

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

Statement by Mr. Diallo, Permanent Mission of Senegal to the United Nations.

I thank you, Mr. President, for having organizing this open debate on preventing sexual violence in conflict — an issue that is affecting civilians more frequently, particularly women.

At the outset, I would express my appreciation at seeing you, Sir, preside over the work of the Security Council in June. Your presidency reflects the commitment of your country in supporting peace throughout the world. Allow me also to pay heartfelt tribute to the leadership of your predecessor, Ambassador Kodjo Menan of Togo. I also warmly thank Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, for her excellent briefing. We also encourage her tireless efforts in continuing the work of her predecessor, Ms. Margot Wallström.

Armed groups have always used pressure tactics of rape, forced marriage and sexual slavery against populations, especially women, to impose control over their communities. Those horrendous practices have also been used to force populations to move, which has led to unbearable humanitarian situations in neighbouring countries.

In that context, I express my condemnation of the new trend of using sexual violence in order to gain illegal access to natural resources. Beyond undermining morale and trampling the dignity of the people who are the victims, those crimes also seriously undermine the development efforts of countries already suffering the effects of poverty.

As timely highlighted by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2013/149), the failure of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform efforts in many countries has led, as we know, to violations against women. In addition, there is a risk of reprisals against the victims of sexual violence.

Only a strong message, backed up by a holistic strategy on the part of the international community, will lead to the control of that phenomenon, which entails such disastrous consequences for maternal and child health, populations, international peace and security as well as for our people's well-being.

That leads me to welcome resolution 2106 (2013), which the Council has just adopted and which places victims at the heart of efforts to combat sexual violence and to improve conflict resolution. On that basis, efforts to combat this scourge should be based on adequate prevention as well as on accountability, which helps to dissuade people from committing these crimes once again. Prevention is first and foremost the responsibility of Governments, particularly of security forces, which have a duty to protect their own citizens. We need to support the countries affected in establishing the rule of law by enhancing the capacity of the security forces in a substantive way and by developing their legal capacities. The basic goal is to fill the gaps in terms of their protection and judicial mechanisms, particularly in the spheres of intelligence, investigations and prosecution of perpetrators. In that regard, we are happy to see the significant progress achieved by various countries thanks to the United Nations campaign on sexual violence in conflict, which includes “firewood patrols” in Darfur and an early-warning system in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Moreover, it is important to underscore the fact that the prevention effort is also a collective one, as it transcends borders and deals with a phenomenon that poses a serious threat to peace and security throughout the world. Worse yet, acts of sexual violence constitute crimes against humanity, war crimes and crimes of genocide, in line with the decision handed down by the International Criminal

Tribunal for Rwanda in the *Jean-Paul Akayesu* case.

This shows the importance of taking into account sexual violence in the context of preventive diplomacy, particularly when ceasefire agreements are reached between warring parties. In that connection, I support the recommendations made by the Secretary-General to establish monitoring mechanisms for the commitments entered into by parties during the good offices process, in line with resolution 1960 (2010). That also applies to peacekeeping missions and to special political missions, which should have a sufficient number of women's protection advisers.

Combating impunity at the international level continues to be a major pillar, indeed an indispensable one, in combating sexual violence. Those who tolerate or perpetuate these serious and unacceptable crimes must be held accountable for their acts. In that regard, the International Criminal Court must, in accordance with the principle of complementarity with national jurisdictions, play a leading role in administering justice for the benefit of the many victims of sexual abuse in conflict. In that connection, I would like to pay tribute to the Group of Eight agreement on sexual violence in conflict, which reflects the Group's commitment in the light of this serious phenomenon.

I would like to encourage the Council to adopt a holistic approach in combating sexual violence, as well as to reiterate the unfailing determination of my country to protect future generations from this longstanding legacy.