

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security
November 30th 2012, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Arias Permanent Mission of Spain to the United Nations.

Spain wishes to express its gratitude for the opportunity to participate in today's Security Council debate and to discuss the specific measures that need to be promoted in order to ensure the full participation of women and girls in peace processes.

Currently, we have at our disposal a large body of relevant resolutions and reports. Moreover, and as Spain has already stated during previous debates, experience has shown that when women have the means and the legal framework to do so, they are extremely effective in building peace. That is why this debate is so important, because the role of women in peacebuilding is indispensable.

Spain welcomes the Secretary-General's report (S/2012/732) and supports its observations and recommendations, in particular the attention that the role of women's organizations deserves in the context of the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding. In that regard, Spain wishes to highlight the need for the Security Council to not only hold thematic debates and continue to strengthen normative standards on the issue of women, peace and security, but also to decisively promote the mainstreaming of this key issue in all of its activities and decisions.

I would also like to make special mention of the recent report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, which highlights the invisibility of women with disabilities in times of conflict. They are the forgotten ones in wars, refugee camps, reconciliation processes and in terms of access to justice. It is therefore important that the Security Council keep them in mind and appeals to States to adopt the necessary measures to ensure the safety and protection of persons with disabilities in situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies, natural disasters and other hazardous situations.

My country also wishes to acknowledge the work done in this area by UN-Women and its Executive Director, Ms. Michelle Bachelet, and to convey our appreciation and gratitude for the recent publication of the sourcebook on women, peace and security, which is a very practical contribution to the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). We also would like to encourage UN-Women to continue its fruitful cooperation with other departments, agencies and programmes of the United Nations system in order to perform its role fully in addressing this issue. It will have the full political support of Spain in that respect.

Spain has devoted significant efforts to the promotion of the role of women and the gender perspective in conflict situations. In that regard, I would like to recall that my country drafted an action plan on women, peace and security in 2007, which has been updated several times since; in fact, the third monitoring report was presented during the second half of 2012.

Spain has also been promoting a number of initiatives in the field of foreign policy, cooperation for development and defence policy to ensure the proper implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Those efforts entail two main lines of action, namely, promoting the role of women in peacebuilding in conflict and post-conflict situations, on the one hand; and, on the other hand, curbing violence against women in conflict situations in order to contribute to the elimination of sexual violence, and especially of such outrageous abuses as the systematic use of rape as a weapon of war.

At the same time, in response to the appeals of the international community for greater efforts to train civilian and military personnel on gender issues, this year once again the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and the Ministry of Defence of my country, in collaboration with their counterparts in the Netherlands, held the third iteration of the International Course on Gender-Integrated Approach in Operations. The course was held from 10 to 15 June in Madrid, with the aim of providing the know-how and skills needed to effectively implement gender mainstreaming in international missions and operations. The course focused on how to include the gender perspective in the civilian and military aspects of peace operations in various conflicts. Throughout the course, speakers from the academic, civilian and military world took part, coming from the United Nations, NATO and the European Union. The fourth course will be held in the Netherlands from 19 to 23 November.

Moreover, we continue to work in close collaboration with civil society on future activities focused on training inspired

in large part by the recommendations of the latest report of the Secretary-General.

Since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), many variables have changed in our approach to peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. In that changing context, questions of gender have become an ever more important factor when it comes to the planning, training and evaluation of missions. However, the reasons that led to the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) still persist. Among them, the following are worth mentioning: the neglect of the gender perspective in conflict prevention and early warning; the lack of protection of women and girls against the various forms of gender-based violence, in particular rape and other forms of sexual abuse; the particular vulnerability of certain groups, such as indigenous women or women with disabilities, in the context of conflict; the exclusion of women from peace processes and post-conflict institutions; and the limited role of women's organizations in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and peacebuilding. The international community must therefore step up its efforts in the interest of peace and security to take advantage of the immense potential of women as agents of change.

In conclusion, Spain would like to associate itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union.