

**Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Council, April 2014, Security Council Chamber**  
*Statement by Mr. Thoms, Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations.*

At the outset, I would like to thank the delegation of Nigeria for having organized today's open debate. My thanks also go to the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Ms. Bangura, for their very insightful briefings. I also thank Ms. Rhoda Misaka for the statement she made on behalf of civil society.

Germany aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union.

We welcome the Secretary-General's comprehensive report on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2014/181), and we commend the United Nations staff in the various agencies and in the field that have contributed to the report in such detail.

Progress has been made in the fight against sexual violence in conflict since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions. However, sexual violence has not been eliminated. It is time to take stock of what has been achieved. Implementation and the consolidation of measures to prevent and end conflict-related sexual violence have to be our main objectives. Let me make a few suggestions on how to further advance the women and peace and security agenda:

First, we cannot emphasize enough the importance of the effective and meaningful participation of women, in the interest of promoting gender equality, which is the essence of resolution 1325 (2000), and of ending sexual violence. Women themselves know best what they and their children need in order to feel safe, to protect themselves and their families, and to rebuild their lives and their communities after a crisis.

They need a seat at the table at all levels of conflict prevention, peace negotiation, transitional justice and reconstruction. It is not enough to just let them be observers of decision-making processes. That is especially important not only at the local level but also in the national and international context. The United Nations needs to ensure that women are involved in all United Nations-led peace and reconciliation talks.

In efforts to achieve the active involvement of women, civil society organizations can play an important role. They can connect women's organizations and train women representatives and thereby empower women to take their rightful place in all decision-making processes.

Secondly, it is well known that sexual violence is a prevalent element in most armed conflicts and is sometimes even used as a tactic of warfare. Recent events in South Sudan, where radio broadcasts were used to incite sexual violence, are a stark reminder of that appalling reality. Most perpetrators still go unpunished and are not held accountable for their actions. Those actions destroy the lives of women, children and whole communities. Accountability is the promising way to promote lasting reconciliation. If hatred and fear prevail in a society, peace will not be possible.

Accountability is first and foremost the responsibility of each State. Therefore, national capacities need to be supported and built. Justice- and security-sector reforms are essential. When effective prosecution in the State concerned is not possible, the only way to achieve justice for victims and survivors is to have those cases transferred to an international jurisdiction, including to the International Criminal Court.

Thirdly, the prevention of sexual violence, especially by preventing conflict in the first place, has to be the goal of all our efforts. In order to prevent sexual violence in ongoing conflicts, the elimination of gender-based imbalances in a society is crucial. To that end, coordination between all relevant sectors is essential. That includes security, service provision, justice, human rights, development and peacebuilding.

We thank United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict for its work in ensuring such coordination in order to achieve more efficient results and a better use of resources, and we encourage all United Nations agencies to continue their commitment to that critical inter-agency initiative.

Fourthly, data collection is essential for our ability to prevent, protect and respond and is the precondition for any justice and accountability mechanism at the national and international levels. Women protection advisers therefore need to be deployed and monitoring and reporting arrangements should be established in all relevant peacekeeping and special political missions. We welcome the mandating of women protection advisers in the newly established Mission in the Central African Republic, which will face the challenges of integrating women protection issues into all disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform processes, and of ensuring that the survivors of sexual violence have access to all psychosocial and medical services in order to protect their sexual and reproductive rights.

Germany has recently ratified the Arms Trade Treaty, which has clear provisions related to serious acts of gender-based violence or serious acts of violence against women and children. We would like to call on all States to follow our example and sign and ratify the Treaty in a timely manner.

Germany will continue its support to UN-Women and all other relevant actors, including civil society organizations, to ensure that women's active participation and their important contribution to conflict resolution and peacebuilding are adequately taken into account.