

Mr. Lucas (Angola):

We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his opening remarks and to UN-Women Executive Director Ms. Phumzile Mlambo- Ngcuka for presenting the report of the Secretary- General (S/2016/822), and we welcome Ms. Rita Lopidia of South Sudan, who spoke on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security. We were deeply touched by the message she conveyed to the Council on the dire situation of women in South Sudan.

Since the holding more than a year ago of the open debate celebrating the fifteenth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, and the high-level review, this is an occasion to assess the progress achieved so far. The global study on the resolution's implementation highlighted the critical contribution of women to peace and security. We join the Executive Director of UN-Women in her call on Member States, regional organizations and the United Nations to do more to take forward the study's recommendations and turn commitments into concrete action.

We further share the Secretary-General's view on the need to strengthen women's participation and leadership in peace and security endeavours and on United Nations progress towards achieving a gender balance in its staff at all levels by emphasizing the essential link between women's involvement in conflict prevention and resolution and post-conflict reconstruction in order to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of these processes. The Permanent Representative of the United States was particularly eloquent in illustrating that reality.

The Secretary-General's report (S/2016/822) provides key information on progress made following the high-level review, highlighting some headway made in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). More women are involved in peace talks, more peace agreements include provisions related to the special needs of women and girls in support of their rights, additional personnel are being trained to prevent and respond to sexual and other forms of violence against women, and more countries are implementing national action plans or related strategies. The establishment of national focal point networks for women and peace and security is step forward in strengthening the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda and in assisting Member States and regional organizations through the exchange of best practices and by improving coordination, funding and assistance programmes.

Despite these improvements, including several judicial cases of conflict-related sexual violence, violations of the rights of women and girls persist, including by non-State actors and terrorist organizations that attack the fundamental rights of women as part of their political agendas, making women and children the main victims in conflict and post-conflicts situations. We urge States to comply with international, humanitarian, refugee and human rights law and to hold violators accountable. The equitable participation and full involvement of women in preventive diplomacy and related decision-making processes regarding conflict resolution and peacebuilding have been highlighted by the Security Council and are attested to by the high quality of gender expertise provided by the United Nations in relevant mediation processes.

In Angola, women's participation was decisive to the attainment of peace. After the end of the armed conflict, their direct involvement in peacebuilding efforts was instrumental in providing psychological support to the victims as counsellors of peace, in national reconciliation and in strengthening social cohesion. Moreover, relevant measures were adopted promoting women's empowerment, and women are currently playing a crucial role in the political, economic and social life of the country.

Following the review of resolution 1325 (2000), significant progress was made in formulating a national action plan, which has already been drafted by the Commission for Social Policy and is due to be approved soon by the Council of Ministers. The action plan sets out seven objectives, with specified activities, goals and indicators of performance aimed at increasing the participation of women and integrating gender equality into the prevention and resolution of conflicts; the training and empowerment of women, girls and boys focused on gender equality and gender-based violence, the promotion and protection of women's and girls' rights, their empowerment and education; the participation of civil society in preventing and eliminating gender-based violence; raising awareness and knowledge of the women and peace and security agenda in all ministerial departments, including a gender-perspective in the national budget with a view to fulfilling the commitments set out in resolution 1325 (2000); promoting women's socioeconomic development in rural communities; increasing food security and contributing to poverty eradication.

Finally, we support the systematic inclusion of provisions related to preventing conflict-related sexual violence in relevant country-specific resolutions and in the mandates of special political and peacekeeping missions, and to increasing the inclusion of women and gender advisers. We attach utmost importance to the empowerment of women in peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts by making them full participants in conflict prevention and resolution and post-conflict reconstruction.