



Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

*Provisional***6877**th meeting

Friday, 30 November 2012, 10 a.m.

New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri	(India)
<i>Members:</i>	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Araud
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Masood Khan
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Karev
	South Africa	Mr. Crowley
	Togo	Mr. M'Beou
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Mrs. DiCarlo

Agenda

Women and peace and security

Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2012/732)

Letter dated 2 October 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2012/774)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Women and peace and security

Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2012/732)

Letter dated 2 October 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2012/774)

The President: Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Afghanistan, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Egypt, Estonia, Fiji, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Spain, the Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, the Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey and Tunisia to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director of UN-Women, and Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Bineta Diop, President and Founder of Femmes Africa Solidarité, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Thomas Mayr-Harting, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Mari Skåre, Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security of the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2012/732, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security.

I also wish to draw members' attention to document S/2012/774, which contains a letter dated 2 October 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

I welcome the presence of the Deputy Secretary-General and give him the floor.

The Deputy Secretary-General: I would like to begin with a warm expression of appreciation to both India and Guatemala, which, during their Security Council presidencies, focused our attention on the important contributions by women and women's civil society organizations to preventing and resolving armed conflict and to carrying out peacebuilding.

During a recent visit to Mali, I saw first-hand some of the acute challenges that women face in times of crisis and conflict. My time there left a deep impression on me. I promised the women leaders with whom I met in Bamako that I would convey their message to the Council. They told me disturbing accounts of the abuses that women faced in the northern part of the country, which is now under extremist rule and occupation. Sexual violence against women is widespread, and I met women who had been raped. Despite being the primary victims of a combined security, political and humanitarian crisis, they remained excluded from the various bodies that were seeking possible solutions. They urged me to make known to the outside world the need not only to ease their suffering, but also to strengthen women's participation in resolving the crisis and preparing for a better future.

As Council members well know, extremist groups have started implementing exceedingly harsh interpretations of sharia law in northern Mali. That has led to the separation of boys and girls at schools, forced marriages for young girls and targeted killing or maiming of women accused of having children out of wedlock. Women's rights are being dramatically curtailed, including their right to work, leaving them unable to sustain themselves or their families.

But women in Mali and across West Africa are strongly resilient. They have already demonstrated their ability, if they are given a chance, to bring about peace,

reconciliation and development. We must empower and assist them further.

As the case of Mali clearly underlines, armed conflict affects women and men differently, which means that women have to be part of the solution. One of the key messages of the Secretary-General's report on women and peace and security (S/2012/732) is that early and sustained engagement with women is crucial to ensuring the sustainability of peace efforts, as well as vital to deepening democracy and promoting respect for human rights. Actively engaging women must be a priority, not an afterthought.

The role of women's organizations across the world in preventing violence, resolving conflict and building the foundations for peace is well known. Our challenge is to become more systematic in supporting and scaling up such initiatives and making the necessary links to formal peace processes. Today's debate is an opportunity to support that critical work and to address the obstacles to women's participation in conflict mediation, peace talks, national dialogues and donors' conferences. It is also critical that we accelerate progress in reaching the goals of the Secretary-General's seven-point action plan on gender-responsive peacebuilding.

The Secretary-General and I welcome the presidential statement on women, peace and security issued on 31 October (S/PRST/2012/23), in which the Council pledged to advance women's participation in all aspects of conflict resolution, including transitional justice.

The United Nations system is strongly committed to strengthening the rule of law, particularly with regard to women's access to justice during and after conflict, which is precisely when it is most needed but is least accessible. We are reviewing the United Nations programming in order to galvanize a stronger and more effective impact in that area. The declaration adopted at the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels (General Assembly resolution 67/1) has given new impetus to that effort.

Through the evolution of the women and peace and security agenda over the past 12 years and through country-specific decisions and mission mandates, the Security Council has demonstrated that decisions made around this table can tangibly improve the lives of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations. We must, however, ensure that those issues

are not addressed just once a year, on the anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000). I therefore welcome the renewal of the Council's invitation to the Executive Director of UN-Women to provide periodic briefings outside the annual open debate cycle.

Finally, engaging women and promoting gender equality as part of our work for peace and security is a daily responsibility and an unfinished mission for all of us. It is time for us to finally recognize the role and power of women to help us build a peaceful world.

The President: I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to Ms. Bachelet.

Ms. Bachelet: It is an honour to address the Security Council and to introduce the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2012/732).

I join the Deputy Secretary-General in thanking the presidency of India and the previous President of the Council, the Ambassador of Guatemala, for encouraging us to address the role of women's civil society organizations in the prevention and resolution of armed conflict and in peacebuilding. We are grateful that this open debate was rescheduled after last month's hurricane. We thank the Council for having met exceptionally on 31 October to adopt the presidential statement that welcomed the enhanced participation, representation and involvement of women in the prevention and resolution of armed conflict and in peacebuilding (S/PRST/2012/23). I am also very happy to participate today with my colleague Hervé Ladsous and with Ms. Bineta Diop.

The very origin of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) is the courage, leadership and accomplishments of women's civil society organizations that promote peace under what are often unimaginably difficult circumstances. Today we will hear many examples of the contributions of women leaders and civil society organizations. I would like to draw the Council's attention to what women's groups in Mali are doing right now to contribute to non-violent solutions to the crisis.

In spite of their absence from official conflict-resolution processes, women leaders in the north of the country are using informal channels to call on the leaders of armed groups to participate in peace dialogues. Just two weeks ago, nearly 1,000 women

leaders and members of civil society groups gathered in Bamako and delivered a common call for peace, during which they expressed solidarity across ethnic and other divisions and recommended specific measures to protect women's rights and to prevent violence against women and children. They asserted that now was the time to dedicate funding to reparations, care and the empowerment of survivors.

Wherever there is conflict — whether in Mali, Syria, the Middle East or the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo — women must be part of the solution.

The Secretary-General's report (S/2012/732) assesses the state of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in the areas of conflict prevention, women's protection, their participation and gender-responsive relief and recovery efforts. The report notes the rising number of countries and regional organizations that have strategies on women and peace and security, including the recently announced Pacific regional action plan.

In the area of conflict prevention, the report finds that more actors, including the Security Council, are engaged in early-warning efforts to detect threats to women and girls. However, the effective prevention of violence against women and girls remain a challenge. One need look no further than Syria or Mali to find situations where conflict has severely affected women and children. Sexual and gender-based crimes persist, along with other abuses that affect women differently from men — such as forced displacement, the loss of a means of survival and limited access to basic services.

In the area of participation, particularly in formal peace processes, the report notes that while some good examples exist, specific efforts are needed to increase the number of women represented on official delegations. Of the 14 peace negotiations co-led by the United Nations in 2011, only four had delegations that included a woman. Of nine peace agreements signed in 2011, only two — Yemen and Somalia — included provisions on women and peace and security.

In the area of elections, the report shows the value of temporary special measures to increase the number of women candidates. Yet, out of nine post-conflict elections last year, only one — in Uganda — employed an electoral gender quota, which produced a parliament made up of 35 per cent women. In the other eight elections, women won between 4 and 13 per cent of the seats.

In the area of protection, the report indicates that mechanisms pertaining to such things as community patrols, access to legal aid, rapid response and surge teams multiplied in the past year. There have also been initiatives to establish integrated services, address fuel and lighting needs and train security personnel. Women's protection is now part of standard operating procedures for security-sector personnel in some contexts.

