

**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. Emvula, Permanent Mission of Namibia to the United Nations.*

I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your country's assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of October. Furthermore, I wish to thank you for organizing this very important debate affording the wider United Nations membership an opportunity to contribute to the very important discussion on women, the rule of law and transitional justice. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN Women and the High Commissioner for Human Rights for their kind introductory remarks. I am also grateful for the concept note (S/2013/587, annex) that you have circulated, Sir, which we believe will guide our deliberations to a successful conclusion.

From the outset, Namibia has recognized the important role of women in peacebuilding, as enunciated in resolution 1325 (2000), of October 2000, which my delegation, together with many others, successfully negotiated during our presidency of the Security Council. Since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), we have been pleased that the United Nations has adopted specific policy directives to achieve gender equality in peacekeeping operations. Due to their vulnerability, women in many conflicts situations around the world continue to face intolerable hardship, as they become targets of sexual violence. In that context, Namibia welcomes and supports the adoption of the recent Arms Trade Treaty, as it is the first international instrument that includes a gender criterion in the context of arms transfers, thereby identifying women as vulnerable targets in conflict situations.

The role of women in conflict prevention and post conflict peacebuilding is of great importance. Namibia therefore fully supports the inclusion of women in security systems such as armed forces, police and peacekeeping operations and special political missions in support of various United Nations resolutions that recognize that important role.

Namibia is proud to be among the troop contributing countries that have successfully complied with resolution 1888 (2009), which urges Member States to deploy greater numbers of female military and police personnel in United Nations peacekeeping missions. As we speak, a group of police women from Namibia is on its way to Darfur.

We recognize the important role of non-governmental organizations such as Justice Rapid Response in training Member State officials as investigators of gender-based violence and rapidly deploying them to conflict areas. Namibia will continue to support such initiatives, as they can go a long way in assisting the international community in investigating such horrible crimes, which specifically target women and children. We therefore welcome the partnership between Justice Rapid Response and UN Women in organizing the upcoming training course for investigators of sexual-based violence to be held in Bogota in January 2014.

We would like to draw the Council's attention to the recent resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on the elimination of violence against women that encourages the use of mechanisms such as the UN Women/Justice Rapid Response joint roster of international investigators of sexual and gender based crimes in its efforts to promptly make available the relevant expertise to investigate mass rapes and systematic violence.

There is a need to combat impunity and bring the perpetrators of sexual violence to justice. Sexual violence must be prosecuted at both the national and international levels. However, we have noticed with great concern that sexual violence is underreported at both the national level and in conflict situations. Therefore, there is a need to support the strengthening of judicial systems and the destigmatization of sexual violence for the victims so they may access justice without being excluded.

At the international level, we urge States to fully comply with international humanitarian law, international human rights law and the International Criminal Court mechanisms, which need to be strengthened.

In conclusion, the legacy of conflict-related violence is endured long after peace agreements have been concluded. Women continue to be targets of violence as insecurity continues in the absence of effective justice systems that facilitate large-scale impunity. Therefore, the involvement of women in peace processes and the establishment of the rule of law are the foundation for sustainable and durable peace. We therefore commend the continuous engagement of the Council in promoting the role of women in peacebuilding.