

**Security Council Open Debate on Women, Rule of Law and Transitional Justice in Conflict- Affected Situations, October 18th 2013, Security Council Chamber**

*Statement by Mr. Nkoloi, Permanent Mission of Botswana to the United Nations.*

We join other delegations in congratulating your country, Mr. President, on its assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month, and we extend our gratitude to you, Sir, for convening this important debate. Today's deliberations reaffirms the great importance that we, individually and collectively, attach to the promotion and protection of the rights of women and their role in the prevention of conflict.

As the year 2013 marks the thirteenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, it is of the utmost importance that we strive to ensure gender equality, to address violence against women and to enhance women's participation in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. We therefore welcome the Council's continued recognition of the need for more systematic attention to the implementation of women and peace and security commitments in its work.

As the report of the Secretary-General (S/2013/525) indicates, we welcome the progress that has been made since 2012 in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and the operationalization of the accountability framework provided by the Council's resolutions on women and peace and security. In that regard, we take note of the efforts and measures undertaken by Member States, United Nations entities and regional organizations.

However, we remain gravely concerned that, despite the existence of resolution 1325 (2000), which became a beacon of hope for millions of women and young girls, crimes of rape and sexual violence still persist. Women and girls continue to be targeted, while rape and sexual violence continue to be used as weapons of war. The prevention of sexual violence in armed conflict is therefore both a matter of upholding universal human rights and of maintaining international security, in keeping with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

In that connection, impunity for sexual violence by armed groups is unacceptable and can never be tolerated. My delegation wishes to stress the responsibility of States to protect their own populations and the importance of demonstrating commitment and political will to prevent sexual violence. To that end, I wish to emphasize the importance of respect for the rule of law, accountability and access to justice, as we believe that they are critical to protecting women's rights in the aftermath of conflict. Botswana also shares the view expressed by many that gender-sensitive legal and institutional reform, in conformity with international standards, should be accorded priority in order to stem violence against women. With the belief and a sense of optimism that, given our collective will, especially in the Security Council, we can bring an end to impunity and to those crimes, we call on the Council to strengthen its efforts in that regard.

While greater attention continues to be paid to the prosecution of perpetrators of these crimes, we are also of the view that more must be done to ensure that transitional justice addresses the full range of conflict-related violation of women's rights. My delegation also believes that efforts to address sexual violence in armed conflict should be consistent with and complementary to wider efforts to promote the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and other relevant resolutions on women and peace and security.

Let me also highlight that greater coordination and collaboration with other relevant stakeholders and the provision of assistance to States in conflict and post-conflict situations are vital to improving global efforts to address women, peace and security challenges.

Recognizing that peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men, one of the most important issues to be addressed remains women's participation in conflict resolution, including the negotiation of peace agreements at the national and international levels. In that respect, it is also our belief that the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) can be achieved only through increased recognition of the crucial role of women, as well as their participation and involvement in all efforts aimed at the prevention and resolution of conflicts. We therefore fully share the opinion that gender equality should be recognized as a core issue in the maintenance of peace and security. We also support calls for the inclusion of a gender

perspective in mediation and peace processes, particularly in the context of security arrangements and transitional justice mechanisms.

Ending violations of women's human rights is a moral imperative and one to whose achievement we must collectively commit. In that regard, Botswana strongly supports all efforts aimed at preventing and eliminating all forms of violence against women and children. To that end, we wish to reiterate our support for the work of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. In line with the Security Council's intention expressed in 2010, Botswana looks forward to the convening of the high-level review in 2015 to assess progress in the implementation of its resolution 1325 (2000). We therefore welcome this morning's adoption by the Council of resolution 2122 (2013).