

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security – 5 October 2009
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Colombia

Mr. Montoya (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. We thank you for issuing the concept paper (S/2009/490, annex) serving as the basis for today's discussion.

Colombia's experience demonstrates the importance of implementing gender strategies that include the social, economic and cultural dimensions, among other factors. Thus, since 2003, the national Government has been carrying out an affirmative policy that ensures women's empowerment in all areas. For example, mindful of the particular needs of women at the local level, we are promoting the establishment and enhancement of women's community councils, which are spaces for discussion in departments and municipalities, created to increase their participation and increase the visibility of the role that they play in development in their regions. This tool links women to the Government's policies and programmes, promotes development with gender equity and encourages or strengthens gender mainstreaming processes at the regional level.

In that connection, we are advancing the rural women's agenda, which includes actions to enhance respect for and guarantee the effective enjoyment of rural women's rights. The Office of the Adviser on Women's Equality, a governmental entity, has launched a project to increase the visibility of and enhance the situation of indigenous women, young women and girls, as part of the policy entitled "Women: Builders of Peace and Development". To that end, three regional laboratories and a central forum have been established to create spaces for dialogue and raise awareness about the importance of the efforts being made by women in their communities. The space created for dialogue between the Office of the Adviser and the indigenous women participating in the three laboratories is contributing to the development of a joint programme of work that includes efforts being made by women in their own areas. The goal is to develop an affirmative action plan for indigenous peoples, with an emphasis on women.

In addition, with the support of the European Union and citizen support, the programme Laboratories of Peace has been established in violence-affected areas. Through the programme, with the tools of the rule of law, we are exploring courses of action that Colombian society and local communities must take to address violence and promote sustainable development. Women are benefiting from and/or carrying out projects to promote peace in their areas.

In the peacebuilding process, entities of the Colombian State are working together to ensure the inclusion of a gender-based perspective, as well as full participation by women in violence prevention. Furthermore, we have developed guidelines for assistance to displaced persons, taking a gender-based approach. The objective of the guidelines is to assist in consolidating public policy aimed at displaced persons, in order to provide effective assistance that meets the specific needs of women and addresses the impact of displacement on them. The guidelines were based on three guiding principles: participation, a rules-based approach and a gender-based approach. They are structured around three phases: prevention and protection, emergency humanitarian assistance, and socio-economic stabilization.

Additionally, the State has made efforts to ensure access to justice and special protection for women victims of displacement and sexual violence perpetrated by illegal groups. The Office of the General Prosecutor is promoting a comprehensive action strategy to uphold the fundamental rights of women victims. The programme is based on a specific methodology to address the impact of this phenomenon on Colombian women.

Our national policy for the social and economic reintegration of those who have left illegal armed groups seeks to ensure that institutional actions fully incorporate a gender-based approach. In particular, assistance to women, children and ethnic minorities in the reintegration process is taken into account by identifying the characteristics of population groups and promoting the family's dynamic role in the process.

Likewise, we are carrying out a programme to prevent violence in families that include reintegrated persons. Strengthening the role and the capacity of women, as well as respect for their rights, is a central aspect for the Government of Colombia. In such efforts, the assistance of the United Nations system and the international community is essential. My country, as a member of the group Friends of 1325, will continue to closely follow developments in the area of women and peace and security. Colombia reaffirms its commitment to the implementation of policies, plans and programmes that broaden and strengthen the role of women in peacebuilding.