Despite the progress, the report identifies persistent protection gaps and obstacles to women's and girl's access to justice. We therefore welcome the attention given in the presidential statement to mission drawdown and the imperative of preventing any erosion of the protection environment during transitions.

In the area of relief and recovery, the report indicates that post-conflict financial allocations to women's empowerment and gender equality are low but increasing. The percentage of project spending that targets gender-specific needs rose from an estimated 5.7 per cent in 2010 to 7.1 per cent this year. That is an improvement, but it is clearly still a long way from the 15 per cent minimum spending target set in the Secretary-General's action plan on gender-responsive peacebuilding.

The report emphasizes the need for greater attention to women's post-conflict employment and other forms of livelihood support.

The report has a special section on gender-responsive prevention and the resolution of conflict. It notes that gender expertise and the participation of women in official peace processes is decisive in ensuring greater sensitivity to women's rights and gender equality in a subsequent accord. For that to happen, gender issues must be addressed at the earliest possible stages — right from the start of dialogue and peace negotiations.

The report welcomes opportunities created in the past year for women to participate in international strategy and donor conferences, including in the Central African Republic, Afghanistan and South Sudan. However, it acknowledges that insufficient attention is given to improving women's access to national and international peace dialogues. Greater effort must be made to invite women to participate in conflict-resolution forums.

To ensure greater progress, the report recommends action in three broad areas.

First, consistent implementation of international norms and standards on the human rights of women and girls is needed across all efforts to prevent and resolve conflict and build peace. The report calls for systematic attention to women and peace and security commitments across the Security Council's actions. It notes in particular the need to sustain the implementation of these commitments in situations of mission drawdown and transition.

Secondly, when it comes to women's participation and representation, determination is needed to provide more opportunities, eliminate obstacles and build capacity for influence. The report cites the need for more women mediators, advisers, negotiators and observers in peace processes, and more women in the senior management of international and regional organizations, and calls for measures to address obstacles to their participation. In elections, temporary special measures help to encourage women's participation both as voters and as candidates. Special attention to the protection of women human rights defenders is called for. In United Nations missions, sector-specific gender experts can advance mainstreaming. Capacity-building of women's organizations during and after armed conflict will help amplify women's influence.

Finally, there is a need for continued improvement of tracking and accountability systems for the implementation of women and peace and security commitments, including at the regional and national levels. It is recommended that challenges to the national and regional implementation of women and peace and security commitments be assessed, including in upcoming reviews of national action plans. The need for increased coordination and consistent tracking of results at the United Nations is also noted.

To summarize, we need determined leadership and dedicated systems to realize changes on the ground. With regard to leadership, I note the recent significant appointments of women to strategic international and regional peace and security roles. I welcome the appointments of Ms. Zainab Bangura as Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict; Ms. Leila Zerrougui as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict; and Ms. Fatou Bensouda as Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. I also welcome the appointments of Ms. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma as Chair of the African Union Commission, and

Ms. Mari Skåre as the NATO Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security.

While these high-level appointments are welcome, I note with concern that the United Nations itself must do better in building the pipeline of women candidates for these positions. Since June 2010, women's share of senior United Nations positions, from P-5 to D-2, in political missions has actually dropped from 23 per cent to 18 per cent, and in peacekeeping missions from 24 per cent to 21 per cent. The United Nations system is currently reviewing this situation to take appropriate action.

To conclude, the Secretary-General's report notes that we are not seeing results at the pace that we expected or that women rightfully expect of us. For this, we need to ensure that women have opportunities to play their full role in peace and security. We know that there is no shortage of women's leadership. However, as the Secretary-General's report points out, there is a shortage of opportunities for women to engage in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. We must create these opportunities.

Creating these opportunities is not impossible, but it takes a special effort. It requires determination to make a priority of preventing gender-based violence in conflict. It requires determination to investigate and prosecute abuses of women's rights, or to insist on including women in a donor conference or a peace negotiation. This determination is not a matter of simply going through the motions; it is about going the extra mile. UN-Women and our partners in the United Nations system and civil society are here to go that extra mile.

The President: I thank Ms. Bachelet for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ladsous.

Mr. Ladsous: I would join the Deputy Secretary-General and Michele Bachelet in thanking the presidency of the Council for having invited me to discuss the critical issue of women and peace and security.

Last month, in its presidential statement S/PRST/2012/23, the Security Council underlined the importance of enhancing the participation of women in the prevention and resolution of conflict and in peacebuilding within the framework of the women and peace and security agenda. Today, I would like to affirm, from the extensive field experience of the

Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support, that women indeed can and must play a leading role in political participation, conflict resolution and the transition from conflict to peace. I will further illustrate how our missions support the role of women in building peace and women's civil society organizations in protecting women's rights. And lastly, I hope to chart a path forward for overcoming the political obstacles and security threats that impede women's groups from more effective engagement in conflict prevention and peace consolidation.

I am grateful to the Security Council for welcoming the contribution of gender advisers and women protection advisers to the implementation of resolutions on women and peace and security. I wish to express my commitment to ensuring that gains made in the protection and promotion of women's and girls' rights and empowerment remain sustained, including during United Nations mission drawdowns and transitions.

This year, peacekeeping missions have supported important progress in some areas, notably women's political participation at the local and national levels. Experience also showed that in other areas — including the protection of women activists — more could be achieved. Women continue, unfortunately, to be largely absent from or to play merely symbolic roles in formal peace processes. Social and cultural norms certainly pose serious challenges to the full and meaningful participation of women in peace processes. In addition, women are frequently exposed to gender-based violence and have limited access to decision-making.

Regarding political participation, I have seen our missions work with women's organizations to bring women into State political institutions, to strengthen advocacy efforts, and to form strong, effective networks for peacebuilding, conflict resolution and leadership skills development. We have seen, for example, that women can successfully resolve conflicts relating to land ownership, water and cattle raiding by establishing dialogues with other women's groups from across border lines. In South Sudan, the women's community dialogue forum in the state of Central Equatoria has held meetings with community's leaders to discuss the issues affecting women and children who had been displaced after the conflicts between the Mundari and Bari communities. Two women who were involved in the community dialogue forum were nominated to the state legislative assembly.

(spoke in French)

In situations where, strictly speaking, there is no armed conflict, it is even more appropriate for women's organizations and civil society to play a part in preventing and settling political and social tensions. At present in Haiti, women account for fewer than 4 per cent of members elected to the national Parliament, and it must be acknowledged that most have been excluded from the reconstruction process. By comparison, in September this year women accounted for 19.5 per cent of parliamentarians in the Caribbean and for 20.5 per cent worldwide. It is true that the Haitian Constitution has been amended to include a 30 per cent quota for women, but that special measure has yet to be implemented. While it could be an encouraging sign of greater participation of women in political life, representatives of women's organizations in Haiti appealed to the President of the Republic to find solutions to the problem of appointing members of the Cabinet and Permanent Electoral Council.

We need to do more to help States develop constitutional reforms that include a gender-specific perspective and take into account issues related to gender-based violence. We must also support the security sector and institutions for the rule of law, both for professionals and for those who will be held accountable. That can lead to the training of specialized police force members and greater capacities for judges and prosecutors in order to ensure a higher profile for prosecutions in cases of sexual violence. We must also strengthen networks for support to those who have survived gender-based violence so that they can once again take an active part in public life. Finally, we need to work together to a greater extent with UN-Women and our partners in country teams to help States to develop national action plans for implementing resolutions on women and peace and security.

