

**Mrs. Nguyen** (Viet Nam): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 10 States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

ASEAN commends the Spanish presidency of the Council for convening this high-level review of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. We thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2015/716) and the Executive Director of UN-Women for her insightful briefing. This high-level review provides us with an opportunity to look back at the past 15 years, and more importantly, to map out how the important agenda of women and peace and security can be brought forward in a more forceful and effective manner.

Although much progress has been made in key aspects of the implementation of landmark resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent relevant resolutions, gaps in their implementation still need to be addressed, even as we tackle new challenges. Indeed, today's security environment differs dramatically from that of 15 years ago. ASEAN is deeply concerned by the unprecedented threats posed by the wars and conflicts ravaging many States and regions, the rise of violent extremism and the increasing number of refugees and internally displaced persons. We are particularly alarmed by the horrendous phenomenon of widespread sexual violence committed against women and girls.

Those challenges, new and old, necessitate a stronger commitment and more determined and coordinated actions from the international community. ASEAN believes that the women and peace and security agenda must be placed within the broader framework of conflict prevention and resolution. As highlighted in the global study, as well as in the review of United Nations peace operations, prevention is key in all contexts. The Charter of the United Nations and international law provide a crucial framework for conflict prevention and resolution. Respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter, as well as for the fundamental principles of international law, is critical. In that context, special emphasis must be placed on respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States, on refraining from the threat of or use of force and on the settlement of disputes by peaceful means.

Women have an important role to play in that regard and must be empowered to play an active role in conflict resolution and peace processes. As reaffirmed in the global study, the meaningful participation of women, particularly in decision-making, will enable early conflict prevention, sustainable peace and strong post-conflict recovery and resilience. It is essential to mainstream gender-sensitive approaches in efforts to promote more inclusive and effective responses to conflicts and emergencies.

ASEAN is gravely troubled by the violation of the rights of women and girls in conflicts and when they fall victim to extremist non-State actors. We particularly deplore sexual violence against women and girls, especially when it is deployed as a tactic of war. Women and girls in conflicts are also being deprived of their most basic needs, including shelter, food, water and health care. We call on the United Nations and the international community to take immediate action to end all acts of conflict-related sexual violence and to provide protection and support to women and girls in conflicts.

Most importantly, we believe that it is vital to address the root causes that give rise to violence and conflict, such as poverty, inequality and injustice. Women have an indispensable role to play in building inclusive and peaceful societies. ASEAN therefore calls for the full and effective implementation of the inspiring, universal and transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1), recognizing its strong interlinkages with the women and peace and security agenda.

Regional organizations play an essential role in implementing global obligations and commitments to better protect women and girls from sexual violence, discrimination and social exclusion and to promote the role of women in conflict resolution and peace processes, including by supporting their member States in their efforts to do so. The ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation held a workshop in March in Cebu City, the Philippines, to strengthen women's participation in peace processes and conflict resolution. The workshop aimed at highlighting the level of women's participation in peace processes and conflict resolution in the region and at raising awareness of resolution 1325 (2000) and existing national action plans on women and peace and security.

As we move towards an ASEAN Community, ASEAN members are determined to strengthen the work of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children and the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation. We believe that the best way to implement the women and peace and security agenda is to protect and promote women's rights, empower women and increase their involvement in all economic development and political processes, particularly in decision-making positions. ASEAN is also working hard with partners to ensure that the South-East Asia region remains one of peace, security, stability and prosperity. ASEAN stands ready and is strongly committed to joining efforts with other Member States, the United Nations and other regional organizations to safeguard the rights of women and girls and empower women in conflict prevention and resolution.

Before I conclude, I would like to emphasize, in my national capacity, that Viet Nam remains committed to addressing the issue of women and peace and security. We are pleased to have been able to introduce and facilitate the adoption of resolution 1889 (2009) under that agenda item. While the protection of and support for women as victims are essential, Viet Nam strongly believes in the value that women can bring and the contributions they can make to conflict prevention and resolution and to post-conflict peacebuilding and reconstruction.