

**Mr. Aluloom (Iraq)** (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the French Republic on presiding over the Council this month. We thank France for its transparent and tremendous efforts in steering the work of the Council. I also thank the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia for its work during its presidency last month.

Iraq seeks to increase the participation of women in public life. We are raising awareness among women of their social, economic and political rights. We apply the principle of gender equality via equal opportunity policies. This principle also applies to appointments to senior posts and representation in Parliament and municipal councils, in addition to decision-making and capacity-building.

Iraq's Constitution of 2005 protects and upholds the rights of women and provides for their care. It provides women with social and health insurance and a means of living in freedom and dignity. The Constitution considers all Iraqis equal before the law without discrimination based on gender, race, nationality or religion. We have increased the percentage of women in positions of leadership in Iraq since 2003. The new Iraqi Constitution establishes a quota of no less than 25 per cent for women holding seats in the Council of Representatives. We now have 83 female members of Parliament and ministers; 3 female ambassadors and 86 female judges. Iraqi women today have been able to become presidents of universities and deans of 75 colleges, in addition to mayor of the capital. The capital of Iraq has 7 million residents and has a woman mayor.

The advancement of women is an important step towards achieving peace and security. Therefore, Iraq continues to work with international organizations focused on the advancement of women and the empowerment of women in society. The Government is working with the gender unit of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) to achieve an agreement on a partnership between the national reconciliation committee and UNAMI aimed at enhancing the role of women in national reconciliation and awareness of the importance of resolution 1325 (2000).

The provision of equal opportunities to women and girls in all areas is the cornerstone of peace, prosperity and sustainability in the world. However, Iraq has suffered a vicious wave of terrorist attacks perpetrated, inter alia, by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). These attacks have threatened international peace and security. Iraqi Civilians, in particular women and girls, have suffered the most heinous forms of terrorist practices. We must draw attention to the crimes of that terrorist organization against thousands of Yazidi women and girls and other women in Iraq of various ages. They were sold as slaves in the areas along Iraq's border with Syria and were subjected to the worst forms of sexual enslavement. The international community must therefore redouble its efforts to assist Iraq in freeing, rehabilitating and reintegrating these women into society so that they can return to a normal life.

My Government has taken constructive steps to that end, including the signing of the joint communiqué between the United Nations and the Government of Iraq on the prevention of and

response to conflict-related sexual violence, on 23 September 2016. We continue to work with UNAMI in Baghdad and the technical team in New York of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict to implement the provisions of this statement through a national plan set out for that purpose. In addition, we established 19 June as the National Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Iraq sent a letter to the President of the Security Council on 9 August (S/2017/710, annex), conveying our hope and intention to see the Security Council adopt a resolution to ensure that members of ISIL would be held accountable for crimes they have committed in Iraq, including all acts that constitute crimes against humanity. We have sought the help of the international community in the condemnation of ISIL for murder, kidnapping, hostage-taking, sexual slavery and other forms of sexual violence, rape, sale into or otherwise forced marriage, in addition to the recruitment and use of children, attacks on infrastructure, the destruction of cultural heritage and trafficking in cultural property. On 21 September, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2379 (2017), on collecting evidence of crimes committed by ISIL, in order to hold perpetrators accountable for their crimes and bring them to justice.