

Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Council, April 2014, Security Council Chamber
Statement by Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi, Permanent Mission of Spain to the United Nations.

I thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this debate, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Bangura, for her important contributions.

Spain fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union. The full version of my statement will be circulated in the Chamber, but I should like to share what I believe to be its most vital elements.

Conflict-related sexual violence is a violation of human rights and possibly one of the most abhorrent. My country therefore firmly supports the idea of an optional protocol that would help to mitigate and document violations of human rights. We believe that if we are to effectively combat conflict-related sexual violence, we need the cooperation of regional and subregional organizations. Therefore, we particularly welcome the appointment by the African Union of Ms. Bineta Diop to help in addressing conflict-related sexual violence. Spain has also cooperated with the African Union in such difficult areas as providing gender advisers in Guinea Bissau, Mali and Somalia. The Secretary-General's report (S/2014/181) is magnificent and lengthy. We have read it extremely carefully. I should like to emphasize six elements that I believe to be of vital importance.

First is the importance of prevention, as we all know. Secondly, in post-conflict situations, which are perhaps the most serious and most traumatic of situations, we need to incorporate a specific provision for care for victims. Thirdly, we must never forget the victims themselves, whose situation is truly tragic and alarming. Fourthly, we must keep in mind in particular victims from vulnerable sectors, such as indigenous groups or the disabled. Fifthly, it is important to ensure appropriate training for armed forces because they can play a definitive role in conflict and post-conflict situations. Lastly, we need to combat helplessness.

I have two positive concluding remarks to make. First, we have made progress and have certainly done so because of the work of Ms. Bangura's Office. Secondly, we must duly exploit the current momentum. I should also like to comment on remarks made by Ms. Bangura and by the Ambassador of Malaysia.

Ms. Bangura said this morning that we need to move from resolution to solution. I think we have a sufficiently broad normative corpus of resolutions and decisions that enable us, legally speaking, to address this very tragic phenomenon. The Ambassador of Malaysia said something that I wholeheartedly endorse, to the effect that we must have zero tolerance for sexual violence in conflict, which, I repeat, is one of the most heinous and tragic violations of human rights.