

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): We thank France for organizing this important meeting, and extend our appreciation to the Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary General, the Executive Director of UN-Women, the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, and the Secretary-General of the International Organization of la Francophonie for their efforts and important briefings.

The issue before us is of relevance not only to half of the planet but to everyone, given the role and contribution of women in the area of peace and security, and the untapped potential that could be unleashed by mainstreaming their participation. Much has happened since the adoption by consensus of resolution 1325 (2000), and yet we remain far from the goal of full and equal participation, including in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding, and from ensuring the protection and empowerment of women. Gender equality and non-discrimination remain prerequisites for the fulfilment of the purposes and principles of the Organization, and all of our lofty, collective commitments, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The State of Palestine welcomes the Secretary General's report (S/2017/861) and his commitment to implementing the women and peace and security agenda, including by placing gender at the centre of his prevention platform and surge in diplomacy. We appreciate all efforts of the United Nations in that regard, including by UN-Women, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Development Programme, notably in the area of human rights, capacity-building, employment and the rule of law. We urge United Nations bodies, notably those operating in Palestine, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, to intensify their engagement and collaboration with women's organizations.

I wish to highlight some of Palestine's own important efforts in that regard. The Palestinian women's movement is one of the oldest and strongest in and beyond the region, with institutional and representative structures established as early as the nineteenth century. Within the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), the General Union of Palestinian Women was among the first unions to be established. A coordination structure linking various women's groups within PLO political parties and other organizations was also established as the Women's Affairs Technical Committee, following the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference. Since then, there have been many other achievements, including the 2012 inauguration by Palestine of a high-level national committee for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), which was led by the Ministry of Women's Affairs in partnership with relevant Ministries and non-governmental organizations.

In 2016, the State of Palestine was among the 68 countries and entities that adopted a national action plan on women and peace and security. The 2017-2019 action plan, adopted by the Government and civil society organizations, identifies three primary objectives: first, ensuring the protection of women and girls both domestically and in the face of the Israeli occupation; secondly, ensuring accountability through national and international mechanisms, with a

particular focus on crimes and violations committed by the occupation; and, thirdly, furthering women's political participation in decision-making at the national and international levels. The State of Palestine also joined core international humanitarian law and human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, without reservations. Women's participation and empowerment are also important and cross-cutting objectives in the context of the national policy agenda for the period from 2017 to 2022.

We are, however, conscious that, despite all those efforts, much more work remains to be done. Only in 2009 was a woman elected to the highest executive body of the PLO. Quotas are still decisive in allowing women's election to Parliament and local councils. Although women's organizations were among the strongest advocates of national reconciliation, they have been unfairly absent from reconciliation talks. The relevant, applicable legislative framework in Palestine is also outdated and must be revised to ensure consistency with Palestine's international commitments and obligations so as to provide women the protection and rights to which they are entitled and the opportunities they deserve.

The Palestinian women's movement, since its establishment over a century ago, has pursued the struggle on two fronts: the struggle for the independence of Palestine and the struggle for women's rights and empowerment. It is a dual struggle that the movement continues to pursue to this day. The Israeli occupation remains the main source of violations of our women's rights, their vulnerability and violence against their persons. We have repeatedly called for the protection of the Palestinian people, especially women and children. We have also called for accountability — a key element of resolution 1325 (2000), which was the first of its kind to address the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women, as the only way to end violations and crimes.

While Palestine stands ready to do its part to advance women's rights and the role of women in the area of peace and security, it is clear that the enjoyment of those rights in our country requires ending the Israeli occupation. We will therefore continue to work towards an end to the occupation and true progress on the path to independence, justice and peace with the equal and full involvement of women leading to an independent State of Palestine, ensuring human rights for all its citizens without discrimination.