

Mr. Nyago (Uganda):

I shall begin by expressing Uganda's condolences to the Permanent Missions of Russia and Germany for the tragedies that befell their nationals yesterday.

Furthermore, I bring warm greetings from His Excellency President Museveni of Uganda, who has sent his apologies for not being able to come and participate personally in this important debate due to other, previously planned duties. He extends his greatest appreciation to you, Sir, for the honourable invitation extended to him to participate in this debate on a topic that is so critical to Uganda.

My delegation also appreciates the briefings delivered by the Secretary General, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, and other briefers.

Trafficking in persons in conflict is perhaps one of the most challenging evils that the world is currently confronted with, and the organization of this debate is very timely in providing an opportunity to Member States to share insights into how the challenges being encountered in countering this scourge can be effectively addressed.

Uganda happens to be in a region that has experienced a lot of conflict, which has exacerbated the problem of human trafficking in our region. The conflicts in our region have made the majority of our people, particularly women and children, vulnerable to organized criminal networks that take advantage of our weak institutions in immigration and the judiciary to engage in the trafficking mainly of women, children and other vulnerable people across borders to far distant places. The conflicts in the Central African Republic, the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and, more recently, South Sudan continue to expose the most vulnerable sections of our population to the criminal networks that traffic in them for mainly cheap labour, sexual exploitation and, in other cases, slavery.

A number of reports have recently revealed some of the most horrific experiences that the children and women who have been trafficked go through in some of the countries where they end up being sold as objects. Uganda itself has been a victim of this scourge, whereby some of our children, particularly girls and young women, who have been trafficked have endured torture and sexual abuse at the hands of their tormentors. Our Government recently set up an interministerial committee, coordinated by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, to investigate these abuses and to devise appropriate measures that can be undertaken to effectively address the problem. This is in addition to various other interventions that the Government has made in the past to address this challenge.

One of the major steps that needs to be undertaken by Member States, with the support of

the international community, is the harmonization of legislation that comprehensively provides for judicial mechanisms to harshly punish and deter offenders and would-be offenders, and for there to be a coordination mechanism for their enforcement. Such efforts will require the strong support of this organ.

Given the transnational nature of this crime, it requires the combined efforts of the international community to decisively address this problem. As ably amplified in the concept note provided by the Spanish presidency for this debate (S/2016/1031, annex), trafficking in persons in conflict is closely intertwined with other transnational organized crimes, such as money-laundering and international terrorism. The financial resources that accrue from human trafficking enable money-laundering to thrive and in turn largely contribute to funding terrorist activities. And the cycle continues.

It is therefore evident that this requires a holistic approach that addresses the interconnectedness of these vices in our societies. Working together through the Security Council by adopting a resolution with effective measures that address the vices of human trafficking, money-laundering and terrorism in a holistic manner would help to send a strong message to the perpetrators of these crimes and to undermine and curtail the capabilities of their networks to execute these criminal activities.

In the same vein, the efforts of the international community aimed at addressing the root causes of conflict would help to deny these networks the conducive environment in which they thrive. That is why Uganda continues to play a key role in the region in fighting terrorism in Somalia and the Central African Republic, and in engaging with partners to address the conflicts in our neighborhood. Uganda continues to be a champion of pan-Africanism, with a strategic objective of eliminating conflicts and associated vices in our region so that we can embark on the road to peace, peaceful transformation and prosperity for our people.

Uganda associates itself with the efforts of this organ to address the problem of trafficking in persons in conflict, and pledges to work together with our international partners in supporting measures aimed at eradicating it.