

**Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security  
October 2014, Security Council Chamber**

*Statement by Ms. Mejía Vélez, Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations*

At the outset, I express my thanks to the Secretary-General for his report (S/2014/693). I also thank the Assistant Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN-Women and the High Commissioner for Refugees. I also thank you, Madam President, for having convened this open debate on the occasion of the issuing of the report of the Secretary-General on such a sensitive matter at such a critical moment for international affairs. I have first-hand knowledge of your work and deep commitment to issues relating to women and peace and security, Madam President, stretching back many years. The Government of Colombia has always attached great importance to this topic, and never more than today as we are engaged in what we hope is an irreversible peace process resolving more than five decades of conflict in which women were lamentably the victims of a great deal of such violence.

Colombia is aware that, as mentioned in the concept note (S/2014/693, annex), women's socioeconomic, cultural and political autonomy are fundamental elements for living free from violence, enjoying democracy, international stability and lasting peace. This recognition, in our case, is based on our belief and the commitments made 15 years ago in resolution 1325 (2000), which are reflected in the public policy implemented in our country. The Secretary-General's report of 24 September refers to the specific actions and steps taken by the State of Colombia. For the sake of brevity, I will leave it for members to read for themselves, but there are five mentions in the report to our satisfaction because they reflect significant steps and progress that other States could implement. I will refer to just one of them: women's fully empowered participation in conflict resolution.

There are two women in the five-person team participating in today's peace talks in Havana. Women constitute an impressive group of mediators and special envoys, as well as members of civil society and victims, on the Government and insurgent sides alike. This recognition in the Secretary-General report is important to the State of Colombia, not least as it drives us to continue making progress to consolidate that differential focus based on the knowledge that peace processes cannot succeed without the active participation of women. When it comes to refugees and displacement, it is clear that women constitute one of the most vulnerable groups in the world. I would like to refer to four specific measures from the lessons learned in our country that could be useful to our discussion today.

The law for victims and comprehensive and accessible reparations programmes were adopted in 2011. The single victims' register for identifying and registering their needs has been a very interesting process: we have already managed to ascertain that 49 per cent of victims of violence in my country are women. The gender equality policy adopted in 2003 sought to guarantee women lives free of violence and has allowed us to develop and implement sustainable actions longer-term over the past decade. Finally, the law against sexual violence was enacted to provide preferential treatment whereby the burden of proof does not fall on the victim. All those measures are designed

to have an impact on the whole of Colombian society and to put us on a path that will enable us to build a sustainable, consensus-based, lasting peace.

Finally, despite everything, Colombia is aware that we have a long road ahead of us. We are therefore continuing to work on the main challenges facing the Government, and reintegrating with full rights the victims affected by internal conflict, especially women, is a priority. That is a difficult goal, but we will work to achieve it, adopting policies to promote participation in a post-conflict society and to create situations where our commitment can continue to translate to promoting a society living in peace, where women and especially girls enjoy full rights and guarantees. I would like to explain my country's position on this and am prepared to share experiences and to exchange views with other countries if requested.