevent sexual abuse by personnel serving under the United Nations flag. Such acts must not be allowed to happen again. We particularly welcome the appointment of a special coordinator to deal with those issues and call upon all troop-contributing countries to strictly implement the zero-tolerance policy in connection with the commission of sexual abuse by their personnel. At the same time, we support international efforts to harmonize the training of military, police and civilian personnel in issues involving gender and the prevention of sexual abuse.

Mexico also expresses its concern with regard to the alarming increase in the use of sexual violence as a tactic by terrorist groups, particularly those involved in armed conflict. On that account, we welcome the initiative of the Secretary-General to identify gender equality as one of the priorities of his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, and we see it as a positive sign that General Assembly resolution 70/291, which was the culmination of the fifth review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, highlights the importance of promoting greater synergies among Member States, the United Nations and women's organizations in developing strategies to combat terrorism and violent extremism.

Finally, I reiterate Mexico's commitment to the full implementation of the sustainable peace agenda, while comprehensively promoting programmes that meet the specific needs of women in connection with prevention and conflict in all of its phases.