

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

*Statement by Mr. Osorio, Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations*

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, and to say how pleased we are to have you presiding over the Security Council. I would also like to thank you for organizing this open debate on women, the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict-affected situations. We are grateful for the report presented this morning by the Secretary-General (S/2013/525) and the briefings by the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the representative of the NGO Working Group on

Women, Peace and Security, who have given us a clear idea of the situation under discussion.

In our country, Colombia, we are aware that the participation of women in decision-making processes in situations that affect them, especially in conflict and post-conflict situations, is of great importance for peace and security, and that States have the primary responsibility to protect their populations with a differential approach and a gender perspective.

My delegation recognizes the important results that the Security Council has achieved in the field. It is necessary, however, to make a distinction between the Council's treatment of States that are making efforts to comply with their international obligations in the area but are not on the Council's agenda and its treatment of those States that are on its agenda. We would therefore suggest that the issues generated in that context should not only be guided by assessments and follow-up processes, but they should also place an emphasis on promoting successful experiences in the field of cooperation and exchange of know-how and best practices, giving priority constructive elements.

In considering this issue, the Council and United Nations bodies should strictly adhere to the agreed terms of mandates in the resolutions on women and peace and security that are aimed at protecting women in situations of violence, particularly sexual violence, as well as decision-making in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Focusing on the issue before us, with respect to the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict-affected situations, I would like to share the experience of our country, which is currently debating the subject, while striving to overcome armed conflict through a process of dialogue that we hope will lead to peace.

On 12 March, the Government of Colombia approved the national policy on gender equity and a comprehensive plan to guarantee a life free of violence, which constitute reference points for the design and implementation of sustainable actions for the protection of women and to ensure the effective enjoyment of women's rights, with a focus on peacebuilding, cultural transformation and the promotion of the participation of women in positions of power and decision-making. The budget approved by the Colombian Government, which is a sign of its political commitment, is approximately \$1.75 billion.

Taking into account that 50 per cent of the total number of victims of conflict are women, the law on victims and land restitution has made significant gains. The law established a comprehensive reparations administration programme that enables major access to victims, including measures to fully compensate them for forced displacement and sexual violence in the context of armed conflict.

In order to know the truth of what happened, understand the structures of criminal organizations and determine degrees of responsibility for illegal armed groups and their collaborators, cases of sexual violence have been given priority, resulting in the joining of legal actions and guidelines in the Colombian Attorney General's Office.

As part of the plan of assistance, support and reparation, 339,000 persons have received compensation, 57 per cent of whom are women. Significant progress has been made. To meet those commitments, the Government invested an additional \$750 million dollars through August 2013.

Nonetheless, it should be noted that reparations are not limited to the payouts of resources and money.

Additional actions are being developed, such as setting up institutions for the exclusive purpose of guaranteeing the rights of the victims and implementing an emotional recovery strategy, in which more than 3,000 women are taking part.

Colombia understands that the role of women in a post-conflict situation is critical from the moment that an agreement to achieve peace is sought. In that regard, my Government has actively encouraged the participation of women in the ongoing peace process. For example, the first phase of the process, known as exploratory talks, was led by a group of five persons working on behalf of the national Government, two of whom were women. Furthermore, 60 per cent of the staff of the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace are women, which ensures that the cases being considered are treated with particular sensitivity to issues of gender and women's rights.

Finally, I would like to stress that the strategies I have mentioned are a sample of the efforts being made by Colombian Government to protect women in the context of conflict, while working for their improvement, in accordance with the guidelines proposed by the Security Council and with an increasingly modern and

strengthened institutional system operating within a framework of respect for the rule of law.