

**Mr. Enikanolaiye (Nigeria):**

I thank the delegation of Uruguay for organizing today's open debate and welcome the participation of that country's Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs. We also thank the Deputy Secretary-General and other briefers for sharing their perspectives on this very important subject.

We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his very comprehensive report (S/2017/249), including its far-reaching recommendations, which, if fully implemented, would ensure that we have truly begun to address the plight of women and girls in armed conflicts in an effective manner. It is evident that women and girls caught in conflict suffer more than men and boys do, and that they are extremely vulnerable to violent extremism and remain, in many parts of the world, the victims of terrorism most affected by the scourge of sexual violence. We condemn in the strongest possible terms the abduction, trafficking and maltreatment of women and girls by extremist groups, including the heinous activities of Boko Haram in the Lake Chad region and particularly in north-east Nigeria.

We cannot agree more with the Secretary-General on the patterns and trends identified in his latest report. Indeed, the use of women and girls as sex slaves must equally be condemned. In that regard, we welcome the efforts of the United Nations aimed at improving inter-agency coordination, knowledge-building, advocacy and technical country-level support. My delegation believes that in order to achieve an enduring result in the search for workable solutions to the challenges of sexual violence in conflict, priority must be accorded to addressing the enabling environment and the underlying root causes of conflicts, such as poverty, hunger, human rights abuses, injustice, unemployment, corruption, the lack of inclusiveness, and impunity.

Perpetrators must be held accountable, but the capacity of States to do so, with the prevalence of weak structures and institutions, needs to be addressed. Beyond the law-enforcement approach, however, dealing with the political economy of conflicts in a more holistic manner is crucial to the finding of potential remedies to the situation of conflicts around the world. In that regard, multilateral cooperation should be enhanced so as to strengthen States' capabilities to deal with the threats posed by violent conflicts, criminality and terrorism.

Today's open debate bears great relevance with respect to the terrorist activities of Boko Haram in north-east Nigeria, which have led to the large displacement of approximately 2 million people and conflict-related violence against women and girls, which has been widely condemned by all. Nigeria has always acted in a concerted manner to ensure accountability for crimes of sexual violence. We have also collaborated with the United Nations and other international partners to improve service delivery and enhance protection measures both in communities and in areas where women and girls seek refuge. Those efforts by the Government of Nigeria should be seen in the context of the great strides already made by our military in severely degrading Boko Haram terrorism.

In spite of the daunting challenges, Nigeria has been in the vanguard of promoting the involvement of women in conflict resolution and in the promotion of peace and security. Only

last week, the Nigerian Government launched its revised national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and related resolutions on women and peace and security. The plan reflects our commitment to ensuring the security of women and girls during armed conflicts and enhancing their active and direct participation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. We have also taken measures to enhance the security of women and girls in internally-displaced-person camps, reduce their vulnerability and promote their safe return to their homes and their eventual reintegration into society.

As part of efforts to counter violent extremism, Nigeria is taking steps to deradicalize convicted terrorists by developing a range of psychological experts and hiring counsellors to pioneer rehabilitation efforts and using Islamic scholars to counter extremist narratives by training them on various aspects of dialogue and religious counselling. We are also working assiduously with the affected communities to design economic revitalization programmes targeted at people most affected by terrorism and violent extremism.

We take this opportunity to assure the Council that, following the recent release of 82 of the abducted Chibok schoolgirls, the Government has intensified its efforts to secure the release of the remaining abducted girls and to free the released girls from the ideological grips of Boko Haram terrorists. Having regained their freedom, it is equally important that the girls regain their self-esteem and be assisted in returning to their families and their schools. Furthermore, emergency teams of psychosocial counsellors and health professionals have been dispatched to the north-east of the country in order to assist the recently released girls with the profiling of victims, with a view to adopting appropriate therapies for them.

Nigeria has carefully and favourably considered joining the existing 108 countries that have signed on to the Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups and the Paris Commitments to protect children from unlawful recruitment or use by armed forces or armed groups. Following Nigeria's active participation at this year's international ministerial conference in Paris in February, it is our conviction that this step will help to strengthen Nigeria's commitment to global frameworks by further preventing the recruitment and use of girl children as child or female bombers by Boko Haram.

In addition, the Government of Nigeria has put taken steps for victims of Boko Haram terrorism — in the form of rape and other sexual violence against children, abduction of children and other grave violations — by putting in motion several legal remedies. Some legal and social remedies undertaken by the Government include the diligent prosecution of more than 200 detained Boko Haram terrorists in competent courts of law, as well as reintegration, reorientation and rehabilitation programmes designed to meet the needs of each victim of sexual violence.

We take note of and fully support the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report (S/2017/249) under consideration. We are convinced that the United Nations remains the central platform for raising awareness for the plight of women and girls in conflicts, including the peace and security agenda of the United Nations. We also acknowledge the progress made so far by the various United Nations mechanisms in addressing

conflict-related sexual violence. Nigeria stands ready to continue to work with the United Nations and international partners in that important endeavour.

We commit to ensuring that women and girls enjoy their full rights and that those who have perpetrated sexual violence are dealt with in accordance with our national laws and international obligations.