

Ms. Söder (Sweden):

I am honoured to address the Security Council at this yearly open debate. In fact, this is a debate on peace and security, conflict resolution and conflict prevention. It is about the core business of the Council, not an add-on or an ad hoc discussion on women and girls. The full and effective participation of women and girls in peace processes is a necessary condition for sustaining peace and for durable and equitable peace for all. We strongly support the call of Secretary-General-designate António Guterres for a surge in peace diplomacy and his manifest dedication to achieving gender equality. They go hand in hand. We are convinced that to succeed such a surge must put the participation of women and girls at centre stage. That will guide us as we prepare to assume our seat in the Council in January.

Both the world and the Council have made progress, but we are still falling short. The task facing the Council is to close the gap between ambition and reality. After the global study and the adoption of the corresponding resolution 2242 (2015) last year, our full attention should be directed to carrying out our tasks to effectively integrate and operationalize the women and peace and security agenda in the daily business of the Council. I would like to highlight some areas where we see a need for improvement.

First, we must adopt a gender equality perspective from the very outset, with a focus on the objective of strengthening the situation of women and girls in conflict situations. Their needs, challenges and opportunities must be brought to the attention of the Council — by the Secretariat, the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, UN-Women and others — and acted upon. A continued dialogue with women's organizations and the relevant stakeholders in the field, through the various parts of the United Nations system, is therefore paramount. The Council should be actively engaging with them.

Secondly, there is a need to improve data collection, including sex-disaggregated statistics. Too often, we make decisions based on incomplete data and analysis. We cannot afford to fail to grasp the root causes of conflict or to identify peace dividends and agents. For instance, mothers, sisters, wives and daughters often know where small arms are, and they are more likely to see to it that they are handed in in under disarmament programmes. They need to be part of such programmes from their design to their implementation. For that to happen, we need proper data. The Security Council and the Secretariat should jointly endeavour to ensure that the basis for every decision has a solid and actionable gender perspective.

Thirdly, there is a need to ensure the full and effective participation of women and girls in peace processes. That requires the Security Council to adopt strong mandates on participation, but also that we strengthen our follow-up on such mandates. We need to make sure that guidance is implemented and that national efforts are recognized and supported, or encouraged and requested if missing. We should hold United Nations mediators, peacekeeping missions and political missions accountable to their women- and-peace-and-security mandates. That is how we can assist Colombian women in following through on their remarkable peace work; or help Afghan girls to receive an education; or Somali women to be properly represented in the next legislative assembly.

Fourthly, we must incentivize through financing and other means. We must make sure that enough resources are dedicated to realizing this agenda. The 15 per cent

target in the three peace and security reviews is a step in the right direction, but only as a first step. I am glad that the Peacebuilding Fund is leading by example.

Conversely, we should critically review peace and security missions, operations, projects and programmes that do not meaningfully address gender equality or provide for the participation of women and girls. We should consider discontinuing funding to those that do not. Indeed, there is an acute need to gender-mainstream the United Nations regular and peacekeeping budgets. Sweden believes that the Secretary-General should be asked, in the outline draft resolution for the next biennium, to present proposals on how to address that shortcoming.

I am pleased to represent a feminist Government with a feminist foreign policy. In that context, Sweden naturally follows the work on women and peace and security. For us this is about our three R's: rights, representation and resources. We will pursue this agenda intensely during our term in the Security Council, not only because it is right but also because it is smart. We count on the partnership of all members of the Council. More women simply means more peace.