

Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Council, April 17th 2013, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Haniff, Permanent Mission of Malaysia to the United Nations.

At the outset, I would like to congratulate Rwanda on its presidency of the Security Council for this month. I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate on the important issue of women and peace and security. And I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his remarks and the other invited speakers for their valuable briefings on the subject.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Viet Nam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Malaysia joins other Member States in strongly condemning acts of sexual violence against women and girls. We feel there is an urgent need to address the factors and underlying reasons that such acts continue. More energy should be put into integration efforts, with no groups excluded from participation in disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and security-sector reform. We also agree that policymakers and private entities must do more to help reduce acts of sexual violence related to the extraction of natural resources. At the same time, Malaysia is also deeply concerned about the emerging incidence of sexual violence perpetrated against men and boys, as well as the plight of children born as a result of rape and the practice of forced marriages by armed groups.

It is a worrying trend that sexual violence in those contexts remains universally under-reported, for which a lack of adequate national capacity and expertise for investigating and prosecuting acts of sexual violence remains one of the main causes. Malaysia therefore welcomes the ongoing work of the United Nations and other stakeholders, as well as that of the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, which focuses its efforts on strengthening the capacity of national rule-of-law and justice institutions. We feel that engaging with the relevant Governments would strengthen the Team's capacity to effectively address sexual violence against women and girls.

With regard to accountability for crimes related to sexual violence, we feel that accountability requires not only careful investigations and prosecutions of those responsible, but a broader acceptance of political, legal and moral responsibility by individuals and institutions for past violations. Malaysia views accountability as a duty under both domestic and international law. In that regard, national systems should be pushed to meet international standards for ensuring accountability and justice so that perpetrators of such crimes will never go unpunished.

My delegation believes that women's equal, full and active participation is key to peacekeeping and peacebuilding. In that regard, while we acknowledge the existing normative frameworks as represented by the Security Council resolutions pertaining to women and peace and security, we hope we will see a greater impetus towards actual realization of those resolutions, including the landmark resolution 1325 (2000), in order to increase women's participation in the field of peace and security.

In that context, my delegation welcomes the various initiatives and actions undertaken by Member States, United Nations entities, including UN-Women, civil society organizations and other relevant actors that are focused on supporting and increasing the representation of women in peace negotiations and mainstreaming gender perspectives into peace agreements. In recognition of that crucial element, in October 2011 the Malaysian Ministry of Defence and the United Nations Development Programme jointly organized a seminar on promoting peace through mainstreaming the gender perspective in peacekeeping operations. For Malaysia, a country firmly committed to contributing peacekeeping troops to United Nations missions, that seminar on gender and peacekeeping represents our commitment to supporting both the global agenda for gender and

peacekeeping as well as policies that support women's development. Additionally, in September, Malaysia, along with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, will jointly host a regional seminar on child protection at the Malaysian Peacekeeping Training Centre in Port Dickson. The seminar, which will include participation by 30 Member States in the Asian region, will officially validate the training module for civilian and military personnel on peacekeeping missions dealing with the protection of children involved in armed conflict.

My delegation is deeply concerned that forced marriage, rape and sexual slavery have been documented in several States in conflict and have occurred under the pretext of Islamic sharia law. Malaysia wishes to emphasize that Islam does not condone forced marriage, rape or sexual slavery in any way. We believe that education is key to reducing the incidence of sexual violence. In the area of education, Malaysia has been working through the Malaysia Australia Education Project for Afghanistan, which aims to enable Afghan women teachers to master English and Islamic teachings. The trainers are playing a critical role in developing the skills of a new generation of female Afghan teachers, who will be role models and mentors for girls in years to come.

In conclusion, Malaysia reaffirms its strong commitment to efforts to address sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations, and strongly believes that the issue of women and peace and security deserves the Security Council's sustained attention. In that regard, we will continue to work with others who share a similar interest in advancing that agenda and ensuring the full mainstreaming of women into activities aimed at achieving peace and security.