

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Rule of Law and Transitional Justice in Conflict-Affected Situations, October 18th, 2013, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mrs. Smaila, Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the United Nations

I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open date, which places in the proper context the issue of women and the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict-affected situations. We also thank Azerbaijan for the concept note (S/2013/587, annex), which has provided direction to our discussion.

Nigeria shares the Secretary-General's view that there has been measurable progress in all areas of the women and peace and security agenda, especially as it relates to the increased provision of expertise and training. We are pleased to note that, under the rubric of prevention and protection, there has been a significant increase in focus on policy and operational focus on the monitoring, prevention and prosecution of violence against women. The international community must sustain that momentum.

In spite of those accomplishments, we believe that considerable work still needs to be done to overcome the challenges posed by a lack of implementation of commitments on women and peace and security. A nexus must be created among women's participation, security and the core work of United Nations peacekeeping operations — often overlooked when gender-specific information is provided to the Council. Indeed, the lack of sex-disaggregated data on security threats prevents action that could contribute to greater security for women. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's recommendation to explore options for providing guidance that would facilitate reporting to the Security Council to include information on the situation of women and girls. The Council requires such information to work in concert with other intergovernmental bodies such as the Human Rights Council.

Sexual violence against women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations should remain a matter of high priority to the international community. More needs to be done to hold accountable the perpetrators of such heinous acts. Indeed, the adoption of resolution 2016 (2013), in June, underscored the need for more systematic monitoring of sexual violence in armed conflict. It is therefore imperative that the Council develop the appropriate mechanisms to ensure women's participation in all aspects of mediation, post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding to address sexual violence in conflict.

The gender dimensions of transitional justice are critical in assessing crimes committed against women in conflict. The lack of access to justice occasioned by the deterioration of an already weakened criminal justice system amplifies their vulnerabilities. Indeed, UN Women notes that securing justice for women entails engaging with the processes that shape future justice mechanisms, including constitution-making and peace processes. That ultimately accentuates the need for greater women's participation in post-conflict nation-building, where frameworks are instituted to enable them seek redress.

Nigeria is committed to the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions on women and peace and security. Strident steps have been taken at the national level to ensure the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). In the same vein, Nigeria stresses the importance of compliance with resolution 1820 (2008), on ending acts of sexual violence against women in conflict situations.

It is essential for Member States to adopt and implement comprehensive legislation on violence against women as a concrete step to increase women's access to justice. Special courts designed to reduce delays in rendering justice should be established where necessary to facilitate access to justice for victims. Strong advocacy to break the culture of silence and promote zero tolerance across the globe is fundamental to the restoration of the rights and dignity of women in all circumstances.