

Mr. Sanabria Valderrama (Spain) (spoke in Spanish):

Like other speakers who have preceded me, I would like to thank the presidency of Uruguay for organizing today's debate, which is going to help to focus attention on one of the main and systematic violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, namely, sexual violence in conflict.

I would also like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her briefing and to express my gratitude for the statements made by Mr. Dieng and Ms. Jaf. They have set before us a very difficult reality that requires action and determination on our part. I would also like to take advantage of this opportunity to pay tribute, as others have done, to Ms. Zainab Bangura for her excellent work. We worked with her over a period of years with a view to strengthening the instruments needed to combat the scourge of sexual violence in conflict, and we welcome her successor, Ms. Pramila Patten. Under Ms. Patten's leadership and that of the Secretary-General, the next five years will provide us with a historic opportunity to make the fight against the worst forms of exploitation one of the priorities at the heart of all United Nations priorities.

Spain will decisively support all efforts aimed at preventing sexual violence and human trafficking for sexual exploitation purposes. We want to ensure that the perpetrators of such crimes are brought to justice and serve their sentences. We wish to contribute to the reintegration of the victims and to the elimination of any possible stigmatization. We all know that those goals are not in the exclusive hands of any one of us, but they are in the hands of all of us together. Acting together with perseverance and firmness we can make a difference, which is why it is important to ask ourselves today what a body such as the Security Council can do in the immediate future and what the rest of the United Nations membership can contribute.

Last December, Spain promoted the adoption of resolution 2331 (2016). Many elements of the resolution expanded the already extensive body of norms relating to combating sexual violence, and new pathways are opening up on which we can work in the immediate future, such as addressing the use of sexual violence as a tactic of war or terrorism, the impact of violence on men and boys, and the fight against stigmatization. In that context, I would like to highlight four points.

The key aspect that we need to improve in the implementation of resolutions on sexual violence in conflict is making good use of the specialized expertise of the panels of experts of the sanctions committees, national experts in combating violent extremism, mediators and negotiators in peace processes, officials working at border posts, and military and police personnel deployed in United Nations missions. Irrespective of whether we are referring to the national, regional or international level or whether we are referring to the humanitarian sphere, the security sector or the political and diplomatic arena, it is only when we are working in a consistent and coordinated manner in all of those areas that we will achieve better results. That specialized knowledge, enriched by an ongoing dialogue with civil society, will also contribute to the development and improved implementation of early-warning mechanisms, which could help prevent an outbreak of an armed conflict. Undoubtedly, that is the best investment we can make in favour of international peace and

security. Spain has strengthened its extensive training of security-sector personnel, providing training to such countries as Palestine and Colombia, and contributes to the United Nations initiative against sexual violence in conflict.

The second pillar of any action should be guided by the fight against impunity. In that context, we have to look at all the mechanisms that can improve the preservation of evidence, so that responsibility can be decided in national legal bodies or at the International Criminal Court.

Thirdly, the victims should be at the heart of any measure undertaken. We must do more in terms of support and socioeconomic reintegration for survivors and the children they bear as a consequence of sexual violence. We have to ensure that they get the recognition and reparations they deserve in whatever context they find themselves.

Fourthly, I would like to highlight that it is not just a question of forging peace by relying on training and expertise in the area of gender-based and sexual violence. Rather, it is essential that there should be the equal participation of women in the peace and security sectors, in the contingents deployed and at the negotiating table.

Just a week ago, in Alicante, we held the first meeting of the network of women-and-peace-and-security focal points, which we launched in New York in September. One of the subjects dealt with was the structural barriers to equality in the sphere of peace and security. Not one country has achieved satisfactory numbers. Spain is convinced that expanding the role of women is essential to combating sexual violence in conflict and sexual exploitation and abuse. For that reason, we support deepening the debate on specific measures needed to increase the participation of women in all areas. Much remains to be done. Debates like today's have to remind us of that fact and motivate us if we are to make progress.

