

Ms. Bakuramutsa (Rwanda) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to thank the French presidency for convening today's important debate.

(spoke in English)

We are also grateful to all the briefers this morning for their insightful remarks.

It has been almost exactly 17 years to the day since the international community recognized the urgent importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective into peacekeeping and multidimensional peace support operations. On this anniversary, we must take stock of the progress we have been able to make and of what still remains for us to accomplish, individually and collectively. My delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's efforts to mainstream this agenda within the ongoing reforms of the United Nations peace and security architecture and recognize the collaborative advantage that it will confer on the Joint United Nations African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security.

The participation of women in peace and security is not only the right thing to do but also the smart thing to do, as it is a proven fact that when women are involved in conflict prevention and efforts to achieve unity and reconciliation, as well as peacebuilding, sustainable outcomes are achieved. Women contribute added value in addressing especially critical issues, such as protecting children's rights, combating gender-based violence and promoting human rights.

After listening to the briefers for today's debate, it is clear that blocking women's rights and empowerment has direct negative effects on society as a whole. During the genocide in Rwanda against the Tutsi, rape and other forms of violence were primarily directed at women not just to degrade them individually but also to strip the humanity from the larger community of which they were a part. As situations of armed conflict and violent extremism continue to prevail in many parts of the world, with women and children bearing the primary burden, we must work steadfastly to empower women and encourage their participation in the entire spectrum of peace processes and in the promotion of the rule of law, good governance and mediation.

As a regional initiative, the East African Community, in collaboration with the African Union, has developed a regional implementation framework to enhance women's leadership in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and mainstreaming gender in security policymaking, and to ensure that women's rights are protected in humanitarian crises, transitional contexts and post-conflict situations. It is important to note that the action plan also ensures that activities related to women and peace and security are not seen as standalone efforts but rather as an integral part of regional peace and security discussions that are in line with promoting gender equality.

Nationally, the Government of Rwanda, bringing to bear strong political will, has made great strides in empowering women to fully participate in all sectors and fields, an approach complemented by the fact that private-sector, civil-society, religious and non-governmental organizations are also taking ownership of the part they play in the empowerment and

advancement of women. In addition, we have adopted a national action plan in order to fast-track existing national mechanisms and frameworks for implementing resolution 1325 (2000). The plan is based on two pillars, the first being that of promoting the equal participation of women and men in all peace initiatives at all levels, and the second of integrating gender perspectives into peace and security efforts.

Individually and collectively, we have a long way to go, but we can achieve the meaningful and long-term changes we seek if we continue to put women at the centre of our agenda. In conclusion, Rwanda stands ready to work with Member States, the SecretaryGeneral and the United Nations as a whole, particularly UN-Women, to make this agenda a success.