

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security
October 28 2011, Security Council Chamber

Statement by H.E. Mr. Osorio, Representative of Colombia

Allow me, first of all, to thank the Secretary-General for his report of 29 September (S/2011/598*) and his briefing this morning to the Council. We would also thank Ms. Michelle Bachelet, Mr. Lazarous Kapambwe and Ms. Orzala Ashraf Nemat for their briefings, which provided a serious and complete framework for our debate.

Colombia appreciates the important role that is given in this report to promoting cooperation mechanisms, constructive dialogue and effective support for efforts being made in different countries, as well as the contributions from the General Assembly aimed at strengthening the national capacities of States in preventing and addressing all forms of violence against women.

We thank Ms. Michelle Bachelet, Under-Secretary-General for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, for her briefing and for the contributions of UN-Women, which help to strengthen coordination and cooperation in the implementation of mandates relevant to women, peace and security. I assure Ms. Bachelet of our support as she fulfils her important mandate.

We also recognize the importance of the concept note (S/2011/654, annex) prepared by the delegation of Nigeria, where proper emphasis is placed on the participation and role of women in conflict prevention and mediation.

We agree with the Secretary-General that UN-Women constitutes the cornerstone for articulating the mandates of the United Nations system in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. In this context, we emphasize the role that broad and inclusive intergovernmental consultations have in evaluating the gender architecture and the advancement of women, as well as the agreements between States on models and practices adopted in that area. All of that is an essential element for progress in improving national capacity to generate greater participation of women in conflict prevention and mediation.

The appointment of Ms. Margot Wallström as Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict has contributed to monitoring the implementation of respective resolutions within their scope of competence as established by the Security Council.

We also emphasize the importance of the reference in the Secretary-General's report to relief and recovery, as well as the actions being taken with regard to gender mainstreaming in the post-conflict phase, including job creation, education policies, life skills training, opportunities and support for children, access to basic services in health, education and legal support, and the provision of basic public services, such as water and sanitation. We emphasize that this represents an enormous challenge for States.

I would like to highlight the fact that the report of the Secretary-General notes progress made in Colombia in connection with the four aspects of resolution 1325 (2000), namely,

prevention, participation, protection and relief and recovery. I think that it is also important to highlight other important actions that are being pursued in these areas in my country on the basis of our conviction that the phenomenon of violence against women includes domestic violence, violence committed in the context of the community and violence caused by illegal armed groups.

In terms of prevention, Colombia's armed forces have incorporated into their training programmes courses in the prevention of gender-based violence, sexual violence, sexual and reproductive health, sexual and reproductive rights and gender equality.

With regard to participation, I should also like to mention initiatives such as the creation of women's community councils, indigenous women's regional laboratories and community radio programming boards. These are tools designed to promote the involvement of women in public policies, support leaders to advance the implementation of such policies, sustain a dialogue with this sector and with women's social organizations, and promote participatory processes at regional, departmental and municipal levels.

There has been legislation in place in this area since 1992, recently updated by a law in 2011 that provides for and promotes the participation of women in the exercise of legislative policy work in the Congress, as well as in the executive and judicial branches. There are now 37 women in the Colombian parliament. The highest positions in the country's public prosecutors' and comptrollers' offices are held by women. In the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Minister and two deputy ministers are women, from whom I receive orders — I mean, instructions — every day.

All of that reflects the efforts being made by the Government of Colombia to adopt policies designed to include women at all stages of peacekeeping and peacebuilding while eliminating discrimination against women and promoting their economic, political and social empowerment, as well as their more active participation in development, both in decision-making and in enjoying the benefits that development brings.

Our priority is the incorporation of gender perspectives into our major national policies, including development plans, strategies for poverty eradication and the promotion of employment and entrepreneurial culture, among others. We place particular emphasis on action related to protecting women against all forms of violence, as well as for protecting those in particularly vulnerable situations, such as indigenous women, migrant women, trafficked women and girls, and women in rural areas, among others.

As a member of the Commission on the Status of Women and of the Group of Friends of 1325, Colombia reaffirms its support for full implementation of that resolution. We stress the importance of coordinated and consistent support of the United Nations system for national initiatives aimed at building the capacity to address the security needs, recovery and development of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict.

Finally, we would like to reiterate that approaches to human rights that focus exclusively on monitoring mechanisms do not contribute to achieving sustainable solutions, unlike mechanisms for cooperation, constructive dialogue and effective support for countries, which do indeed genuinely contribute to effective solutions.