

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

Statement by Ms. Paik Ji-ah, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations.

I would like to thank Executive Director Mlambo-Ngcuka, Assistant Secretary-General Mulet, Special Rapporteur Chaloka Beyani and civil society representative Suaad Allami for their insightful briefings.

The Republic of Korea welcomes the progress made at the normative level to support the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda since the adoption of the landmark Council resolution 1325 (2000). We also note with appreciation the continued efforts of the international community to ensure the protection of women and girls in situations of armed conflict, as well as their participation in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. However, Korea is of the view that much greater efforts are needed to meet the commitments set out in resolution 1325 (2000). As pointed out by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2014/693), in the past year there was a series of heinous crimes linked to conflict, leading to new mass displacements, humanitarian catastrophes and serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights. Many of the victims of such increased violence in conflict are women and girls. Over 51 million people were forcibly displaced as of 2013 — the highest number since the end of the Second World War — and three quarters of the refugee and IDP population are women and children.

Displaced women and girls continue to face tremendous threats and violence in the conflicts in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and Syria, among other places. Even more troubling is the fact that many armed groups bent on violent extremism are deliberately targeting women and girls. In addition, the high risk of violence that women and girls face during the period of displacement usually continues until the process of return and reintegration. Their vulnerability increases when gender is compounded with other factors, such as disability.

Having said that, I would like to make a few observations on the protection of displaced women and girls.

First, it is imperative to tackle sexual and gender-based violence committed against displaced women and girls. Sexual exploitation, forced marriage and human trafficking are just a few of the human rights abuses perpetrated against displaced women and girls. Preventive measures, including heightened security at camps for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDP), as well as accountability for perpetrators, must be ensured. There should be zero tolerance for sexual harassment and abuse by any troops, including Government forces, non-State armed groups and even peacekeepers, who take advantage of the victims' vulnerability. In that regard, we express our particular concern over the persistent allegations of the sexual exploitation of women and girls in IDP camps in Somalia.

Secondly, displaced women and girls are not only victims, but also survivors and leaders. They often show remarkable courage and resilience in protecting and supporting their families. Currently, one in four Syrian refugee families in Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan are headed by women struggling to take care of their traumatized families. We should strengthen their self-reliance by supporting their economic empowerment, legal rights and education.

Thirdly, it is critical to ensure that the voices of displaced women and girls are heard. In order to reflect their special needs, they must be included in decision-making procedures and play a leadership role. The participation and representation of refugee and IDP women must be improved during the process of developing, implementing and evaluating policies and programmes that affect their lives.

Lastly, improving compliance with international law serves as a comprehensive measure for the protection of displaced women and girls. We urge all parties to armed conflict to uphold their obligations regarding international human rights and humanitarian law. We need to close the implementation gap of international law through awareness-raising, capacity-building and follow-up legislation.

Displaced women and girls in conflict constitute one of the most vulnerable groups. They are too often invisible, forgotten and overlooked. Our empowerment and humanitarian support is essential for them to overcome the hardships they face. As part of our efforts to support the implementation of this important agenda, the Republic of Korea is supporting Afghan women refugees by making a multi-year contribution to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for the returnees. We also made efforts to improve the status of women refugees and asylum seekers in the Republic of Korea, based on our refugee act. Such efforts include support for their livelihoods, vocational training and social and cultural adaptation.

As the 2015 high-level review of resolution 1325 (2000) approaches, the Republic of Korea reaffirms its steadfast commitment to the protection of women and girls in situations of armed conflict.