

Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Council, April 17th 2013, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Amit Kumar, Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations.

At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General, his Special Representative Zainab Hawa Bangura and the civil society representative, Ms. Saran Keita Diakité, for their detailed briefings.

Women bear a disproportionate brunt of armed conflict, even though in most cases they are not directly engaged in combat. Resolution 1325 (2000) provides the framework for women to play an important role in the resolution of armed conflicts through participation in peacebuilding processes and post- conflict reconstruction efforts. Allow me to make a few comments on that important issue.

First of all, the need for greater coherence between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UN-Women can hardly be overemphasized. That is necessary not only for operational effectiveness but also for the optimal utilization of scarce resources.

There is a need to avoid making standardized prescriptions when dealing with situations of armed conflict. The specific causes and characteristics of each armed conflict vary, and so will possible approaches and solutions. United Nations peacekeeping and political missions should be provided the necessary flexibility to deal with specific situations.

It is also important to recognize that some structural changes can take place only in the mid to the long term. Such changes include the encouragement and consolidation of democratic ideals and practices and effective improvements in socioeconomic conditions. The task of capacity-building and strengthening Government institutions, including in the areas of security and justice, is therefore extremely critical to sustainable peace. United Nations support and guidance are crucial, but ownership by the State concerned is equally important in order for institutions to be consolidated.

We support the United Nations efforts to deploy greater numbers of women's protection advisers and gender advisers to its missions. The mandate provided by the Security Council on women and peace and security also necessarily requires more resources for effective, sustained results.

The promotion and protection of the human rights of women and girls in armed conflict continue to pose a pressing challenge. There should be zero tolerance for gender-based violence and sexual violence. All cases of gender-based violence must be promptly investigated and its perpetrators prosecuted.

However, we would urge caution in drawing generalized linkages between sexual violence and issues such as the exploitation of mineral resources and internal displacement, for example, based, as they are, on specific country experiences, as the recent report of the Secretary General (S/2013/149) suggests. It is pertinent to mention in that regard that the report itself points to the presence of armed conflict as the consistent backdrop in all those situations. It is also critical that the mandates given by the Security Council be observed and that the report remain focused on the situations of armed conflict on the Council's agenda. The so-called situations of concern are not part of that mandate.

While United Nations peacekeeping missions have provided critical support for gender-related issues in countries emerging from armed conflict, we agree with the report's assertion that it is equally important to pay adequate attention to security-sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes, so as to avoid the risk of relapse. There is also a need for an increased deployment of female military and police personnel in United Nations peacekeeping operations and

for appropriate training to enable United Nations peacekeepers to effectively discharge their responsibilities. India stands ready to place more female formed units at the disposal of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for deployment as required.

In conclusion, let me reaffirm India's commitment to contribute in a positive manner to United Nations efforts in the area of women and peace and security.