

Ms. Wallström (Sweden): I have come here directly from a visit to Herat and Kabul, in Afghanistan. I met with women and girls in the midst of conflict, who are struggling to make ends meet and keep their families safe. They face a constant risk of sexual violence. While talking to those women, I wondered what the women and peace and security agenda is doing for them.

Well, it should ensure that the women I met — for instance, those who work in the security sector — have more female colleagues and can work without the threat of harassment. It should ensure that the female mediators that Sweden has provided training for can have a real role and work free from the shadow of death threats. It should also have ensured that the girl I met — who is 18 years old, was married away at 13 and already has five children — could have perhaps had 10 more years to grow as a person, get an education and realize her dreams in life.

The oppression of women is a global disease. We see how women all over the world are systematically underrepresented in decision-making, receive fewer resources and lack fundamental rights in a number of areas. Sexual violence as a weapon of war is a horrendous manifestation of the oppression of women. I got to see that up close when, as some members of the Council might recall, I was appointed the first Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict some years ago. I often say that it was a role that left me with a heavier heart, but also with higher hope for the future, thanks to all the women I met who did not want to be seen as victims alone, but as actors, citizens and humans with full rights.

What I have come to realize was that we make three mistakes when we look at this issue. We tend to view it as inevitable, unspeakable and as a lesser crime. I had that job back in 2010 and 2011, when resolution 1325 (2000) celebrated its 10-year anniversary. Today, that resolution and seven more have existed for 17 years, and we are unfortunately still far from eradicating this horrendous practice. It saddens me, but it also strengthens my resolve.

In order to achieve real results for the women and peace and security agenda, we need to work systematically, as we have already heard. In that regard I thank all the briefers. We need to have a gender perspective to all aspects of peacebuilding. Therefore, let me point to three important aspects.

My first point, and this is also what everyone in this Chamber can help in, concerns data and analysis, because we can do much more about the situation on the ground if we have and use disaggregated data on women and men. As an example, that could concern statistics on education, internally displaced people or the number of women and men employed in the police force. Once we have the data, we need to look at it carefully before drawing conclusions. Reporting should have an integrated gender perspective that feeds into the Secretary-General's recommendations and conclusions. Women's civil society organizations — which are often at

the front line — give valuable input. Sweden stands ready to work with the United Nations to enhance data collection and the analysis of gender-disaggregated data.

My second point concerns expertise. Many reports have highlighted how gender experts contribute to the overall success of United Nations missions. I am worried that budget cuts and mainstreamed mandates could result in cuts in essential gender expertise in United Nations missions. That would mean that we risk leaving out half of the population in our critical work on the protection of civilians or strengthening the rule of law. We must all do better to train and provide women to United Nations peace missions.

Thirdly, women's organizations and networks receive a disproportionately small amount of development funding. We have heard that already, thanks to Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka. That must change. Whether in the public, private or non-governmental organization spheres, there are networks of active women who are actors for peace and security. We should support women's organizations and networks and enable them to participate fully at the local, national and international levels.

When Sweden joined the Security Council, we set out two overarching priorities: conflict prevention, and women and peace and security. In all our work in the Council, we have sought to operationalize the agenda on women and peace and security. I am sure the Council has heard our excellent Ambassador, Olof Skoog, ask time after time where the women are, or whether we can put more language on women's participation into mandates, and so on. We do that, for instance, through ensuring the inclusion of gender reporting in mission mandates and adding criteria for listing sexual and gender-based violence in sanctions regimes. We will continue that work with commitment, not just on a day like this but on every other day as well.

It gives me hope that the new United Nations leadership places gender at the centre of its diplomacy for peace. It also gives me hope to read the Secretary-General's report (S/2017/861), which points out that meaningful participation by women has a demonstrable impact on the sustainability and effectiveness of peace processes, economic development and social prosperity. There is momentum for women's participation in peace processes. We should seize that momentum and place women's full enjoyment of their rights at the core of international peace and security. This is not a women's issue. It is an issue of peace and security, essential to a successful response to the many crises on the Council's agenda. The frameworks and tools are all in place. It is up to us to make it happen.

We know what is needed: political space, active civil-society organizations, constant capacity-building. And we have examples. For instance, in Afghanistan, where the restructured High Peace Council has 13 female and 39 male members, Sweden has supported local female leaders in building their capacity to participate in mediation and dialogue processes. In Somalia, the political will shown by the National Leadership Forum ensured a quota for women in Parliament, despite resistance to their participation. In Colombia, as we have heard, women's organizations paved the way for their inclusion in the peace process.

True change can be achieved only with strong and courageous political leadership. Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed set an example through the joint United Nations-African Union high-level mission to Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which focused on women and peace and security and development. We should build on that good example and use that methodology in future country visits. Gender equality makes societies more peaceful. Or, as I like to put it, more women, more peace. We, the Security Council, must show leadership, not only today but across the country-specific files and in all aspects of our work.

Let us remember Dag Hammarskjöld's words: "No peace which is not peace for all, no rest until all has been fulfilled."