

**Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Conflict, June 24<sup>th</sup> 2013, Security Council Chamber**

*Statement by Mrs. Adhikari, Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations.*

My delegation wishes to express its sincere appreciation to you, Mr. President, for organizing this important debate. My delegation expresses its profound gratitude to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon; Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict; Ms. Angelina Jolie, Special Envoy of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; and Ms. Jane Adong Anywar for their remarks.

Sexual and gender-based violence in situations of armed conflict not only affects the dignity and honour of the victims, but also leaves negative impacts on families, communities and societies. The report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council (S/2013/149) depicts the pervasiveness of sexual violence and its interconnection with the maintenance of international peace and security.

After the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord in 2006, the Government of Nepal has traversed a long path towards empowering women. The interim Constitution of Nepal 2007 has ensured the maximum participation of women in decision-making positions in all walks of national life, from grassroots to national levels. Peace committees at the district level play a very important role in managing post-conflict issues, including one-third representation by women. Nepal is committed to increasing the number of women in the Nepal army and police and United Nations peacekeeping operations in order to make them more inclusive.

Protecting and promoting the rights of the people and ensuring inclusive development is at the core of our efforts to build a peaceful and prosperous Nepal. We are fully committed to preventing all forms of violence against women, including sexual violence. Nepal is a State party to seven core international human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The independent judicial system and the National Human Rights Commission — a constitutional human rights watchdog body — are playing a prominent role in safeguarding the rights of the people.

Nepal strongly believes that there can be no peace and security if violence against women and girls persists. The Domestic Violence (Crime and Punishment) Act, 2009; the Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act, 2007; the Gender-Based Violence Act, 2010; the National Plan of Action against Trafficking in Women and Children, 2012; the National Commission on Women Act, 2006; and other national laws provide the measures necessary to address violence against women and girls. Moreover, there is a sustained effort to review laws that discriminate against women.

Nepal is the first South Asian country to develop a national plan of action on resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008). Increasing the participation of women in decision-making, protecting women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence and ending impunity are the topmost priorities set forth in our plan. We have a zero-tolerance policy against gender-based violence.

The Government of Nepal has never reneged on its commitment to prosecute cases involving grave violations of human rights and to end impunity through the establishment of transitional justice mechanisms. We are fully conscious of fulfilling our international obligations and national commitments, and we are enacting laws to establish transitional justice mechanisms. Our 2013 ordinance on the investigation of disappeared persons and on the truth and reconciliation commission is currently being examined by the Supreme Court, and is therefore sub judice.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate that the international community has to play an important role in

ending all forms of violence against women, including sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations. Nepal stands firmly committed to ensuring the full protection of women's rights and preventing sexual violence and all other forms of violations of human rights. We look forward to working more closely with the international community in the days ahead.