

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

Statement by Mr. Bishnoi, Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations

We thank you for organizing this debate on a matter of considerable importance, Madam President. We would also like to thank the Executive Director of UN-Women, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, and the representatives of civil society for their briefings.

It is a fact that women bear a disproportionately higher share of the burden of conflict, but have a marginal say on matters of war and peace. That is a function of the gender imbalance in our societies reflected in positions of power and influence. It is therefore important to underline that the equal participation of women in power structures and their full involvement in all efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts are essential to the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. To put it simply, women should occupy positions of influence. Looking at you, Madam President, we are pleased to see that there has been some progress in that direction.

In its resolution 1325 (2000), the Security Council set out a visionary agenda for achieving gender equality as a prerequisite for peaceful, inclusive and just societies. As the Secretary-General has noted, considerable progress has been made at the normative level. The challenge lies in implementation and in sustaining progress. Of particular concern are extremism and the targeted violence and human-rights violations linked to terrorist acts against women and girls. It is important that the situation of displaced women and girls be directly addressed. As the concept note (S/2014/731, annex) circulated by the presidency indicates, on every single day in 2013, violent conflicts displaced some 32,000 people from their homes. Three quarters of the refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) were women and children. We support the recommendation that a gender perspective be integrated into policies concerning refugees and IDPs.

We do not subscribe to the view that women should form part of the military component of peacekeeping missions. No useful purpose would be served by women becoming a part of military culture and glorifying it. That said, we do feel that women can play an important role in policing functions. Research has repeatedly shown that women perform certain specific police duties better than men. We are therefore happy to be contributing an all-female formed police unit to the United Nations Mission in Liberia. I should also take this opportunity to mention an Indian police inspector, Shakti Devi, who was deployed to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and recently received the International Female Police Peacekeepers Award for exceptional achievements in establishing women police councils in several parts of Afghanistan. Her consistent engagement in improving services for victims of sexual and gender-based violence has led to the successful investigation and prosecution of a number of cases. We are proud that the work of a female Indian police officer in a United Nations peacekeeping mission is inspiring others to follow her example in the quest to redress the disproportionate burden that women bear in times of war and conflict.

I turn now to a point that we have made previously before the Council: by definition, it is States that are parties to the treaty-based system of international law. By and large they respect it, and when

they do not, penalties arise through the provisions in the treaties. When their actions gravely threaten peace and security, sanctions can be imposed against them through the action of the Council. The most egregious crimes against women, however, have been and are committed by irregular forces, often warring against Governments. They obey no laws and are, as experience has shown, much more immune to sanctions than Governments are. The Council needs to focus its attention on such forces, which are responsible for the bulk of the crimes committed against women.

Conflict situations vary; each has its own causes and consequences. There can be no off-the-shelf remedy or panacea. We need to take practical and effective steps to mitigate the impact of conflict on women and to enhance their ability to restore and preserve peace.

This will be our last statement before the Security Council under your presidency, Madam. We would therefore like to place on record our very warm appreciation for the work of your delegation in the Council and for the maturity and understanding that your country has brought to issues relating to the maintenance of international peace and security.