

Mr. Nduhuura (Uganda):

At the outset, my delegation extends to the Russian presidency our great appreciation for convening this open debate on the very important theme of women and peace and security.

My delegation appreciates the efforts made by the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, in promoting the mainstreaming of gender equality and empowerment. We welcome the briefing he gave this morning, as well as that delivered by the Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo- Ngcuka. We also take note of the briefing made Ms. Rita Lopidia, Executive Director of the EVE Organization for Women Development in South Sudan.

Uganda joins other Member States in reiterating the concerns the international community continues to have in the effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Women continue to face numerous challenges, but most specifically their plight is even more debilitating during conflicts and wars. More often than not, they are not the causes but mere victims and bear the greatest brunt of the excesses of such conflicts. Women and girls have endured some of the greatest acts of humiliation by being subjected to such degrading acts as rape and other forms of sexual violence and abuse during conflicts. In most instances, sexual exploitation, violence and abuse are even used as weapons of war.

United Nations reports are awash with many such acts in many conflicts and war situations all over the world, including in Africa. Conflicts and wars have registered many widows and orphans, the most vulnerable of whom are girls. In the same vein, women continue to be sidelined and marginalized in conflict management and resolution, peacemaking, peacebuilding, peacekeeping and peace support operations.

We commend the United Nations for some deliberate actions taken so far to address those challenges and for the implementation of some aspects of resolution 1325 (2000). However, a lot of work still needs to be done. We therefore call for the full and effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). We note with appreciation the recognition of the Secretary-General in his report (S/2016/822) of Uganda as an outstanding example of a country that has demonstrated that women are making a remarkable difference as agents of change. In local districts under the localization programme, Uganda, facilitated by the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, has adopted local action plans that have resulted in a decrease in sexual and gender-based violence.

The question of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations must be seriously addressed and those who commit such crimes should be held to account for their actions. Uganda is exemplary in that respect. Not long ago, some Uganda People's Defence Force members serving in the African Union Military Observer Mission in Somalia were identified for transgressions and were duly tried before a court of law, both in the Mission area and at home. Those found culpable were severely punished for their actions.

In order to address the question of gender balance and gender mainstreaming in a holistic manner, Uganda has made tremendous strides in empowering women and girls through not only the provision of universal primary and secondary education, but also the introduction of affirmative action in admissions to tertiary institutions in the country. That has greatly enabled more women to acquire the necessary education

that empowers them with the required skills and knowledge to compete with men in various aspects of life, both internally and globally.

In politics and governance, more women have been able to be elected to the national legislature and other Government legislative institutions due to the deliberate Government policy of affirmative action of reserving certain positions for women alone, in addition to their ability to compete with men in other positions. More female members have also been appointed to the national Cabinet in Government. The Government of Uganda is committed to continue exploring more opportunities in the effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). We wish to call upon the United Nations to involve more women in preventive diplomacy, negotiations and mediation to promote gender balance in these areas.

Last but not least is the question of gender budgeting that must take into account the special needs of women in the domain of peacekeeping and support operations. Working together through and within the United Nations system, we should continue to promote the equal and effective participation of women in all efforts aimed at the promotion of peace and security.