

Mr. Mminele (South Africa):

My delegation wishes to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his statement, as well as to Ms. Phumzile Mlambo- Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN-Women for her valuable contribution.

The adoption on 31 October 2000 of resolution 1325 (2000) remains a significant milestone in the progressive march for women's rights and equality the world over, since it represents new progress in our efforts to ensure for women a significant and necessary voice in the area of peace and security.

South Africa strongly believes in the involvement and empowerment of women in every aspect of peace, security and development. That finds a robust reflection in the fact that democratic South Africa has one of the largest contingents of women peacekeepers deployed throughout the African continent. Women's participation in peacekeeping and peacemaking efforts is recognized as a contributing factor to the effectiveness and long-term success of United Nations deployments. The recognition of the importance of the role of women in the context of peace operations is a strong incentive to building women's capacities within the peacekeeping landscape. It also contributes to the accessibility and credibility of United Nations deployments in local communities.

In that regard, South Africa has been developing the training programmes needed to equip our peacekeepers to deal with the unique circumstances that may develop during peace operations. In 2015, the South African Government, in partnership with UN-Women, launched a training course tailored for female military officers stationed at the South African Army School's Peace Mission Training Centre in Pretoria. A second training course, co-facilitated by South Africa and Kenya, will take place in Kenya in November. The South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation, in collaboration with the Government of Norway, has established an initiative for training and creating a network of mediators, with the ultimate objective of broadening the inclusion of women's mediation efforts all over the world. UN-Women and the United Nations Department of Political Affairs have also participated in that training programme, and the African Union has included it in its own work.

16-34131 55/90 South Africa supports efforts to mainstream women's involvement in peace and security, which can be achieved through further coordination and cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations. That, we believe, can help to formalize the training of women mediators and ensure their effective mainstreaming into United Nations peacebuilding efforts. South Africa would like to encourage the United Nations to develop a database of women mediators that could ensure their meaningful participation in peacebuilding delegations. That would be in addition to cooperation between Member States on training courses designed to help build women's capacities in various specialized areas of the peace and security environment.

South Africa reaffirms its strong commitment to the full and effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and the subsequent related resolutions, as ground-breaking commitments to the advancement of the agenda on women and peace and security. Women and girls continue to be disproportionately affected by conflict situations, especially where sexual abuse and violence are concerned. That reality underpins the principles of resolution 1325 (2000), which addresses sexual violence in conflict and forms an integral part of the women and peace and security agenda. We stress that Member States have a fundamental responsibility to prosecute

the perpetrators of human rights abuses, war crimes and crimes against humanity, including those relating to sexual violence against women and girls. My delegation would like to emphasize its appreciation for the active role and full participation in monitoring the implementation of those resolutions by the Executive Director for UN-Women and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Resolution 2242 (2015) gives further impetus to the mandate established by resolution 1325 (2000). Over the past year, we have seen greater engagement on the part of the Council on matters relating to women and peace and security, including through the work of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security. But we believe that more can be done to implement the recommendations of resolution 2242 (2015), including by interacting with women on the ground who are directly affected by conflict. The meeting, co-hosted by UN-Women and Norway and held on the margins of the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session, which explored the impact of violent extremism on women and children, was notable in that regard.

In conclusion, South Africa looks forward to further cooperation and to sharing experiences with Member States, as well as with the Department of Political Affairs, UN-Women and other partners. That will enable us to improve our incorporation of gender perspectives and the concerns of women and girls into our efforts, with the goal of enhancing sustainable peace and security in all conflict situations.