

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Rule of Law and Transitional Justice in Conflict- Affected Situations, October 18th, 2013, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Gasana, Permanent Mission of Rwanda to the United Nations

I would like to express my pleasure in participating in today's debate on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). I take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his most recent report on women and peace and security (S/2013/525), which enlightens us with regard to the implementation of that resolution at all levels. I also thank the Executive Director of UN Women, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka; the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navanethem Pillay; and the representative of Femmes Africa Solidarité, Ms. Brigitte Balipou, for their informative briefings.

At the outset, the Government of Rwanda once again condemns all forms of violence against women and girls worldwide, especially in conflict and post- conflict zones. As previously stated in the Council, we believe that sexual violence in conflict should be qualified as sexual terrorism.

Our Government considers violence against women and girls as an assault on human dignity. Over the years, we have created a favourable environment for gender equality, women's empowerment and children's rights. We have demonstrated a strong political will to end the scourge by adopting supportive policies and legal frameworks, which include a gender- sensitive Constitution and laws on the prevention and punishment of gender-based violence and on the protection of children from violence. As Ambassador Power stated, our new parliament — our lower Chamber of Deputies — attests to the fruitfulness of the policies on our agenda, as recent elections raised women's representation in that body at 64 per cent.

At the institutional level, Rwanda's security organs, in collaboration with other Government agencies, local communities and civil society, have launched initiatives to prevent and respond to violence that targets women and girls. The one-stop centres run by the national police offer a wide range of free services for victims of gender-based violence, and we have set up gender desks in police stations and army posts nationwide, and at the national prosecution agency, for the purposes of offering gender-sensitive services to victims.

At the continental level, Rwanda is among the leading the police-contributing countries, with female police and correctional officers serving in the United Nations peacebuilding and peacekeeping missions in Liberia, Haiti, the Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire and Chad. Those officers actively contribute to combating and raising awareness on violence against women in the communities they serve. They also serve as advisers on gender-based violence and share best practices with other officers and local authorities.

For those reasons, we support the full implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1960 (2010), which insist that all peacekeeping mandates incorporate provisions that specifically identify steps to address sexual violence, including the clear identification of women's protection advisers alongside gender advisers and human rights protection units.

Let me also emphasize that, in our efforts to promote the women and peace and security agenda, in 2010, my country adopted a national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). To that end, we have adopted a range of policies to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls. One of the foremost priorities is to protect and rehabilitate the dignity of victims. We commend those countries that have also adopted national action plans and urge those that have not done so to make it a priority.

Let me also express my delegation's support for the principle of zero tolerance advocated by the United Nations and call for the principle to be more rigorously enforced. During the 1994 genocide perpetrated against the Tutsi in Rwanda, women and girls were forced to endure inhuman and degrading atrocities. Tens of thousands were raped and left for dead. That memory — that history — inspires Rwanda in its unyielding and heartfelt commitment to fight against impunity, especially when it comes to crimes against women and girls.

Rwandans have come to understand first hand the importance of strengthening internal justice mechanisms and building institutions that enhance accessibility to justice. We believe that the fight against impunity is primarily the responsibility of States. The international community, including the United Nations, should

support national jurisdictions and help them to build capacity where gaps exist, by providing guidance and direction drawn from best practices in the field. That is not to suggest, however, that those international justice mechanisms are irrelevant; indeed, a political international mechanism or tribunal could complement the work of national jurisdictions in the fight against impunity and bring perpetrators of crimes against humanity and genocide, including crimes against women and girls, to justice.

As we gather today, 13 years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), we believe that it is fair to make an assessment of how effective the implementation of the resolution has been, and possibly draw lessons for the way forward. Despite the improved practice in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), we note that there remains a deficit in opportunities for women to exercise leadership and that there is a continued underrepresentation of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, protection and peacebuilding processes. Both the international community and Member States will need to deploy greater efforts to address those issues and maintain previous gains with a view to reducing the inequalities observed at various levels in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

My delegation welcomes the adoption of resolution 2122 (2013) and hopes that it will help speed up the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda articulated in resolution 1325 (2000). Specifically, we are pleased that the resolution advocates for improving the quality of gender analysis by calling for gender expertise in all United Nations- led commissions of inquiry, transitional justice mechanisms, groups of experts of the relevant Sanctions Committees and mediation processes; by supporting special representatives, special envoys and mediation support teams and political and peacekeeping missions in that regard; and by deploying gender advisers and women protection advisers. We also welcome the Secretary-General's recommendations, including his call for an independent review of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in preparation for its high- level review in 2015. We hope that such a review will provide in-depth analysis and recommendations for the best way forward.