

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

First I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on behalf of the Moroccan delegation for convening this debate on sexual violence in conflict, which is important for the international community. This is the first time I am speaking here in my capacity as the new Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco, and I am delighted to do so under your presidency and on a topic chosen by Nigeria, to which my country attaches great importance.

I should also like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Ms. Zainab Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and Ms. Rhoda Misaka of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security for their briefings.

We welcome the convening of this debate, which enables us to take stock of the progress made and difficulties encountered by Member States in protecting women and children from sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations. The Secretary-General's report (S/2014/181) is an exhaustive list of events that took place during the reporting period and of national experiences that have much to teach us and which reflect a desire to assume national ownership in ending sexual violence on the part of the countries concerned.

Women often need protection and support; they are the hardest hit by devastating impact of violence and, regrettably, pay a high price for their increased vulnerability and difficult living conditions. Protecting women against sexual violence in conflict remains a collective responsibility and requires us to act with resolve, coordination and as one to strengthen measures to stop the perpetrators and instigators of the violence and to prevent such violence from recurring.

The Secretary-General's report rightly underscores that the slowness of progress made in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, as well as the impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators of sexual violence, promote a high-risk environment for women and girls. Resolution 2106 (2013) seeks to strengthen the existing legal arsenal protecting women against multiple types of violence. The resolution has allowed us to define a comprehensive prevention strategy through concrete, targeted and situation-specific actions. The Secretary-General's report also underscores that rape is often the most widespread use of violence in refugee and internally displaced people camps. Unfortunately, these camps offer no security to women, particularly single women or heads of families, because of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, the infiltration of armed elements among the refugee population, and even the militarization of camps.

The reform of the security sector, accountability and strengthening the access of victims to justice, as well as awareness-raising of human rights and training within national security institutions, would provide better protection for victims. My delegation would like to welcome the work done by the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict in assisting countries to strengthen their national capacities, to promote transitional justice and to reform the security sector.

The signing of peace and ceasefire agreements and implementing programmes to prevent gender-based violence, and the drafting of codes of conduct for security forces have helped to launch investigations to establish the criminal responsibility of the perpetrators.

My delegation welcomes the efforts made by United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict in training peacekeeping personnel so as to strengthen their operational capability for rapid reaction and response to prevent violence.

My delegation also wants follow-up, analysis and information-sharing arrangements established pursuant to resolution 1960 (2010) to be improved in order to take better account of realities on the ground through the collection of objective, viable and credible data. We also want the orientation note on contact points between

these arrangements and the information-management system on gender-based violence established by United Nations Action to enable us to improve the ways in which we gather and share information. Awareness-raising campaigns to protect women in conflict depends on the involvement of public authorities and national human rights institutions, civil society and local women's organizations, as well as religious heads, who play a key role.

My delegation believes that the mandates of women protection advisers in peacekeeping operations and special political missions need to be clearly defined and periodically evaluated in order to enable each context to be borne in mind and to improve coordination between among the advisers in carrying out their missions so as to avoid any possible duplication of work on the ground and to ensure better consistency in their work.

While parties to conflict bear the primary responsibility for violence against women and girls, United Nations action must reflect the benefits not only of dialogue and cooperation, but also of deterrence through resort to legal means, prosecution and incarceration for the perpetrators of these heinous crimes. Accountability must be the principle on which the United Nations should base its work. Combating impunity must be an ongoing parameter for the work of the international community in combating sexual violence, strengthening access to justice systems in place, promoting and strengthening the rule of law, and restoring security, peace, stability and sustainable development in the countries affected.