We are moving forward in the right direction and I believe that we have made significant progress. For example, in 2011, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) trained 380 members of the armed forces, 280 of whom were women. It also trained 767 police officers, more than a third of whom were women, in the prevention of gender-based violence and in the search for appropriate solutions. MONUSCO also provided training on the gender-based analysis of conflict for members of the Commission on the Resolution and Prevention of

Conflicts in Goma. That training made it possible to develop the capacity of the Commission to respond to the serious problems stemming from movements of women and girls in conflict areas, in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

(spoke in English)

Through outreach to Governments, Special Representatives of the Secretary-General can help provide a link between State-led mechanisms and women's groups to ensure that women's priorities are on the agenda. We need more initiatives like that of Darfur, where the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur has been able to support the establishment of the Darfur Regional Women's Legislative Caucus, State committees on resolution 1325 (2000) and a high-level State committee on combating violence against women.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, approximately 5,000 women of all political tendencies, including from civil society, flooded Kinshasa's main commercial avenue a week ago to protest the fall of Goma to rebels from the Mouvement du 23 mars. That was the most massively organized non-violent protest in the country following the fall of that city. The women protesters were received by MONUSCO's senior management. However, women have not been given any political leverage in the regional negotiations aimed at bringing peace to the embattled eastern part of the country pursuant to the provisions of resolution 1325 (2000) that demand that women be a core part of all peacebuilding processes and related agreements.

Additionally, when supporting women's organizations, we must mobilize all members of the country team to serve as consultative partners for civil society. That gives women's groups confidence to act with the assurance that they may turn to the United Nations family if they perceive a threat. The country team also supports women's organizations with funding, information-sharing and capacity-building activities. For instance, women's groups convened by DPKO and UN-Women at the Open Day in Timor-Leste in 2011 called upon country team members to help sustain the participation of women in community-level mediation and peacebuilding activities. As a result, the United Nations Development Programme and the Ministry of Social Solidarity implemented a project

that helped establish a Department of Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion within the Ministry of Solidarity. That department specifically includes women at the community level in local conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts. Another positive example is the recently signed memorandum of understanding between the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan and five women's non-governmental organizations on the implementation of the Women's Police Mentoring Programme, which aims to build the capacity of policewomen and to address the issue of abuse.

Finally, I would emphasize that the critical key to removing the obstacles that impede women's full participation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding is active and systematic consultation with local actors and leaders, including women's civil society organizations. That is the only way to develop effective, context-specific and gender-aware solutions.

Last month, DPKO and DFS participated in a dialogue with women peacemakers from all over the world who had gathered at the University of San Diego. The women peacemakers recommended that the United Nations formalize and systematize consultations with women in every step of the United Nations peacekeeping process, from pre-assessment to deployment of a mission, to evaluation of a mission, to the renewal of a mandate, and to the change of a mandate to transition to peacebuilding.

Together with our partner, UN-Women, we call on Member States to enhance women's participation and protection by supporting and strengthening their commitment to conflict prevention and peacebuilding. As Michelle Bachelet has said, together we must go the extra mile.

Once again, Mr. President, I thank you for this opportunity to brief the Council.

The President: I thank Mr. Ladsous for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Diop.

Ms. Diop: I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for the invitation to address the Security Council this morning. I speak today on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security. I am also here today in my capacity as Founder and President of Femmes Africa Solidarité, an international non-governmental organization with over 15 years of experience advocating for women's human rights in Africa.

The theme of this year's open debate on women and peace and security, which focuses on women's civil society organizations, is timely. Twelve years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the vital work of civil society, particularly women's groups, in ensuring international peace and security must be recognized and supported, specifically with political access, resources and respect.

I recently returned from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where I conducted a solidarity mission to assess the situation of our sisters in the eastern part of that country. I saw for myself the degrading situation of women, in particular in the Kanyarucinya refugee and displaced persons camp, and the immense suffering of the women in HEAL Africa Hospital in Goma and Panzi Hospital in Bukavu, where women's bodies are being repaired after sexual assaults and other violence. I was caught in the fighting during the taking of Goma by rebels from the Mouvement du 23 Mars, and I saw people who were already displaced become displaced yet again with nowhere to go. I promised the women whom I met that I would echo their voices calling urgently for peace, security, protection and humanitarian assistance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I promised them that I would come to talk to the Security Council. We should not let them down this time.

Today, I will highlight three key issues — first, the contribution of women's organizations to international peace and security; secondly, the importance of conflict prevention; and, thirdly, the security threats women and women's human rights defenders face in conflict settings.

First, despite the constraints and barriers we face, women play a central role in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding at community, national and international levels, from early warning to post-conflict reconstruction. For example, in the women's "situation room", mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General, established during the 2012 elections in Senegal, it was the combination of women mobilizing communities for peace, mediating between opposing groups, and monitoring and reporting incidents of irregularity that contributed to peaceful elections in Senegal.

Regarding conflict resolution, despite much rhetoric and many commitments, the percentage of women and gender expertise included in the implementation of peace accords is unacceptably low. That continuing exclusion is demonstrated in recent

data in the Secretary-General's report, as presented to us by Ms. Bachelet. We also see a lack of women at the table in current peace processes, such as those under way in Colombia and Myanmar; in the negotiations between the Sudan and South Sudan; and, as the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations has just told us, in the regional negotiations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Women are not absent because they lack negotiating skills or because they cannot make vital contributions to peace processes. In Colombia, women's groups have united to create Women for Peace, a new movement offering concrete recommendations and proposals for the nascent peace process. Malian women, as the Deputy Secretary-General mentioned, together with women from across West Africa, have been active for months over the crisis in Mali, asserting their right to engage in the efforts to bring about a political solution to the crisis, and reminding all actors that women have been specifically targeted in the violence, especially in northern Mali. Women in Syria have been raising their voices but are vastly underrepresented, if not completely excluded, from efforts to seek a diplomatic solution to the ongoing conflict.

Women's priorities are not secondary or special-interest concerns in these processes. They are integral to making peace more robust and sustainable, and it is the responsibility of all relevant actors to ensure that women representatives, women's human rights and gender expertise are embedded in all efforts to prevent and resolve conflict, be they informal or formal conflict-resolution processes or related to rebuilding after conflict. This includes disarmament programmes and security sector, judicial, political and constitutional reform.

Secondly, the most effective way to fulfil commitments and obligations in the area of women and peace and security is to prevent conflict from occurring. We must challenge the underlying causes of human rights violations against women and girls in armed conflict, including gender discrimination, gender-based violence, militarization and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. That means ensuring women's active participation in designing and implementing disarmament and prevention strategies; it also means that Member States should adopt a comprehensive arms trade treaty with legal and enforceable prevention criteria for gender-based violence.

Thirdly, as we observe the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence, violence against women and girls remains widespread and far too often is committed with impunity. During conflict and long after conflict end, violence against women and girls is unacceptably high and remains an enormous barrier to women's full participation in social, economic and political life. Due to their work exposing violence against women and other human rights violations, women's human rights defenders are exposed to threats, intimidation, violence and at times alienation from their own communities. Those in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and throughout the Middle East often face serious personal risk and sometimes death.

