

Mr. Ruiz Cabañas (Mexico) (spoke in Spanish):

We thank your Government, Sir, for its initiative to convene today's timely open debate to address one of the most important challenges to the maintenance of international peace and security — the use of sexual violence as a tactic of war and by terrorist groups.

The unprecedented increase in sexual abuse and exploitation during armed conflict in recent years is indeed alarming. Mexico therefore echoes Secretary-General António Guterres' call to urgently address the issue and raise awareness about the situation of vulnerability in which millions of people live, in order to seek effective solutions to the phenomenon. Rape, sexual slavery, prostitution, pregnancy, abortion, enforced sterilization and forced marriages and other abominable practices that constitute sexual violence affect women, men, boys and girls at all levels and in all circumstances. The upsurge in armed conflict and changes in tactics used by non-State actors, including terrorist groups, have exacerbated the incidence of sexual violence being committed. In spite of such challenges, Mexico would like to acknowledge some achievements that have been made.

With the adoption of resolution 1820 (2008), we made the shift from an era of silence to one in which we recognized the gravity of the phenomenon and became aware of the urgent need to address it. Likewise, the adoption of resolution 1888 (2009) and subsequent resolutions has strengthened the regulatory framework that ensures effective accountability. Similarly, resolutions 2242 (2015) and 2331 (2016) acknowledged the existence of terrorist groups using sexual violence as a tactic to advance their goals. Despite that progress, however, much more remains to be done to ensure that the terrible stories about the use of sexual violence, with which we are all too familiar are not repeated. Mexico would like to make some proposals to strengthen the development of a comprehensive strategy to address, prevent and eradicate this type of violence.

First, in line with Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, above all, we must continue to promote the full participation of women in decision-making in all areas of public life, in order to achieve inclusive and equitable societies.

Secondly, we must promote the participation of women in designing strategies to combat sexual violence, as well as in peace processes, in order to foster national reconciliation based on respect and gender equity.

Thirdly, we must redesign national policy frameworks to ensure that victims of sexual violence in conflict situations are recognized as being legitimate and can achieve justice and comprehensive redress and the proper access to sexual and mental health services.

Fourthly, we must strengthen broad-based programmes that support victims of sexual violence, in line with the recommendations put forward by the Secretary-General. To achieve those goals, we must also continue to draw the attention of the Security Council to the issue, and work to ensure that our actions are properly coordinated so as to avoid the duplication of resources.

Given the escalating violence confronting us, we need to take concrete actions to ensure full respect for human rights. For that reason, the prevention of armed conflicts and the search for sustainable peace should also be priority goals of the international community.

We call for a renewal of resolve of the membership of the Organization and for a commitment to mainstream the gender perspective as one of the core aspects of the work of the United Nations. I reiterate the commitment of my country to continuing to work with the international community to tackle this terrible scourge, which is so damaging to our societies.