

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (spoke in Spanish):

We would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's important debate on women and peace and security. We commend the briefings by the Secretary-General and by the Executive Director of UN-Women, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-NGcuka, whom we commend on her excellent work leading that body, as well as the excellent testimony given by Ms. Rita Lopidia.

The various forms of violence, discrimination and gender inequality against women and girls are the product of a number of factors having political and economic roots that aggravate inequality. This is a priority matter for the world today, in particular when, because of armed conflicts of varying scales, women are considerably and disproportionately impacted by war more than ever.

The report presented this year (S/2016/822) illustrates the fact that there has been some progress in specific aspects of the agenda on women and peace and security. An example is the increase in the number of peace agreements that have specific provisions relating to gender. We have also seen an increase in the participation and presence of women in the mediation processes that have been co-led by the United Nations. There has also been significant progress with regard to women and peace and security over the past 15 years in legislative terms. However, there are still major challenges. Women in conflict situations continue to suffer in a disproportionate and brutal manner from the consequences of armed conflicts. They continue to be subjected to systematic violence and sexual abuse.

Venezuela urges the international community to continue working on dealing with exclusion, inequality and the various forms of sexual violence against women and girls during armed conflicts. Such inexcusable instances of violence only reflect and exacerbate the disequilibrium and imbalance that women and girls are already subject to in periods before armed conflicts. During armed conflicts, those problems generate specific vulnerabilities that require urgent action and the highest possible political commitment.

We believe that it is a priority to address the underlying causes that lead to the feminization of poverty and the lack of opportunities regarding access to health care, jobs, and political and economic participation. We must therefore prevent exclusionary paradigms and stereotypes that ignore the cultural and ethical diversity and richness of our world. Women cannot continue to be the object of manipulation; they must not be treated as objects used to advance commercial, military or political goals. We are convinced that the participation and contribution of women at all levels and stages and in areas related to conflict resolution are vital to preventing such conflicts and to achieving lasting peace. There can be no international peace and security if the half of the population that is represented by women and girls is not included and taken into consideration.

The bolstering of efforts aimed at ensuring the effective implementation of resolutions dealing with women and peace and security demands effective coordination on the part of the States concerned, the various relevant offices of the United Nations under their respective mandates, and the various regional and subregional mechanisms that deal with the issue. In advancing those efforts and initiatives we should take into account the participation of women in each of the national contexts and conflicts. We should consider the prevailing political models and the social, cultural and religious models of each society in order to find the most

appropriate way to address the issue. We ought to consider specific contexts and build models that can be fine-tuned to each of those contexts.

It has been shown that, with respect to peace and security, the percentage of aid given to promoting gender equality and equity is very low. It is much less than what we need in order to meet our commitments in that area. A fundamental aspect of meeting those commitments is the provision of sufficient resources to create resilience in zones of conflict and post-conflict — in particular, training and increasing the national institutional capacities regarding gender, justice, health and social welfare, and the empowerment and training needed for the preparation and implementation of national action plans on women and peace and security.

One of the other challenges facing the international community today is the high level of violence and sexual abuse used as tools of war by terrorist groups in the Middle East and Africa, particularly the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, Jaysh al-Islam, Al-Qaida, the Al-Nusra Front, Boko Haram and all other associated armed groups. Thousands of women and girls have been victims of atrocities and crimes committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, particularly those who fall into ethnic and religious minorities. Boko Haram has perpetrated more than 2,000 kidnappings of children, 276 of whom continue to be missing.

It is unacceptable that women and girls throughout the world continue to be considered the loot of war. It infringes upon their human condition and is shameful. There is also the situation of women and girls in the Palestinian occupied territories, where they are victims of disproportionate and constant violence, assassinations and detentions. Other conflicts, such as those in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen, have made women and girls the targets of hate, violence and armed attacks, all of which represent flagrant violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. We cannot accept impunity in the face of such crimes. Venezuela advocates assigning accountability for all forms of sexual violence, and there should be exemplary sentences handed down to those found responsible for such crimes.

In that regard, we repeat our appeal regarding the texts and resolutions of the Council relating to the prohibition against the provision of arms or financial and logistic support to such groups, so that we can neutralize their operational capacities and the horrendous practices of sexual exploitation and violence. We reiterate our appeal to the international community to strategically coordinate efforts to prevent sexual violence. There must be a common front linking all possible efforts to prevent extremist violence and terrorism.

We must also reiterate our categorical condemnation of all incidents of sexual abuse and exploitation committed by foreign armed forces, police or civilians deployed by the Organization in peacekeeping operations and special political missions. That includes those staff who have not been formally deployed on such missions. In accordance with the provisions of resolution 2272 (2016), we support the zero-tolerance policy regarding any sexual violence that is committed by members of peacekeeping operations or military missions under the mandate of and supported by the Security Council. The United Nations should serve as an example of coherence regarding the importance of preventing such acts, particularly regarding the accountability of all personnel of the Organization and international armed forces who have been authorized by this body and who commit such crimes.

We reassert our firm belief that women can be major players in ensuring the emancipation of our people. In our country women play a vital role in constructing

society. In the process of our Bolivarian revolution, they have taken very important steps in the legal and constitutional context aimed at achieving gender equality at all levels regarding the functionality of our State's society. At the global level, women should be working in and benefitting from equal conditions and opportunities in the development of peace and they should be included in an equal way. They have wrought change. In the aforementioned historical process, we reiterate our country's commitment to continue to work with determination in following the noble goal of paying the historical debt of humankind back to women.