

**Mr. Van Oosterom** (Netherlands): I wish to thank you, Mr. Minister, for being here at this late hour. It is great to see you back in New York, and we commend and admire the work of Uruguay on the Council, which is a great inspiration to future elected members. We warmly thank you for all the work that your team here is doing.

We thank Uruguay for having organized this debate, and we welcome the report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/249). Let me take this opportunity to thank Ms. Bangura for her excellent work in past years and to say that we look forward to working with Ms. Patten in the coming period.

We align ourselves with the statement made by the observer of the European Union and with that made by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

Let me also underline the points made by my Italian colleague, in the light of the split term on the Security Council between our two countries, Italy this year and the Netherlands in 2018.

I will focus on three issues: first, identifying the problem; secondly, ending impunity; and, thirdly, taking action.

As concerns identifying the problem, the report of the Secretary-General rightly draw our attention to the disturbing trend of sexual violence as a tactic of war and terrorism. Violent extremism is on the rise. Perpetrators often do not react to political pressure or abide by agreements, treaties or international law. The use of rape as an instrument of war and terror constitutes one of the most horrendous human rights violations in the world. The problem is clear, so we need to do more.

That brings me to my second point: ending impunity. Reporting of cases is complicated and can carry high social costs. Shame, stigma and strong cultural norms can dissuade women and men from reporting crimes. The Council therefore needs to act. The listing of the individuals and groups that commit such acts of violence is one of the means to address these violations, and the Council has a responsibility there.

But we also need to ensure that perpetrators are prosecuted. We have to close the impunity gap, and this applies also to sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations personnel. The Kingdom of the Netherlands therefore strongly supports the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance approach to this issue.

When it comes to ending impunity, we feel very strongly that the International Criminal Court (ICC) has a role to play as a court of last resort. Its mandate allows for prosecuting individuals suspected of sexual violence. We believe that the ICC must continue to strengthen the policies that ensure accountability under international criminal law.

This brings me to my third point. We need to take action. Let me share some

Dutch examples here. All Dutch police and military personnel receive pre-deployment training, and, together with our valued partner Spain, whose representative spoke earlier today, we provide training to other professionals from other States. Additionally, we financed a specialized training programme for female military officers with UN-Women, and we also made possible a global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

But we also need to shift our conceptual paradigm. We must empower women and involve them as leaders in conflict resolution and in peace negotiations. We should not only see them as victims but see and treat them as leaders, and empower them accordingly.

In conclusion, identifying the problem, ending impunity and strengthening action to deal with sexual violence in conflict is important, and it is the clear task of the Council to support such efforts. Together we must put an end to conflict-related sexual violence. Together we must end sexual violence as a tactic of war and terrorism, and, working together, the Council should act accordingly. The Kingdom of the Netherlands will continue to be a partner in that endeavour this year and certainly also in 2018.