Last month, Denis Mukwege, an outspoken supporter of victims of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who has continually called for peace in his country and who is well known to many in this Chamber for his advocacy of women's rights, was attacked in his home. I was there visiting the Panzi Hospital, and the women are asking for his return. There are thousands of advocates like Mr. Mukwege who, despite such risks, are working to implement the Council's resolutions on women and peace and security.

The Security Council and all Member States should offer concrete support to efforts to achieve accountability for violations of women's rights, and particularly of international humanitarian and human rights laws. In addition, protection and prevention measures must ensure the safety of women, including those who are displaced, refugees or disabled.

I would like to conclude my statement with a call for action to the international community, including United Nations Member States and Security Council members in particular. I urge them to engage women's groups as key partners in peace, mediation, negotiation and governmental processes; demonstrate leadership and prioritize women's rights by implementing national and regional action plans for compliance with resolution 1325 (2000); meet regularly with women's groups and women leaders — and I commend the proposal just made for the holding of regular meetings rather than an annual one, particularly under the leadership of UN-Women and other women's groups; and ensure that women's priorities are substantively incorporated into all relevant negotiations. We call on the Council to make those priorities non-negotiable and to allocate the political and financial resources to women's civil society organizations that are necessary

to their engagement and authority as partners in national, regional and international communities. Finally, we call on Security Council members to show themselves to be role models by consistently and fully implementing resolution 1325 (2000).

Women whose communities and lives are affected by conflict demand that the Security Council, with its mandate for maintaining international peace and security, and all Member States and United Nations actors support them and champion women's human rights. From the women in Sri Lanka seeking to rebuild their lives, to the women in Afghanistan demanding a voice in shaping their country's future; from the women seeking protection and medical care in the Kivus, to the women driven from their homes by violence in Colombia; from the women in Sierra Leone, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Sudan still seeking justice, to the human rights defenders in Iraq and the women disarmament activists in Côte d'Ivoire — these women are rightly expecting the Council to turn its words into action. Women suffering count on us. Together, we have innovative ideas, solutions and means. What are we waiting for?

The President: I now give the floor to the members of the Council.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for holding this open debate on women and peace and security, marking the twelfth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). I would also like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Michelle Bachelet, Hervé Ladsous and Bineta Diop for their informative briefings this morning.

I welcome the statement to be made later by the observer of the European Union, and the important contributions the European Union makes to this agenda.

The Chinese have a powerful proverb that says "women hold up half the sky". Twelve years after the Council first made landmark commitments in resolution 1325 (2000), we must all stand united behind efforts to confront those who seek to exclude, harm or marginalize half their populations.

As the Secretary-General has set out in his report (S/2012/732), we in the Council have made a concerted effort over the course of the past year to support the rights, protection and empowerment of women in strengthened peacekeeping mandates, in calls for more female peacekeepers, greater representation for women

in United Nations leadership roles and a greater number of gender experts in United Nations field missions. The Council must respond to the Secretary-General's call to demonstrate continued and committed leadership.

Women have a unique and powerful role to play in peacebuilding. But the lack of security for women and girls continues to be a major factor inhibiting their participation in decision-making in conflict and post-conflict settings. Women must participate as voters and candidates in post-conflict elections. They deserve to have the security to do so safely. Women must be placed at the centre of peace negotiations, not marginalized, threatened and ignored. And women's civil society organizations, so often at the forefront in responding to conflict and building peace in their own communities, must be nurtured, funded and supported.

The United Kingdom itself benefits substantially from early, regular and close consultation with women's civil society organizations. The United Kingdom civil society umbrella group, Gender Action for Peace and Security, played an integral part in our own recent national action plan review process.

We must do more to prevent conflict-related sexual violence and tackle its perpetrators more aggressively. That remains an urgent priority for the United Kingdom. Despite our best collective efforts, the culture of impunity that has grown up around this horrific crime is tough to crack. It is shocking how few of those responsible are put on trial for the crimes they commit. Governments must do more and must do so urgently.

In September, the United Kingdom Foreign Secretary launched a new initiative on preventing sexual violence at an event co-hosted with Michelle Bachelet, Zeinab Bangura and the International Campaign to Stop Rape and Gender Violence in Conflict. The initiative aims to replace the culture of impunity with one of deterrence, bringing more perpetrators of sexual violence to justice. We will work closely with the United Nations, international partners and civil society to launch a sustained campaign and to build a global partnership to prevent sexual violence in conflict.

Nationally, we have recruited a specialist team of experts who are available to work in support of the United Nations and civil society to investigate allegations of sexual violence, gather evidence and help countries build their own capacity to do so. The United Kingdom has also contributed \$1.5 million to

the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence to support her team's work. We hope others will also find ways to renew their commitments.

Today we recognize in particular the invaluable contribution civil society organizations make to this agenda. Their contribution is vital. In Liberia, organizations like the Women's Situation Room help promote women's participation in political life and prevent electoral violence. In Sierra Leone, the Rainbow Institution has made great strides in helping survivors of sexual and gender-based violence with medical assistance and counseling, sensitizing communities and empowering women and girls through village savings and loans associations specifically for them. Such organizations deserve to be nurtured and supported.

Women often bare a disproportionate burden in all stages of conflict. We know that they play a critical role in helping a country to draw back from recent conflict, to ensure sustainable peace and to heal wounds in societies torn apart by war. In that role, they surely hold up more than half the sky.

We must ensure that together we support the rights, protection and empowerment of women. Like Mr. Ladsous, the United Kingdom, both in our national capacity and as the Security Council lead on women and peace and security, is ready to go the extra mile to achieve that goal.

Mrs. DiCarlo (Unites States of America): I thank Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson, Executive Director Bachelet and Under-Secretary-General Ladsous for their briefings and their commitment to the women, peace and security agenda. I thank Ms. Diop for her remarks today, and especially for carrying the message of the women of Goma and Bukavu. We agree with her; we must not let them down.

As we mark the twelfth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), we can point to real progress. United Nations mediation, peacekeeping and peacebuilding increasingly tap the expertise and address the concerns of women. Peace processes include greater outreach to women. More countries are developing their own national action plans on women, peace and security, yet our work is very far from complete. We must continue to increase our collective efforts to address the challenges women face in conflict and post-conflict situations, and civil society groups can play a crucial role in peace and security initiatives.

The participation of women in peace and political processes is central to long-term peace and stability. We see that more than half of all peace agreements fail within five years. While the reasons for failure are complex and unique to each conflict, there is one common thread, historically: a lack of women's participation.

Of the hundreds of peace agreements signed in the past 20 years, a sampling of those treaties shows that less than 8 per cent of negotiators were women. Research suggests that women who participate in peace talks often raise issues like human rights, citizen security, justice, employment and health care — issues that are key to long-term recovery and stability but which are often ignored. Civil society can be instrumental in increasing the participation of women in these processes. Just this month in Afghanistan, for example, over two hundred representatives from Afghan civil society, political parties, Government, provincial councils, the religious community and the High Peace Council gathered for the national conference for strengthening the role of women in the peace process. They discussed increased participation of women in reconciliation efforts, greater protection for Afghan women and the importance of compliance with resolution 1325 (2000) by the Afghan Government. The delegates are currently drafting an action plan to drive genuine progress for Afghan women.

