

Mr. Schulz (Germany):

At the outset, let me thank you, Sir, for convening this debate. We welcome the fact that the Security Council is increasingly putting the elimination and prevention of conflict-related sexual violence at the heart of its agenda. The Secretary-General's report (S/2017/249) clearly states that sexual violence is an unacceptable violation of human rights. Voices such as that of Ms. Mina Jaf remind us of the need for urgent action and zero tolerance by all of us.

Let me add our voice to the chorus of those who have thanked Ms. Zainab Bangura for her excellent work as Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Germany has worked closely with her and her Office to make a real difference in the lives of survivors of atrocities in Syria. We look forward to continuing that close partnership with her successor, Ms. Pramila Patten. I pledge Germany's unwavering support for her Office and mandate. I would like to add a few suggestions on how we can further improve the implementation of the sexual violence in conflict agenda, especially beyond New York.

First of all, we need to take a comprehensive approach to supporting the victims of sexual violence. Medical and psychological care, opportunities for economic participation and legal protection are some key aspects of such an approach. Germany supports, for instance, protective measures in the field of trafficking and smuggling. We have also received more than 1,000 women and children who suffered traumatic experiences in the conflicts in Syria and Iraq, and have given them access to medical care and trauma therapy.

Secondly, we need to change how women are perceived in society. Adequate role models and gender equality are indispensable in preventing and combating sexual violence against women. We are taking steps towards that goal, as outlined in our recently adopted national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

Thirdly and equally important is redoubling our efforts to shift away from a culture of impunity. At the international level, the use of sanctions to list individuals for sexual violence or human rights violations against women, including through the use of specific listing criteria, is essential, as are efforts of international tribunals to open investigations and file charges related to sexual violence in conflict. Furthermore, in the case of Syria, we support — both politically and as a lead financial contributor — the creation of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, including crimes of sexual violence.

Fourthly and lastly, the shortcomings in the implementation of the strategic results framework on women and peace and security are not due a lack of words, but a lack of action. Those shortcomings must be addressed at different levels.

To accelerate the agenda's implementation, Germany is particularly engaged in supporting regional efforts. For example, at the end of this month, the African Union will launch a network of African women leaders with the backing of UN-Women and Germany. That

network aims to create a platform for politically active women across the continent to exchange their experiences and knowledge.

At the capital level, the recent meeting of the Women, Peace and Security National Focal Points Network, organized by Spain, has been extremely valuable in generating further discussion on Member States' various national action plans. Germany is very pleased to host next year's meeting of the focal points in Berlin.

Let me conclude by pledging Germany's continued commitment to the protection of women and girls from conflict-related sexual violence. The implementation of the women, peace and security agenda is more pressing than ever and will remain one of our top priorities