

## **Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Council, April 17<sup>th</sup> 2013, Security Council Chamber**

*Statement by Mr. González de Linares Palou, Permanent Mission of Spain to the United Nations.*

I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in this debate on specific measures to prevent, punish and eradicate sexual violence in conflicts. It is an issue of great concern that affects sensitive areas, such as the protection of civilians in all kinds of armed conflict, the displacement of populations and peacebuilding processes, without forgetting its undeniable connection with other scourges, such as trafficking in persons.

Spain welcomes the report of the Secretary-General (S/2013/149) and supports its recommendations. Similarly, Spain commends the commitment of the new Special Representative, Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, to the priorities developed by her predecessor, Ms. Wahlström. Spain also shares the new goal set by Ms. Bangura of promoting national ownership in the fight against sexual violence in conflict, which is key to obtaining lasting results. Ms. Bangura can count on my country's full support for her work.

Combating sexual violence in conflict requires the adoption of measures for the prevention, protection and prosecution of the perpetrators. In all those areas, the victims' cooperation is essential. However, as the Secretary-General's report points out, the lack of adequate information and fear of reporting for cultural and social reasons, which tend to increase in times of conflict, are serious obstacles to such collaboration. We must therefore, to the greatest extent possible, reinforce mechanisms designed to help victims, raise awareness about their surroundings and strengthen the capacity of national courts.

Spain also shares the conclusions of the report regarding the role of the International Criminal Court. While the primary responsibility for the trial of suspects for acts of sexual violence lies with national courts, the Court plays a crucial complementary role at the international level.

As I already mentioned, Spain fully supports the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General, but would like to highlight those that relate to the need to define a mechanism to monitor the obligations of parties to conflict as set forth in resolution 1960 (2010) — including the possibility of referring cases to the International Criminal Court — and in particular to those pertaining to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes and security sector reform. I also wish to stress the importance of the role of the International Criminal Court, as acknowledged in the recent conclusions agreed to in the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

In the open debate on women, peace and security held last fall at the Security Council (see S/PV.6877), we referred to the numerous initiatives that Spain had been leading in its foreign policy, development cooperation and defence policy with a view to achieving two goals — first, to promote the role of women in peacebuilding in conflict and post-conflict situations, and, secondly, to eliminate sexual violence in conflicts, including the outrageous practice of using systematic rape as a war tactic.

Focusing now on the second goal, Spain believes that it is a priority to implement specific programmes to eradicate all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls, while giving special attention to extreme situations such as trafficking, sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation. I would also like to highlight our unconditional support for the work of UN-Women in its campaign against sexual violence in armed conflict.

Spain has generously contributed to the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund, which has provided \$94 million for 20 conflict prevention and peacebuilding programmes in as many countries around the world.

In the area of training, I would emphasize the specific seminar on the gender perspective in peace operations that is being jointly organized by the Ministries for Foreign Affairs and Defence of Spain and the Netherlands. The fifth edition of the seminar will be held soon and will have a specific module on sexual violence in conflict.

I would conclude by referring to a particularly vulnerable group in the area of sexual violence, namely, people with disabilities, who are even more vulnerable in a context of conflict. On 23 September, a high-level meeting will be held on achieving the Millennium Development Goals for persons with disabilities. Spain, together with the Philippines, has the honour of having been appointed to co-facilitate the outcome document of that meeting. It will undoubtedly be the best opportunity to discuss a new development agenda that takes into account the imperative of combating discrimination against persons with disabilities.