The United Nations has made important strides in advancing women's roles in security, governance and civic life. We support the Secretary-General's recommendation that greater attention should be devoted to women's empowerment and rights when establishing or renewing mission mandates. And we commend him for placing more women in leadership positions and increasing the number of gender advisers in the field. Their support to local civil society groups has been critical, and it is clear that the United Nations can have a significant impact when it partners with civil society. UN-Women's Fund for Gender Equality typifies that approach by partnering with regional, national and local women's organizations as well as with Government institutions to get more women engaged economically and politically.

It is encouraging, moreover, to see that more women parliamentarians are elected to office during transitional periods where there is United Nations assistance. Libya's landmark elections on 7 July had record levels of women's participation, with over six

hundred women candidates running for the national congress. And yet United Nations budgets remain well below the agreed 15 per cent recommendation in the Secretary-General's action plan to ensure women's participation in post-conflict recovery. If that continues, recent progress could stagnate. We must find ways to accelerate progress on that front.

UN-Women's focus on women's leadership and political participation has produced concrete results, and we look forward to the forthcoming report of the Secretary-General on implementation of General Assembly resolution 66/130, on women and political participation. We are also grateful for the work on women's political participation by the Human Rights Council Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and Practice.

The United States remains deeply concerned about violence targeted at women and girls, especially sexual violence. Not only is it horrific for the victims, but it tears apart the fabric of societies. As Secretary Clinton has said, these acts are not cultural but criminal. In the peace and security context, they are not simply women's issues, but, rather, fundamental problems that must be addressed for societies to reconcile, rebuild and find peace.

We applaud the efforts made by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to prevent violence against women in armed conflict by working to devise innovative procedures such as random patrols in areas commonly used by women and girls for gathering firewood or water.

Beyond sharing best practices and lessons learned, we need to do more to standardize mission-wide strategies and policies, improve redeployment training for peacekeepers, address victims' needs and hold perpetrators accountable. That is why United Nations campaigns such as Stop Rape Now are so important.

The work of resolution 1325 (2000) is a national responsibility. Less than year ago, President Obama issued the first-ever United States national action plan on women, peace and security. Based on wide-ranging consultations with American civil society and with other Governments, our action plan lays out how the United States will help empower half the world's population as equal partners in preventing conflict and building peace. Partnering with civil society groups is a key component of this strategy.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that the international community has made progress in including women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, tackling the scourge of sexual violence in conflict and making national commitments to act. But much more needs to be done so that the world fully sees women as actors, not victims, and as leaders, not followers.

Mr. Crowley (South Africa): My delegation thanks all of the briefers for the insightful statements they delivered here today. We also thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this important debate.

South Africa is fully committed to pursuing an integrated, gender-oriented approach in the areas of conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, in recognition of the powerful role of women as agents of change.

The report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2012/732) shows that Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) has provided for the establishment of an enabling framework for the creation of opportunities and spaces for women to be at the centre of processes affecting their safety, security and development, in equal partnership with men. However, the report highlights the fact that 12 years after the adoption of the resolution, despite some positive gains, its implementation remains slow and uneven in many cases.

My delegation notes that much work still needs to be done to strengthen the role of women in preventive diplomacy, formal peace processes and mediation. We therefore remain fully committed to working, in cooperation with the United Nations system and Member States, towards the removal of barriers impeding the full and effective implementation of the resolution.

In that regard, we welcome the role played by UN-Women to integrate a gender perspective under the women, peace and security agenda, in keeping with the broader United Nations system-wide mandate.

We note with concern the continuing underrepresentation of women in formal peace processes. We therefore call for a more regular review of the status of implementation within the United Nations system and in Member States of the proposals made by the Secretary-General on the inclusion of women in conflict prevention and mediation, the nomination of women to lead negotiation processes, and an increase

in the number of female police and troop personnel in United Nations missions.

Equally, we urge the Secretary-General to give specific attention to the appointment of women to senior positions, including chief mediators and heads of political, peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions. We maintain that greater effort needs to be expended towards the deployment of greater numbers of female military and police personnel to United Nations peacekeeping operations.

South Africa is pleased to note the valuable contribution that gender advisers in post-conflict settings continue to make through the provision of training to and awareness-raising of peacekeepers and assisting in the capacity-building activities of national Governments and of civil society.

However, we remain concerned at the slow deployment of women protection advisers to peacekeeping missions. This presents a serious protection gap, and every effort must be made to ensure that the progress made in the protection and promotion of the rights and empowerment of women and girls is not lost.

We are supportive of the efforts undertaken by the Council to ensure that more systematic attention is given in all its work to the implementation of commitments in the area of women, peace and security. The integration of appropriate gender perspectives into the mandates of the relevant peacekeeping missions and in other thematic areas related to peace and security would positively advance efforts in that regard.

We welcome the focus of this open debate on giving prominence to the role of women's civil society organizations in contributing to the prevention and resolution of armed conflict and to peacebuilding. From our own perspective, South Africa continues to contribute to the popularization of resolution 1325 (2000) through such structures as the Southern African Development Community, the African Union and the Pan-African Women's Organization.

We remain conscious of the fact that women and children are the most vulnerable members of society. They suffer disproportionately from conflict and State incapacity. Their experience of conflict, violence and repression, and their particular needs in such contexts usually differ from those of men. Unfortunately, women tend to be sidelined from formal conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes. We must therefore create the

space for women to assume positions of leadership and decision-making in peacemaking and peacebuilding processes. Better still, we need to focus more on preventing conflicts from breaking out in the first place.

Post-conflict recovery and reconstruction programmes often overlook women's security needs, which ultimately compromises the inclusiveness and sustainability of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts. Access to justice for women in post-conflict States through deliberate policies of inclusion is essential to building fair, equitable and equal societies. Women suffer disproportionately from poverty, and the risks they face are heightened in armed conflict and post-conflict situations. The United Nations system and the international community must therefore provide sufficient assistance to countries emerging from conflict to build their national capacity in terms of justice and security institutions, especially in the police, prosecutorial, judicial and corrections sectors and to ensure that women are well represented in all of those structures.

Finally, much work needs to be done to narrow the substantive implementation deficits that remain. The burden of responsibility rests on the membership of the Council to ensure measurable progress on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in the broader context of the women, peace and security agenda and the laudable objectives that it aspires to achieve.

Mr. Moraes Cabral (Portugal): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this open debate on an issue to which Portugal attaches great importance. I wish also to thank Under-Secretary-General Eliasson; the Executive Director of UN-Women, Michelle Bachelet; Under-Secretary-General Hervé Ladsous; and Ms. Bineta Diop, President of Femmes Africa Solidarité, for their very useful briefings.

Portugal naturally aligns itself with the statement to be made later by the observer of the European Union.

This open debate is an excellent and timely opportunity for the Council to express its strong support for the efforts of individual women and women's networks in organizations that are doing so much for peace and security from the grass-roots to the international level. Our British colleague has already given us some concrete examples of that growing involvement.

Women are important, often indispensable actors of change and development. With the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent Council resolutions on this issue, the Council has recognized that their active participation in political processes and in discussions about their own countries' futures is extremely valuable and should be mandatory.

Women undeniably play a crucial role in rebuilding post-conflict societies and in social cohesion. It is therefore essential, as has been mentioned, to guarantee that women are included in peace processes from the early phases and to ensure that their perspectives, direct knowledge and concerns are taken into account by international and local actors in shaping peacebuilding efforts. It is also essential to ensure that women's organizations and their leaders get the necessary support and encouragement from the international community to continue their work. The Council can and should play an important and active role in that regard.

