

**Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands):**

The Kingdom of the Netherlands aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union and that made by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends on Women, Peace and Security. In addition, we fully support the statement to be made by the representative of Italy later today, in the light of our cooperation related to our upcoming split term in the Security Council. Together with Italy, we will continue to place gender at the heart of peace and security issues. We feel proud that resolution 1325 (2000) was adopted by the Council the last time that the Kingdom of the Netherlands was a Council member, in 2000.

I will focus on three issues: first, on the Dutch vision; secondly, the integration of resolution 1325 (2000) in our foreign and security policies; and, thirdly, on the importance of national action plans.

My first point concerns the Dutch vision. Perhaps I will also include a comment on our support for the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security. We are a strong supporter of the entire women and peace and security agenda. As the global study has shown us, our focus should be on putting the normative framework we have built together over the past 15 years into practice — into daily reality. We are convinced that the only way to achieve sustainable peace is by the meaningful inclusion of women in conflict prevention, in conflict resolution and in mediation and peace processes.

We promote the engagement of women and men in changing power relationships and gender norms in support of a more inclusive society. We believe that the way forward is to take our best practices and turn them into standard practices. The inclusion of women in peace processes should be the rule rather than the exception.

We welcome the establishment of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security by the Security Council as a result of resolution 2242 (2015). We commend Spain's efforts to make that resolution a reality. We support the regular participation of civil society in that Group, and we hope the Group will continue to prove its added value to the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

That brings me to my second point, that is, the integration of resolution 1325 (2000) in our foreign and security policies. This is a key aim in the Netherlands. I will provide an example. In the joint Spanish-Dutch Gender in Operations training initiatives, we tried to teach diplomats and military personnel about gender and human rights issues. In that way, we tried to contribute to the effectiveness of peace missions and crisis management operations. Another example relates to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. There, the Kingdom of the Netherlands has made senior gender experts available in an effort to address the high numbers of sexual violence cases in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali.

Our third point focuses on the implementation of our national action plan and on our support for the national action plans of other countries. We published our third national action plan last March. We drafted it in partnership with more than 50 Dutch civil society organizations and knowledge institutions. By trying to coordinate our activities with those of civil society, we aim to make each other stronger and to achieve better, more sustainable results. The Kingdom of the Netherlands encourages other countries to develop their own national action plans, and we will try to support them in doing so. Currently, in our third national action plan we focus on eight countries in Africa and the Middle East and North Africa region.

We support women's participation in peace processes through the support of civil society organizations. For example, together with UN-Women — I am glad to see the head of UN-Women is here — we assist female members of Syrian civil society to unite in the Syrian Women's Initiative for Peace and Democracy. With that initiative, which dates back a couple of years, we aim to help Syrian women from different backgrounds to pursue a common agenda and to give them a voice during the Syrian peace talks. Some of the women we supported have joined the Women's Advisory Board of the United Nations Special Envoy for Syria, Mr. Staffan de Mistura.

The advancement of the role of women is crucial in all our efforts for peace, justice and development. The Kingdom of the Netherlands will remain a partner to promote the rights of women in all those dimensions.