

Mr. Logar (Slovenia):

First of all, I would like to thank the Russian Federation for convening this important and timely meeting.

I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the members of the Human Security Network, a cross- regional network made up of Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, Norway, Panama, Switzerland, Thailand, South Africa as an observer State and my own country, Slovenia. The Human Security Network is an informal group of States that promotes the integration of a human security approach into policies and programmes at international, regional and national levels.

We welcome this important and timely debate. One year ago here in the Chamber we reaffirmed commitments to further realize the women and peace and security agenda (see S/PV.7533). With the adoption of the resolution 2242 (2015), the Council once again reaffirmed the importance of the agenda.

A crucial element of the women and peace and security agenda is the involvement of women in peace-related activities. We see today that more women are involved in peace talks and that more peace agreements include provisions that relate to the specific needs of women and girls, including supporting their human rights, as the 2016 report (S/2016/822) of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security highlights. The Network supports the Secretary- General's call that initiatives to promote women's participation and inclusive consultations should become standard practice in the mediation of peace agreements. Their important role as active agents of change in the promotion and maintenance of peace and security in all phases of conflict resolution and peacebuilding is invaluable not just for women, but for society as a whole.

Despite the progress made and the recognition of the facts that the women and peace and security agenda is critical for conflict prevention and effective responses to complex crises and that women are important agents of progress in peace talks, they remain unequally involved in those processes, particularly in political dimensions. The positive role that women play in all stages of conflict prevention and resolution is often underestimated or even ignored, instead of being recognized and utilized.

The Network calls upon Member States, United Nations entities and regional and subregional organizations to support Member States in their efforts to implement resolution 1325 (2000) and all subsequent resolutions, including resolution 2242 (2015). We call for greater recognition of, and support for, women's participation in all stages of conflict resolution and post-conflict reconciliation processes so that peace agreements can be more attainable and sustainable.

The Network expresses its profound concern regarding the impact of the unprecedented wave of forced displacement on women and girls. In that regard, it calls for the engagement of women in the design and implementation of humanitarian action and early recovery, while taking into account the increasing needs for sustained donor support to host countries and communities to appropriately support women's self-reliance and resilience, ensure a strengthened humanitarian-developed nexus and improve coordination with peacebuilding and human rights efforts.

We also call for greater efforts to promote and respect the human rights of women and girls as, well as to strengthen all efforts to effectively address gender- based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence. For too long, sexual violence against women and girls has been committed on a systematic and widespread scale

as a crime against humanity, or even a weapon of war. We stress the importance of fighting impunity and ensuring accountability under national or international jurisdictions. The perpetrators of such crimes must be brought to justice.

As a group of countries promoting human security, the Human Security Network would like to emphasize that the personal security of women is essential for human security. Women's empowerment and participation are the cornerstones of any prevention and protection response.

The economic, political and social empowerment of women and girls reduces their vulnerability and enhances their ability to protect themselves and exercise their rights. In that regard, we need to ensure that women and girls' interests are fully respected and systematically integrated in the context of peace processes. Strategies for the effective integration of gender perspectives should therefore be pursued to promote women's empowerment and participation.

Allow me now to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the observer European Union and that made by the representative of Liechtenstein on behalf of Slovenia, Austria and Switzerland.

As was reiterated many times after last year's review, it is high time to begin showing tangible results and bring the women and peace and security agenda closer to women who can make a difference. All stakeholders have to cooperate and harmonize their efforts in order to avoid duplication, on the one hand, and gaps, on the other. In that regard, Slovenia welcomes the establishment of the women and peace and security focal points network and the Council's Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security.

Slovenia pays particular attention to awareness- raising and training on women and peace and security, including within our national armed forces. It is important that everyone involved in peace and security processes be aware of the roles women play and the advantages they bring to peace-related activities. The experience of the Slovenian armed forces is that higher numbers of women in crisis management processes and peacekeeping missions ensure better quality mediation, in particular in the context of local communities and especially among socially underprivileged groups in crisis areas, including local women. Raising awareness and education on the comprehensive implementation of the women and peace and security agenda has been integrated into different educational programmes and has become an important component of training systems in the Slovenian armed forces.

To conclude, Slovenia agrees with the report of the Secretary-General that prioritizing gender equality and women's empowerment in peace and security settings must remain a continued effort. We all must strive to remove obstacles to women's participation, in particular in efforts to prevent and combat sexual- and gender-based violence and harmful practices that impede women from enjoying human rights on an equal footing with other members of society.