During the past few years in the Council, Portugal has been working not only to support the promotion and protection of the rights of women, but also to support women's political participation in situations on the agenda of the Council, be it in Libya, Somalia, South Sudan or Afghanistan. We have also encouraged more interaction between the Council and women mediators who have a direct and personal experience in engaging with women in mediation and conflict prevention.

In an Arria Formula meeting that we coorganized with the United Kingdom, we heard very useful testimonies from experienced mediators with direct and personal experience in engaging women in conflict prevention and in the ways and means to enhance their participation in peace processes. Likewise, we also had the opportunity to meet with several gender advisers from United Nations peacekeeping missions and learned from them about the extremely valuable work that they had been doing to support the political participation of women in countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic People's Republic of the Congo, Timor-Leste and Haiti, as well as to implement broader women and peace and security mandates. We believe that the Council can only gain from organizing more of these meetings in order to have direct information from women and women's organizations with regard to the prevention of conflict and post-war consolidation and reconstruction as essential elements for the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). In that regard, let me also underline the importance of keeping

up the practice of organizing meetings with civil society when the Council travels on a field mission.

Another key aspect of the Council's work in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) is its monitoring of women's participation in political processes in post-conflict situations. In that context, it is important to invite Ms. Bachelet, as was done during the past two years, to regularly brief the Council on women's political participation and the concrete situation on its agenda. Those briefings not only complement the briefings that the Council receives from other Secretariat representatives, but they also help the Council in the implementation of the women and peace and security mandate.

Indeed, important progress has been accomplished in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and the subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security. Nevertheless, we have to recognize that significant challenges still remain in order to ensure the adequate representation of women and women's groups in formal peace processes, as Mr. Ladsous underlined, and to benefit fully from their knowledge and experience.

The Council adopted a presidential statement encouraging efforts to strengthen the capacities of women's organizations to engage in conflict prevention and mediation (S/PRST/2012/23). Portugal strongly supports the specific efforts by Member States and the United Nations. In that regard, we welcome the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UN-Women's efforts to give technical support to women's organizations at local and regional levels to strengthen women's civil society groups. The presidential statement also recognizes that those who protect the human rights of women are very often placed in situations of serious risk, and it calls for members to address those risks. In that regard, we pay tribute to human rights defenders who fight for women's human rights in so many parts of the world in extremely difficult conditions. We appeal for their adequate protection.

Every effort must be made to promote women's full and equal participation in electoral processes, as candidates and as voters, and to eliminate discriminatory or legal barriers against women's participation. A lack of access to education, but also the fight against violence, in particular sexual, violence should be addressed in this context, as has been already rightly underlined in previous statements.

In conclusion, resolution 1325 (2000) is a powerful message to encourage women around the world in countries at war and countries in peace to engage in the future of their countries and in the promotion of peace and security. Portugal remains fully committed to that objective and engaged in enhancing action at the national and international levels to fulfil those goals. As was mentioned here today, we must go the extra mile with UN-Women, the United Nations system as a whole and with civil society. Let us do it!

Mr. Karev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, we would like to thank the Indian presidency and the delegation of Guatemala for organizing today's meeting. We are grateful to all who have spoken for their assessments and useful information.

Much has changed in the 12 years since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). The major principles enshrined in the resolution to enhance the role of women in the prevention and settlement of conflicts and in post-conflict reconstruction, as well as the protection of women in conflict situations, have become a type of road map for the implementation and practice of a comprehensive approach regarding the issues of women and peace and security.

Unfortunately, in spite of the multiple efforts undertaken, the number of women who are victims of various forms of violence in armed conflict is not declining. That is why we believe that equal attention should be paid to all categories of violence, including instances of killing and wounding women and children as a result of the indiscriminate or excessive use of force. That problem is not only theoretical; it exists currently.

The international community is expecting results in the investigation of the cases of deaths of the civilian population, including women and children, as a result of the NATO operations in Libya. Specific information with regard to the facts in this case has been published by independent media on many occasions. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has indicated, speaking also with regard to the Council, that it is necessary to make sure that the investigation is completed. As we know, during today's debate we will hear a representative of NATO speak. We would like to hope that she will take this opportunity as adviser to inform us about the status of the results of the investigation. We are also seriously concerned by statistics concerning the so-called collateral damage

as a result of the use of new types of weapons, such as drones.

Women are not only victims of armed conflicts; they make a significant contribution to preventing and settling them. The direct involvement of women in conflict prevention and settlement is, in our view, an important precondition for overcoming violence against them. In that regard, we welcome the fact that this year priority attention in the presidential statement was given to issues of the role of women's organizations in civil society in the prevention and settlement of armed conflict and in peacebuilding (see S/PRST/2012/23). Although a critical role in protecting women at all stages of armed conflict belongs to national Governments, measures undertaken both by civil society and by United Nations system bodies support and complement the efforts of States.

Women particularly suffer during various crisis situations, not only during armed conflicts that are a threat to international peace and security. We welcome the use of background information provided by the Council on questions of violence against women by the General Assembly, the Peacebuilding Commission, the Human Rights Council and the Commission on the Status of Women within their mandates. It is important, however, to adhere to the existing division of labour in the Organization and not duplicate efforts or intrude upon one another's area's of authority. The problems of family violence, women's health, education and many others are being successfully dealt with by other United Nations bodies. The Council must, under resolution 1325 (2000), consider women's issues solely as they relate to the theme of maintaining peace and security and strictly with regard to those situations that are included on its agenda.

We have attentively studied the report of the Secretary-General prepared for today's meeting (S/2012/732). With regard to its contents, collected on the basis of the first third of the assessment indicators for implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), we would like to underscore that the appropriateness and relevance of individual indicators, as well as their scope and application, still raise questions. The information in the report given under the indicators is, for the most part, dry statistics. There has been no serious analysis of the information gathered. It has therefore not been possible to understand the significance of the data, to assess its value added or to draw specific conclusions about the status of women from the information.

We believe that work on the indicators, which is now at the review stage, must be more transparent and open, that is to say, with the participation of all United Nations Member States. With regard to using the so-called national action plans on implementing resolution 1325 (2000) as a tool to assess a country's policy in improving the status of women, States in situations of armed conflict should prepare such plans on a voluntary basis. If other countries wish to draw up similar national plans, they have the right, not the obligation, to do so.

Russia is convinced that there exists a significant and positive potential for women to participate in various aspects of armed conflict settlement and post-conflict recovery. The Council and relevant agencies and mechanisms of the United Nations system must pay more attention to ways to involve women in such processes, as required under resolution 1325 (2000). We also support the proposals on considering gender-based issues when establishing peacekeeping contingents. We also note the importance of including such issues in the mandates of those missions. At the same time, we must deal with such matters not with a standard model but by taking into account the specific characteristics of each situation.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate our belief that ensuring the rights of women and their protection in armed conflict will be possible only through the joint efforts of all interested parties, including civil society. The guideline for us all on this issue continues to be implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this open debate. I also thank Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson; Ms. Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director of UN-Women; Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping; and Ms. Bineta Diop, President of Femmes Africa Solidarité, for their presentations.

The Security Council recognizes two facts. On the one hand, women are the main civilian victims of conflict. On the other, they are never or rarely involved in the political negotiations to end crises. The Council has drawn two main conclusions from that: their protection, which must be strengthened, and their necessary participation in peace and conflict resolution processes.

