

Mr. Ademola Ogunnaike (Nigeria): I thank the delegation of France for organizing today's open debate on women and peace and security. I would also like to commend Ms. Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary-General, for her briefing. Nigeria welcomes the presence at today's debate of Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN-Women, and of the representative of non-governmental organizations. We listened attentively to all the briefings and have taken note of the Secretary-General's report (S/2017/861), which provides an update on the progress that has been made across all areas of the women and peace and security agenda, as well as highlighting gaps and challenges.

Undoubtedly, respect for women's rights and interests, as well as their protection, is not only a mark of progress in human civilization but is also closely related to the attainment of world peace and development. Nigeria therefore welcomes this opportunity to reflect on the progress made on the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, 17 years after the adoption of the landmark resolution 1325 (2000). While we acknowledge the substantial achievements that have been made in that endeavour, however, there are still challenges and significant gaps to be addressed. The international community should therefore go beyond protecting women's safety and upholding their rights and interests in conflict and post-conflict situations, and dedicate greater collective efforts to ensuring their active participation in peace processes. We believe that today's debate can help to determine potential solutions for addressing the prevailing challenges and gaps, and offer suggestions for acquiring the resources needed to advance the role of women within the context of the global peace and security architecture.

Meeting those challenges will be critical to making the progress we need on the women and peace and security agenda. It requires a multi-stakeholder approach involving all actors at the global, regional, subregional and national levels. Communities, civil society and individuals also have crucial roles to play. In order to promote women so that they can truly take ownership of their peacekeeping roles and play an important part in peacebuilding processes, the various United Nations bodies and entities will need to work in accordance with their respective mandates, with a clear division of labour on the one hand, and complementarity on the other.

We are also convinced that national Governments have the primary responsibility to protect women's safety, rights and interests. The international community should therefore support countries by providing constructive assistance, with their consent. However, such support should be consistent with national priorities and focus on capacity-building. There is also the urgent need to step up assistance aimed at supporting the countries concerned with their specific financial and technical difficulties.

In our region, the African Union has provided a useful platform for the advancement of the women and peace and security agenda. It should be noted that Agenda 2063 of the African Union, which was adopted by African Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa in January 2016, places particular emphasis on the engagement of women and youth in the continent's development.

At the subregional level, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has been a major driver of the women and peace and security agenda. In collaboration with the United Nations Office for West Africa, ECOWAS developed an integrated plan of action for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in September 2010. The plan of action emphasizes the importance of the role of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, mediation and peacebuilding, as well as the rebuilding of post-conflict societies.

Consistent with subregional efforts, Nigeria launched a national action plan to fully implement the relevant provisions of resolution 1325 (2000). Indeed, the second national action plan has expanded the concept of security to cover the use of violent extremism, trauma and healing, disarmament and demobilization, and subject them to further localization. The plan reflects the Federal Government's commitment to ensuring the security of women and girls during armed conflict and to enhancing their active and direct participation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

I wish to state that there is ongoing collaboration with our neighbours Chad, Cameroon, the Niger and Benin, within the framework of the Multinational Joint Task Force, to fight Boko Haram, whose activities have targeted women and girls. Our experience today is evidence that, with determined international collaboration, terrorism can be defeated. The sustained efforts by Nigeria and its international partners have culminated in the liberation of four territories previously occupied by Boko Haram.

It should be noted that 80 per cent of the 2 million internally displaced persons in north-eastern Nigeria are women. We have taken concrete steps to address their humanitarian needs and to ensure that the necessary conditions are established for enabling the voluntary return of the displaced persons to their homes safely and with dignity. The Nigerian Government is working around the clock to ensure the release of the remaining Chibok girls and other persons in Boko Haram captivity

We believe that the effective participation of women is an important foundation for realizing sustainable peace and social stability. Women should naturally become important participants in conflict prevention and mediation. They should enjoy adequate rights and be allowed to participate in the decision-making process, making contributions to post-conflict arrangements, peacebuilding and national development. Indeed, women's development is the foundation for truly realizing their empowerment. The international community should make deliberate efforts to promote the socioeconomic development of women, thereby enhancing their capacity to make positive contributions to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Nigeria remains fully and firmly committed to the promotion and protection of the rights of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations. We shall work assiduously to enhance the participation of women in peace and security initiatives. We are determined to reinforce and

implement the principles of resolution 1325 (2000) and, within that context, to address the factors that impact negatively on the lives of women and girls.