

**Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Council, April 2014, Security Council Chamber**  
*Statement by Mr. Koncke, Permanent Mission of Uruguay to the United Nations.*

My delegation wishes to congratulate the Nigerian presidency on having convened this debate, and to thank all those, particularly women, who work day in and day out to promote peace and security. Our thanks also go to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Bangura, for her contributions.

Since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the women and peace and security agenda has clearly progressed both in reach and depth and now occupies a recognized place among the panoply of legal and political instruments and specific actions carried out by the Organization to champion the importance of adopting a gender perspective in which the needs of women and girls are included in all conflict situations, and particularly in post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Lamentably, despite the progress made in recent years, as a troop-contributing country we can say that in the areas of peacekeeping and peacebuilding, civilians, in particular women and girls, continue to be those most severely affected by conflict and in post-conflict situations. Likewise, the reports on women and children show that they remain the most vulnerable sector in such situations and the main physical and emotional victims of sexual violence. Next year will mark the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), which will offer us the opportunity to assess good practices, the progress achieved, and the shortcomings and challenges remaining, and to consider identifying new goals.

The situation of children born as a result of violence is of great concern to us. They suffer social stigma with grave economic and serious psychological consequences. This is also true of forced marriages of women and girls carried out by armed groups in the situation of women victims of trafficking, sexual slavery and forced displacement. We emphasize the need for greater attention to be paid to restoration of the rights and rehabilitation of victims of serious violations, in particular in cases of abuse and sexual exploitation.

It is important to stress that in post-conflict situations the number of women head of families is on the rise. It is therefore critical to guarantee the economic and social rights of women in such contexts. Moreover, promoting accountability is another vital element, and to that end the United Nations system must continue to combat impunity for the perpetrators of such violations, promote national capacity-building, and work with regional actors to promote international justice mechanisms and support the work of women's human rights organizations.

Uruguay considers the women and peace and security agenda to be part and parcel of a broader agenda closely linked to those on children in armed conflict and the protection of civilians in armed conflict. We therefore believe that it is vital to move forward in as coordinated a way as possible to achieve synergy, avoid duplication of efforts, and most effectively to avail ourselves of the United Nations instruments in the field. One of these — peacekeeping operations — is certainly very significant, in which civilian protection mandates have been incorporated in recent years, with particular attention to women and children.

Significant progress has been made. However, regular attacks on civilian populations, particularly in zones of deployment of missions, highlight the ongoing limitations to meeting the expectations of locals populations and the international community. Many of these limitations can be corrected by clear and predictable strategies that are attuned to each mission; better coordination among the various actors in the field, particularly in relations with the host State, which bears the primary responsibility for protection; and greater resources, which are absolutely necessary, among other measures. Particular attention must also be paid to the need for full adherence to the code of conduct on the part of all those in United Nations contingents deployed in the field, on the basis of zero tolerance. We are therefore concerned by the persistence of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping missions.

The natural feedback between protection and participation is probably the core concept emerging from resolution 1325 (2000), in which the Council reaffirmed the important role played by women in preventing and resolving conflicts and in peacebuilding. In that regard, we are concerned over the low representation of women at various levels. Uruguay has been in the vanguard of incorporating women into the armed forces, as evidenced in the number of women deployed by the armed forces and the national police in the Uruguayan contingents of peacekeeping missions. In our capacity as volunteers, we have developed and documented very significant statistics revealing our commitment to the goals of these missions. We therefore reiterate the importance of continuing to promote the greater participation of women in the various areas linked to the peace processes, providing an undeniable qualitative contribution.

In conclusion, we remain committed to the development and implementation of the protection of civilians in armed conflict agenda, with particular attention to women and children. We do so by means of our work here at Headquarters and through our Blue Helmets in the field. We also reiterate the importance of establishing the broadest possible basis for this agenda. The participation of so many countries in today's debate bears witness to that commitment.