

**Mr. Al Saad** (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*):

At the outset, allow me to extend the condolences of my country to the Russian Federation and Germany for the unfortunate incidents that took place recently. We resolutely condemn those terrorist attacks.

I would like to thank the President of the Government of the Kingdom of Spain, Mr. Mariano Rajoy Brey, for organizing this important open debate. I should also like to extend our thanks and appreciation for the President's efforts in ensuring the success of this important debate on trafficking in persons in conflict situations. We appreciate the efforts of the United Nations and its agencies to eradicate this crime by enacting relevant laws and regulations and mobilizing international efforts to combat this phenomenon. Our meeting today to discuss this topic is a clear reflection of those efforts. We are hopeful that this debate will help us find solutions to this problem, address its root causes and put in place a future plan to ensure its full eradication.

Our meeting is taking place to discuss a crime that is condemned by the entire world. It is a blatant violation of human rights. Regrettably, the majority of its victims are women, girls and children. Almost all countries around the world are affected by this phenomenon — whether as countries of origin, transit or destination. Owing to the numerous conflicts around the world, this crime has been on the rise recently and has taken on various forms. Countries around the world and specialized international organizations have sought to develop their tools and enact laws to deter this crime and reduce its social, economic and psychological impact.

At the national level, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has sought to combat trafficking in persons at the legislative, organizational and institutional levels, in addition, to other national efforts and measures to prevent crimes of trafficking in persons, prosecute and punish its perpetrators, protect its victims and enhance international cooperation with countries and relevant regional and international organizations. A law to combat trafficking in persons was promulgated in my country in 2009. That legislation constitutes an important step forward in our efforts to combat these types of crimes. Countries around the world know full well how important it is to enact legal texts that prohibit those practices and punish its perpetrators.

My country has also established a standing committee for combating trafficking in persons under its human rights commission. Its members include representatives from Government bodies to coordinate national efforts to combat trafficking in persons and put in place plans to address them, as well as put forward recommendations that ensure that no violations are committed against categories targeted by trafficking in persons. The commission is tasked with following up on the implementation of the recommendations.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has ratified many relevant international instruments, notably the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its two Protocols — the Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air — as well as other International Labour Organization conventions, in particular Conventions No. 182 and No. 209. Furthermore, we have ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Slavery Convention of 1926 and its subsequent protocol.

The number of conflicts throughout the world has increased, especially in the Middle East. That has led to a significant rise in crimes related to the trafficking in persons, especially against displaced Syrians fleeing conflict zones. Unfortunately, human traffickers have exploited the dire need and the desperate humanitarian situation of victims, who are often forced to compromise their dignity and their humanity and who fall prey to criminals who exploit their bodies for financial gain.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia would like to stress its firm rejection of all forms of trafficking in persons under any pretext. We have stepped up our national efforts to fully eradicate that crime by enacting relevant laws and regulations, cooperating tirelessly with the international community to eliminate trafficking in persons, and ratifying relevant international instruments and conventions.