

Mr. Mendonça e Moura (Portugal):

I would like to thank the Russian presidency of the Security Council for conveying today's open debate and to thank today's briefers.

Portugal is encouraged by several very positive developments with regard to the women and peace and security agenda, such as the fact that the issue is a consistent feature in Security Council resolutions and peacekeeping mandates, as well as the fact that gender-sensitive reporting is now understood as a fundamental element for a thorough understanding of the gender dimensions of conflict and that reinforced efforts are necessary to shape adequate responses at the local and international levels. Today more women are included in peace talks, more peace agreements contain provisions in support of women's human rights and more security-sector personnel are trained to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence.

However, since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the peace and security context and the nature of conflict have evolved — at times dramatically — characterized by entrenched cycles of conflict and fragility, daily violations of human rights and humanitarian law, growing humanitarian crises, mass-scale displacement of persons and refugees, and new threats, such as increasing violent extremism and terrorism, which disproportionately affect women and girls.

The women and peace and security agenda is a critical, yet underutilized, tool for preventing conflict and shaping more effective responses to today's complex crises. That is why it is now more than ever essential to sustain and develop the progress already achieved and maintain the commitment to the agenda by Member States, regional organizations and the entire United Nations system. In that regard, Portugal welcomes the setting up of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security, established pursuant to the 2015 high-level review, as a key step in the implementation of resolution 2242 (2015) with a view to strengthen oversight and coordination on the women and peace and security agenda. We would also like to commend Spain for its initiative in the establishment of the national focal point network for women and peace and security, which constitutes an important platform for sharing good practices, and with which Portugal is pleased to be associated.

Portugal has been a firm and consistent supporter of the women and peace and security agenda. We adopted our first national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in 2009, and a second one in 2014, which is in force until 2018. We consider it critical to ensure the active and meaningful participation of women and girls in all aspects and stages of conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict processes. We will continue to promote the women and peace and security agenda and to raise awareness on the importance of establishing national actions plans on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in all the relevant international forums we belong to, including the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and NATO.

Portugal also reiterates its pledge to continue conducting training programmes for national personnel and members of the armed and security forces assigned to international peacekeeping missions on gender equality and violence against women and girls, including sexual violence, gender-based violence and trafficking in human beings.

I would also like to point out the important role of civil society organizations in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. They are often essential elements in preventing and reporting crimes committed against women,

young women and girls and in alerting the international community to such crimes. Working in close collaboration with civil society organizations therefore becomes indispensable to enhance the results.

In conclusion, 16 years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), we must redouble our efforts in consolidating and reinforcing the implementation of this agenda. Ensuring a gender perspective and women and girls' participation in all stages of peace processes, including in prevention and disarmament, protection in displacement settings, peacekeeping, policy-making and reconstruction, strengthens the protection efforts by United Nations peacekeepers, contributes positively to the achievement of sustainable peace, accelerates economic recovery and development and helps counter violent extremism.