

Ms. Beckles (Trinidad and Tobago):

Trinidad and Tobago is pleased to contribute to this open debate on the sixteenth anniversary of the women and peace and security agenda and one year after the global study on resolution 1325 (2000). It is also noteworthy that this debate comes one year after the international community adopted the most comprehensive universal agenda for sustainable development, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This debate provides a valuable opportunity for us to take stock of how far we have come in our implementation efforts, particularly as it relates to Goal 5, on women's empowerment and gender equality, as well as Goal 16 which speaks to peaceful and inclusive societies, which mirror the subject of this debate. We have, after all, committed to leaving no one behind.

My delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the topic, and we echo his words as stated in the report:

"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." (S/2016/822, para. 4)

In that respect, we are reminded that the paramount importance of the United Nations lies in the maintenance of international peace and security. As the nature of threats to international security continues to evolve in complexity, my delegation submits that the primary objective of our Organization would be elusive without the full and effective integration of women into all spheres of conflict resolution, conflict prevention and peacebuilding processes. Trinidad and Tobago is fully committed to the goal of gender equality. For us, the empowerment of women is an integral part of national development and an essential pillar in the maintenance of sustainable peace.

Trinidad and Tobago is steadfast in its implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). In 2010, my country introduced, and has been the main sponsor since then, of the first General Assembly resolution entitled "Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control" (General Assembly resolution 69/61). It must be highlighted that the catalyst for the resolution on women and disarmament in 2010 was the tenth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. Since its introduction, the resolution has received the support of a majority of Member States and is currently being considered again in the First Committee. The resolution transcends the notion of women as victims of armed conflict and armed violence and recognizes women as empowered and indispensable actors in decision-making efforts to address the issue of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. Trinidad and Tobago is pleased that the language contained in the current and last versions of the resolution on women and disarmament is reflective of the Arms Trade Treaty and its provisions on gender-based violence and violence against women and girls.

At the national level, the equal rights of women and men are guaranteed under the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago. Equal opportunities exist for women's participation at the decision-making level in matters regarding peace and security. That is underscored by the recruitment and ascendancy of women to senior ranks of the security sector in Trinidad and Tobago. At the regional level, we have also worked with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs on initiatives to strengthen the participatory role played by Latin America and the Caribbean in combating illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

Trinidad and Tobago continues to host a number of initiatives, in conjunction the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin

America and the Caribbean, to provide disarmament and arms control training to security personnel, including women. My country pledges its commitment to continue to work with the United Nations in advancing and empowering women at the global level. Consequently, Trinidad and Tobago was elected to the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in April. We are eager to begin our mandate in January 2017 and to join international efforts to promote the advancement of women and girls everywhere.

Trinidad and Tobago takes the opportunity to reaffirm its continued commitment to the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda at the national, subregional, regional and international levels.