

Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Conflict, June 24th 2013, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Masood Khan, Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations.

We thank the United Kingdom Secretary of State of Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Mr. Hague, for presiding over today's debate and the Ministers of Guatemala, France and Morocco for their statements.

We deeply appreciate the Secretary-General's special briefing today, his leadership on combating sexual violence in armed conflict and his recent visits to meet the victims of sexual violence. Special Representative Zainab Bangura has, in a short span of time, injected a sense of urgency for intensified action. We pay a tribute to her for her passion and hard work. Ms. Angelina Jolie's personal commitment and strong advocacy of women's rights have produced results.

The United Kingdom delegation's succinct concept note (S/2013/335, annex) has guided our preparations for this debate. We especially applaud the leadership role of the United States in the Security Council on women, peace and security. We thank the United States delegation for working skilfully and inclusively to forge consensus on resolution 2106 (2013), adopted today.

As the briefers have substantiated once again today, the vile crime of sexual violence in armed conflict is a growing phenomenon. Women, girls, men and boys are all targeted, but women bear the brunt of sexual atrocities in wars and armed conflicts. They are harassed, molested, raped, maimed and disabled.

Other forms of violence — sexual slavery, commercial sexual exploitation, forced pregnancies and enforced sterilization — are rampant. Such violence assaults human dignity, ruins the lives of survivors and their families, and subjects communities and societies to torture and trauma. Sexual violence in armed conflicts is used to force the displacement of populations, illegally acquire natural resources, eliminate political opponents and punish ethnic and religious groups.

Security Council resolutions over the years have established that systematic sexual violence, used as an instrument of war, is a grave threat to international peace and security. By now, we have developed a strong normative and institutional framework to fight that scourge. The erroneous thesis that sexual violence in armed conflict is a cultural phenomenon has been rejected. Yet, we know that the implementation of decisions has been slow and monitoring indifferent. Those who commit, command and condone sexual violence still, by and large, act with impunity.

Resolution 2106 (21303), adopted today, will have an impact on implementation as it translates the Secretary-General's recommendations into concrete decisions. The Security Council, by today's resolution, calls for targeted sanctions against perpetrators. It equips different bodies and entities with tools to oppose impunity, empowers women to seek redress, strengthens international political response and fosters national ownership. The Council's call for the immediate cessation of acts of sexual violence and implementation of time-bound commitments should be heeded by all parties to armed conflicts. Those calls are not abstract. They should resonate to real life situations in the Syria Arab Republic, Guinea-Bissau, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and other armed conflicts.

It is important that measures against sexual violence be made an integral part of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform processes. Before these exercises are started, mechanisms should be put in place for women's protection. More women should sit at the table where decisions are made on peace and ceasefire accords, peacekeeping, stabilization and

reconstruction. As the French Minister said so aptly, women should be stakeholders, not subjects.

It is imperative to mainstream a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations. As one of the largest troop-contributing countries, Pakistan can testify that the appointment of gender advisers in the field has been very useful. Adequate resources should be allocated for that purpose. Pakistani women peacekeepers have served as police officers, doctors and nurses in missions in Asia, Africa and the Balkans. We have made gender sensitization a mandatory part of the training of our peacekeepers.

To conclude, I emphasize that we should also devote energies to addressing the root causes of conflicts. While the Council takes punitive measures against perpetrators, its efforts are strengthened by the voice of the global citizens who help us nurture a culture of zero tolerance of unconscionable acts of sexual violence. In this context, the perspective of Ms. Jane Adong Anywar of NGO Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice is important and directly relevant to our work.