

Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Council, April 2014, Security Council Chamber
Statement by Mr. Charles, Permanent Mission of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations.

Trinidad and Tobago welcomes yet another opportunity to participate in this open debate on the important topic of women and peace and security. We also commend the Security Council for organizing this event, which is very symbolic in being presided over by the Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations in her capacity as President of the Council for the month of April.

Trinidad and Tobago also expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the subject (S/2014/181). We also note with appreciation the very informative briefings prepared by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and by the representative of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.

Trinidad and Tobago is fully committed to the goal of gender equality. For us, the empowerment of women is an integral part of national development as well as an essential pillar in the maintenance of sustainable peace. Trinidad and Tobago is strongly supportive of the need to enhance efforts to ensure that women are equally represented in all spheres. These include decision-making at all levels, as well as in the field of peace and security. We also applaud the valuable contributions that women have made and continue to make to conflict resolution and peacebuilding initiatives.

As a State that seeks to fully honour its international obligations, we recognize the importance of resolution 1325 (2000) — a landmark resolution that not only acknowledges the contribution of women to international peace and security, but also addresses women's participation in all aspects of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Trinidad and Tobago subscribes to the rule of law as a fundamental safeguard in the advancement and protection of the rights of women. Consequently, we view as imperative our continued adherence to obligations arising from a number of international instruments that seek to protect the rights of women and girls, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Trinidad and Tobago holds firmly to the view that the prosecution of perpetrators of acts of violence against women and girls during armed conflict is a necessary requirement for lasting and durable peace. In that regard, we remain committed to our obligations under the Geneva Convention of 1949 and its Additional Protocols I and II of 1977. Similarly, as a founding member of the International Criminal Court, Trinidad and Tobago has given domestic legal effect to the Rome Statute, which established the Court, and encourages others to accede to that instrument.

Trinidad and Tobago is situated in a region that continues to experience the scourge caused by the diversion of small arms and light weapons from legal markets to the illicit trade, which has led to an increase in criminal activity in the Caribbean Community. It should be noted that women and girls are disproportionately affected by that illicit trade. In addition, women and girls also experience economic and psychological burdens, abuse and sexual exploitation, which are sometimes linked to other crimes associated with the illegal arms trade.

Trinidad and Tobago hailed the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which it has signed and ratified, and would welcome its early entry into force. We submit that the ATT represents a significant achievement in the global fight to eliminate the diversion of conventional arms to the illicit market, and could contribute to a reduction if not an end to untold human suffering, particularly to women and girls, as a result of this pernicious arms trade.

Lasting peace can be achieved only if women are more involved in decision-making processes relating to peacebuilding and post-conflict development, which are necessary for the sustainable development of our societies. It was that conviction that led Trinidad and Tobago to introduce resolution General Assembly

65/69, the first-ever on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, negotiated in 2010 and adopted by consensus by the Assembly. We look forward to the continued support of delegations in further strengthening the resolution during the upcoming sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly. Trinidad and Tobago commends and supports the significant role of United Nations agencies and bodies, such as UN-Women, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, in gender mainstreaming initiatives and in making available to us information on the ways in which women have contributed and continue to contribute to the maintenance of peace in our societies.

In conclusion, Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to working with other Member States as well as its partners at the regional, hemispheric and global levels to promote the involvement of women as equal partners in matters related to peace and security, including at all levels of the decision-making processes.