

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. De Aguiar Patriota, Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations

I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this debate. I also thank the Secretary-General for his informative briefing and his thorough report on the situation of women and peace and security. Brazil is also grateful for the briefing by Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka as Executive Director of UN Women. She can count on our full support in dealing with the challenges ahead. We thank the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navi Pillay, for her presentation. Let me also thank the representative of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security for her intervention.

It is widely acknowledged that in situations of conflict, the most vulnerable, women included, are those who suffer the most. That makes prevention especially important. The tendency to rush to military solutions runs contrary to the idea of the protection of civilians, since the use of force aggravates the risks to the most vulnerable and further penalizes civilians, in particular women and children.

The Security Council's engagement with the issue of women and peace and security has greatly contributed to our common efforts to improve the lives of women in conflict situations around the world. The resolutions adopted by the Council have created a comprehensive body of norms and stimulated progress on the protection and promotion of women's rights.

The scourge of sexual violence in armed conflict has rightly been the subject of attention by the Council. It is warranted that we also focus on the importance of furthering the equal rights of women and their right to equal participation in decision-making processes.

The rule of law makes available to vulnerable groups, such as women, normative tools that promote their empowerment and emancipation. It is essential to uphold the equal rights of women by ensuring their full participation in governing institutions and the judicial system. We must reaffirm the need to establish a legislative framework that secures their full access to justice.

Brazil embraces a comprehensive notion of the rule of law that embodies a number of principles and experiences. We are convinced that the rule of law and development are strongly interrelated and mutually reinforcing. The rule of law is intimately connected to the realization of social and economic rights. In that regard, we are proud to celebrate, in 2013, the twenty- fifth year of the Brazilian Constitution, whereby we acknowledged the centrality of social and economic rights in the context of the rule of law and human rights.

The participation of women in conflict resolution and mediation processes not only contributes to the elaboration of balanced rules in post-conflict situations, but is also an important factor in achieving sustainable peace. Unfortunately, there is a long way to go before women are fully and duly integrated into national and multilateral peace efforts around the world. Viewed from different points of view, such as the number of women delegates and mediators; the numbers, substance and relative importance of provisions in peace agreements; and post-conflict strategies or policies, women's participation in peace and security is still insufficient.

Brazil believes that supporting and promoting women's participation in the maintenance of international peace and security is an increasingly important aspect of the Security Council's responsibility under the Charter. In that vein, we encourage further reflection and debates on the role of women in promoting the prevention and peaceful settlement of disputes.

In post-conflict situations, transitional justice can be an important tool to shape a better future for women. In many circumstances, knowing the truth about the violations committed against women is central to achieving national reconciliation. Transitional justice also plays a significant role in ensuring that the permanent justice structure to be established will take the interests of women into account in its foundations.

Important structural gender asymmetries curb the options of women in most societies. Rural women, in

particular, have their potential as agents of peace hindered, since they benefit less than men from the wealth created by rural employment and face new challenges owing to the impact of the still ongoing economic crisis. Yet, rural women are key contributors to global economies, playing a critical role in both developed and developing nations. They enhance agricultural and rural development, improve food security and help reduce poverty levels in their communities, thereby contributing to the promotion of sustainable development with social inclusion and food security, which are key to attaining sustainable peace.

When empowered, women can have an important positive impact on the lives of the individuals in their societies, particularly in countries emerging from conflict. The Security Council is called on to continue to make sure that such impact is fully felt in all relevant situations on its agenda.