

Mr. Kayobosi (Uganda):

At the outset, I bring warm greetings from our Minister for Foreign Affairs, The Honourable Sam Kutesa, and convey his apologies for not being able to come and participate personally in this important debate due to other State duties. He conveys his greatest appreciation to the United Kingdom presidency for the invitation extended to him to participate in this important debate on a topic that is so critical to Uganda.

My delegation greatly appreciates the briefings delivered earlier by the Secretary-General and other briefers.

Trafficking in persons in conflict situations is perhaps one of the most challenging evils that the world is currently confronted with, and the organization of this open debate by the delegation of the United Kingdom, under its presidency of the Security Council, is very timely in providing an opportunity to Member States to share insights into how the root causes of this scourge and the challenges being confronted in countering it can be effectively addressed.

Uganda happens to be in a region that has experienced a lot of conflict, which has exacerbated the problem of human trafficking in the region. The conflicts in our region have made the majority of our people, particularly women and children, more vulnerable to organized criminal networks that engage in human trafficking to destination countries for mainly forced and cheap labour, sexual exploitation and, in some cases, slavery.

A number of reports have recently revealed some of the most horrific experiences of women and girl children who have been trafficked in some of the destination countries, where they end up being sold as objects. These trafficked persons, particularly women and girls, have endured untold torture and sexual abuse at the hands of their tormentors. Uganda's delegation deeply deplores this phenomenon, which is unacceptable, and calls for the concerted efforts of the international community to decisively confront it.

As rightly pointed out in the concept note before us (S/2017/198, annex), the link between trafficking in persons, organized crime and terrorism is increasing in magnitude and scope, as clearly demonstrated in the case of Libya, where the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons continue to provide both direct and indirect funding to armed and terrorist groups. This is a clear example of how conflict situations, whose root causes are multifaceted, have engendered that linkage and made it thrive to unimaginable proportions, leading to a further exacerbation of human suffering.

Trafficking in persons in conflict is also closely intertwined with other transnational organized crimes, such as money-laundering and drug trafficking. The financial resources that accrue from human trafficking enable money-laundering to thrive and in turn largely contribute to funding terrorist activities. And the cycle continues. It is therefore evident that this requires a holistic approach that addresses the interconnectedness of these vices to our societies.

It is imperative that Member States, with the support of the international community, develop comprehensive mechanisms that promote a coordinated approach to addressing the root causes of this phenomenon. Needless to point out, some of the root causes of such conflict situations that enable human trafficking to thrive include, but are not limited to, widespread inequalities in the global economic environment, poverty, foreign occupation in some situations, discrimination based on religion, gender and race, and other vices. Addressing such root causes and mitigating the enormous adverse effects associated with this evil phenomenon requires a holistic approach with the full support of the Security Council and the entire United Nations system.

It is in that context that my delegation welcomes this open debate and extends its full support to measures to be developed to address this problem. Working together through the United Nations system would help to send a strong message to the perpetrators of these crimes and to undermine and curtail the capabilities of their networks to execute their criminal activities.