

Mr. Mažeiks (Latvia): I thank the Secretary- General, the Executive Director of UN-Women, Ms. Yanar Mohammed, Ms. Julianne Lusenge and Ms. Alaa Murabit for their statements. I also thank Spain, in its capacity as presidency of the Security Council, for organizing this important debate marking the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of the landmark resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security.

Latvia aligns itself with the statement delivered by observer of the European Union.

In 2000, resolution 1325 recognized that war impacts women differently and stressed the need to increase women's participation in peace talks. No other Security Council resolution is better known for its number and name because it was truly a historic milestone. Today, we can assess what has been achieved in the past 15 years thanks to a very comprehensive global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), as well as to Secretary-General's latest report on women and peace and security (S/2015/716).

Significant developments have taken place over the past 15 years. The normative framework for women, peace and security has been strengthened by seven follow-up resolutions to resolution 1325, with the latest resolution 2242 (2015) adopted this morning, which Latvia proudly co-sponsored. The empowerment of women and girls and respect for their human rights, as well as women's full participation in decision-making processes, including in conflict prevention and resolution, have been recognized as crucial contributors to peacemaking and peacebuilding. There has been an important change in the way the international community views and deals with conflict-related sexual violence.

Despite these positive changes, the global implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) has been far from complete. The participation of women in peace processes and post-conflict processes needs to be more visible and effective. More efforts are necessary to tackle impunity for conflict-related sexual violence. Moreover, the current challenges to international peace and security, such as the changing nature of conflicts, the growing threat of non-state armed actors, the use of new technologies for warfare, and dire humanitarian crises are too complex and often require comprehensive solutions. The rights of women and girls have been particularly violated by the spread of violent extremism.

These challenges affirm the need for the strengthening of conflict-prevention, early-warning and early-action mechanisms, especially by the Security Council. Latvia believes that the findings of the global study, together with the other two ongoing United Nations reviews of peace operations and the peacebuilding architecture, can contribute to the strengthened United Nations response to conflicts and the recognition of the special role

of women in all areas of peace and security decision-making. We support the synergies among all three United Nations reviews.

Reducing the gaps in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda requires the commitment of all actors, especially United Nations Member States. Latvia has incorporated the principles of the resolution 1325 (2000) in the regulatory provisions of its national armed forces, as well as in its predeployment training programmes.

Women's representation among Latvian military personnel, including among personnel deployed in international operations, has increased. The implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) has been an important element of Latvia's development cooperation, for example in Afghanistan and Iraq. Latvia will continue to develop a national policy framework in order to address emerging challenges to achieving gender equality, and to strengthen the legal framework in order to eliminate violence against women and girls.

While the guidelines and recommendations of the global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) still need to be assessed, Latvia hopes they will help boost the women and peace and security agenda in the future.