That appeal was heard in part. Today, 12 years since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the United Nations increasingly takes the role of women into account in its peace and security activities. Women are ever more present, including as executive directors, in mediation teams and in United Nations field missions.

Under the leadership of Ms. Bachelet, UN-Women has improved the consistency and coordination of efforts to protection and promote women. The Security Council takes better account of the issue of women in its resolutions. However, we need to do more in that regard. France wants to see an increase in the number of advisory posts for the protection of women, in particular,

Those developments should not let it be forgotten that women are still to a large extent excluded from conflict prevention and resolution processes, which is still too often the exclusive remit of men. In crisis situations, in particular, women remain the main target of intolerable violence. In post-crisis situations, their suffering is often ignored.

That shortcoming is also often evident in peace agreements. In 2011, nine peace agreements were signed in the world but only two, in Yemen and Somalia, included specific provisions on women. It is precisely in transition situations that progress for women can be achieved.

There must therefore be even more in-depth consultation with women's organization in civil society. In that context, informal meetings of the Security Council with women active in the field must continue and be promoted and their number increased.

I also wish to commend the tireless efforts of Ms. Bineta Diop, who, as the head of Femmes Africa Solidarité, is working to implement resolution 1325 (2000) in several African States, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Côte d'Ivoire, and in Darfur. In the recent tragic days, I would like to underscore the events in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, where, once again, the civilian population, and women in particular, are the victims of clashes.

Women in conflict situations continue to be regular target of unacceptable violence. That happens when they become involved. Recently, we have also seen defenders of women's rights targeted by all kinds of extremists, who want to silence them. In Afghanistan, women who play an active part in the reconstruction

of their country and participate in political life are threatened by extremist groups. They also remain the primary target for sexual violence, which is still used as a weapon of war to terrorize civilian populations.

On many occasions, the Security Council has made statements on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo — which I have already mentioned — condemning the savage campaigns of rape and sexual violence by rebel groups in the Kivus. Also in Mali, women are the first victims of the violence unleashed against them by Islamic groups that have taken control of the north of the country. There are worrying reports by Islamist groups of the number of unmarried women who have had children. Clearly, such women will subsequently be the targets of violence. We cannot remain inactive given that reality.

In that connection, I commend the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Thanks to her efforts, we now have a list of groups systematically using sexual violence. That list should help put an end to their impunity. In view of such crimes, combating impunity is indeed essential. In that regard, the International Criminal Court should fully play its role. Furthermore, France also welcomes the policy of zero tolerance towards United Nations personnel implemented by the Secretary-General, which must continue.

In 2010, France adopted a national action plan for the implementation of the resolutions on women and peace and security. In that context, we are cooperating at the international level, in partnership with UN-Women. We are thus funding programmes to combat violence in six African countries and in the Arab world, including Jordan, Mali and Niger. Those programmes are being implemented by UN-Women in close coordination with civil society organizations. Since 2011, we have also worked with UN-Women to improve women's access to justice in Afghanistan.

Members can therefore rest assured of the commitment and resolve of France to promote and to defend women's rights and to work tirelessly for the implementation of the resolutions on women, peace and security.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this open debate. You could not have chosen a better topic to close the successful presidency of your friendly country, India, of the

Council this month. I would also like to thank Deputy Secretary-General Mr. Eliasson for his clear and concise presentation of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2012/732), as well as Ms. Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director of UN-Women; Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; and Ms. Bineta Diop, President and Founder of Femmes Africa Solidarité, for their respective contributions.

My delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2012/732) and the adoption in October of the presidential statement on that issue (S/PRST/2012/23). The statement sent a strong message of the firm and ongoing commitment of the international community to helping women to become independent and to protecting their rights. Today's debate will allow us to take stock of the progress made in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), in particular with respect to strengthening women's involvement in decision-making processes and to mainstreaming gender into peacekeeping operations and training programmes for peacekeeping personnel.

The Council adopted resolution 1889 (2009) in the context of the initiative to strengthen the existing legal arsenal in promoting and protecting women's rights and participation in efforts to prevent and resolve conflict and in post-conflict reconstruction. The resolution allowed us to make significant progress towards the independence of women in conflict situations through the drafting of national action plans, with quantifiable indicators, allowing for the establishment of an effective mechanism to follow up the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The Secretary-General's report also notes the important progress towards women's participation in peacekeeping operations and their representation in decision-making processes.

The establishment of specific post-conflict strategies is imperative and must go hand in hand with the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). In that respect, particular attention must be focused on the participation of African women in peace negotiations, mediation efforts, electoral processes, constitutional commissions and truth and reconciliation entities.

Because women are the most vulnerable and most targeted members of a population in conflict situations, they have an undeniable and precious contribution to make and value to add to peace negotiations and peacebuilding. Members of the Council will note that experience in West Africa and Haiti has shown that

when women are associated with peace processes, they have been able to make a difference by bringing their sensitivity, creativity and commitment to bear not only on peace processes, but also on national reconciliation and socioeconomic reintegration.

The establishment of genuine peace requires sound and inclusive political, economic and social structures. Local women's organizations are engines for promoting women's independence and their effective participation in political, economic and social life. My delegation endorses the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report, in particular those that encourage Member States to work with women's organizations effectively to implement resolution 1325 (2000).

My delegation also welcomes the action undertaken in the context of the on Joint Strategy on Gender and Mediation launched by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and UN-Women to enhance the competence of mediators in promoting women's involvement in mediation and peacebuilding processes. We further welcome the measures undertaken by the DPKO to protect women in armed conflict and to mainstream gender issues into peacekeeping. These initiatives of the DPKO and the Department of Political Affairs highlight the gender policy implemented by the Secretary-General since he took office, which has promoted undeniable progress to date. We commend the Secretary-General's determination to consolidate and pursue that policy.

With respect to the protection aspect, the Secretary-General's report emphasizes that women and girl refugees continue to fall victim to violations of international humanitarian law and refugee rights, in particular with regard to access to humanitarian assistance. Regional dialogues with women refugees, regularly organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees show that undocumented women and girls continue to suffer worst from acts of gender-based discrimination, especially in terms of access to health services, education and other social services. According to the report, programmes for emergency registration could have a positive effect on making women and girls more independent. We fully endorse that approach and recognize the need to act to make it feasible.

In conclusion, the success of the international community in implementing resolution 1325 (2000) will depend on the political will to translate its provisions

into reality and to ensure their implementation. The noble cause of women's independence and effective involvement in establishing and building peace is a long-term task. It is a vital and salutary mission, particularly in countries in or emerging from conflict, especially in Africa. It must be pursued and undertaken with resolve and success. The role played by Ms. Bachelet at the head of UN-Women is critical to that end, and we support her efforts in that area.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Sir, having convened this open debate. We all know that the original idea was to hold it precisely one month ago under the Guatemalan presidency of the Council, but Hurricane Sandy decided otherwise and everything had to be placed on hold. We are therefore gratified that the initiative has been revived, which will give greater meaning to presidential statement S/PRST/2012/23, adopted on 31 October.

We thank Ms Bachelet for her briefing and congratulate her on the high profile she has achieved for UN-Women. We welcome the opportunity to have an office of that new entity in our own country. We also thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2012/732), which has served as the basis for this debate, Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson and Under Secretary-General Hervé Ladsous for their briefings. I am especially grateful to Ms. Bineta Diop for having provided a collective and vivid vision of the civil society organizations related to today's topic.

On this occasion, we recall the pioneering resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, adopted in October 2000. The resolution explicitly addresses the condition of women and girls in situations of armed conflict. Each year, the Council has been building on the central premise of the resolution that, without security for women, no lasting peace can be achieved. The more specific topic of today's debate is the important role that women's civil society organizations can play, alongside States, in contributing to the prevention and solution of armed conflicts and in peacebuilding.

As regards Guatemala, fortunately it has been more than 15 years since we overcame our internal armed conflict, which is the element of the agenda that falls under the purview of the Security Council. However, the dividing lines between peacemaking, peacebuilding and economic and social transformation are not always clear, with the result that, to date, our past concerns over the situation of Guatemalan women and girls during the

more than 30 years of domestic conflict have become intertwined with our current concerns about promoting women's advancement in all sectors.

I should add that there are numerous fundamental connections between both areas of concern, one of which is the area of prevention. In that context, resolution 1325 (2000) states that conflict-prevention is the best way to ensure the protection of all civilians, in particular women and girls, from the horrors of armed conflict. But we also apply the prevention concept from another vantage point. I am referring to policies, tools and actions designed to enable women to break the vicious cycle of poverty. A crucial part of those efforts is the necessary achievement of women's economic empowerment.

Another fundamental connection is violence, which is a core characteristic of armed conflict but is also widely seen in societies supposedly living in peace. I am thinking of domestic violence, or perhaps more dramatically, the extreme violence that Guatemalans, and especially Guatemalan women, have been exposed to as a result of the alarming increase in organized crime, from youth gangs to transnational cartels involved in the illicit trafficking of goods and services.

In that regard, if we address the root causes of violence, we find that it frequently results from women's dependence on those who harm them or subject them to violence, either in armed conflict or societies at peace. That is why we believe, for example, that efforts on the part of States or civil societies to improve the situation of women by ensuring them greater economic independence and increased opportunity must form part of the tool kit of preventive action against violence against women. That is also why we support improving the indicators that measure progress and achievements under resolution 1325 (2000). That is important, because those results will enable an analysis of how many and which causes of violence against women have been eliminated, or at the least mitigated, through preventive measures, as well as the lacunae to be addressed through new policies.

Clearly, the United Nations has an important role to play in that area, and we applaud the establishment of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) as an important and unique institutional advance. We should strengthen its capacities for leadership and evaluation of accountability with respect to gender equality throughout the entire system.

As to the mandate stemming from resolution 1325 (2000), we support women's increased participation in peacebuilding efforts and in assessing civil society's capacities in post-conflict situations with respect to the topic of women, peace and security. In our opinion, acknowledging women's contribution to the building of peace and stability is crucial. The fact of their having disproportionately suffered the impacts of conflict highlights precisely the importance of their participation in the peace process.

Lastly, and referring now not only to the Security Council but to the entire United Nations system, we firmly support the greater participation of women in the work of the Organization, just as we support it within our own Government and society. I strongly urge the United Nations system to expand women's participation at all hierarchical levels and to ensure that those efforts are carried out in an equitable manner. In that context, it is incumbent upon us to recall that all Member States have something to contribute, particularly on the topic of violence, of which we, unfortunately, have suffered the consequences at first hand. However, we have also learned certain lessons in that context.

Mr. Wittig (Germany): Let me at the outset thank India for having organized today's open debate, which is important. I also thank Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson, Ms. Bachelet, Mr. Ladsous and Ms. Bineta Diop for their insightful briefings. Germany aligns itself with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union (EU).

At the outset, let me stress that my country unreservedly welcomes the report of the Secretary-General (S/2012/732) and especially his analysis using the set of indicators developed by the United Nations. We also commend the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) for its work in leading the mainstreaming efforts within the United Nations system. We encourage UN-Women to continue to cooperate closely with other United Nations entities.

While the need to involve women in peace processes has been extensively addressed, progress is needed in all spheres of society in order to strengthen the potential of women as agents of change. So, we again need to ask ourselves: What more can the Security Council, the United Nations and Member States do to close the gap between the normative framework and concrete action?

Let me make five points here. First, today's debate and the presidential statement (S/PRST/2012/23) that was adopted on 31 October focus explicitly, for the first time, on the important role of women's civil society organizations. We very much welcome that focus, as the inclusion of women and women's organizations is not a benevolent act, but rather a key requirement of any sustainable peace.

Secondly, the protection of women in armed conflict from all forms of violence, especially sexual violence, is crucial. But we must also protect those who fight for women's rights. They deserve our unreserved backing. Having met with several women's organizations from different parts of the world, I know that human rights defenders often face severe risks in carrying out their work.

Thirdly, women and women's organizations can also play a crucial role in the implementation of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and security sector reform mechanisms. They can also occupy a crucial role in political and constitutional reform and transitional justice efforts. To enable them to play that role, women's organizations need to receive adequate support, including financial support.

Fourthly, Germany regularly supports women's organizations and human rights defenders financially and logistically. To name but a few examples: we have organized regional conferences in Tunisia and Argentina in 2011, and we will be sponsoring a conference in Panama on gender training, the prevention of sexual violence and providing response tools and unhindered access to justice. Germany has also committed itself to the EU charter of the European Shelter Cities Initiative to increase the protection of human rights defenders. Furthermore, I am happy to announce that Germany is working on a national action plan to further enhance the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

Lastly, the Security Council could do even more itself to systematically integrate women and peace and security issues into its daily work, including when mandating or renewing United Nations missions. Envoys and special representatives should address those issues in their briefings to the Council. This should also include considerations on how to sustain gains made in the protection and advancement of women's rights during United Nations mission drawdowns and transitions.

Mr. M'Beou (Togo) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to commend you, Mr. President, for organizing this debate on the issue of women and peace and security in the context of the role of women's civil society organizations in the prevention and settlement of armed conflicts and peacebuilding. I would also like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Michelle Bachelet, Ms. Bineta Diop and Mr. Hervé Ladsous for their statements. I assure Ms. Diop of my country's support for her work at the head of her organization for the effective protection of women's rights, in particular in Africa.

Twelve years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), Togo welcomes the ongoing reflections begun by the United Nations on the implementation of the resolution. The importance of this process resides in the fact that it is an opportunity to take stock of the results achieved and difficulties encountered, and to contemplate strategies to be adopted in our future work. While tremendous efforts have been made in the implementation of the resolution, much remains to be done, in particular in areas such as the implementation of peace agreements, seamless transitions, the gradual drawdown of United Nations missions, and the pursuit of a secure environment for civil society organizations. All these elements must be taken into consideration in order to strengthen the process of preventing and resolving conflicts and peacebuilding.

The report of the Secretary-General before us (S/2012/732) indicates that women and girls continue to suffer violations of their rights, in particular through sexual and gender-based violence, forced displacement and obstructions to humanitarian access, which are serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian and refugee law. While the United Nations does its best to protect civilians, in particular women and children, and calls on all parties to the conflict to act accordingly, we must still note that violence against women and children is growing, as seen in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and northern Mali.

In addition to these horrible, tragic and reprehensible acts, we also note the use of heavy weapons in populated areas, which leads to mass population movements, in particular among women and children, thereby exposing them to all types of violence and violations of their rights. These actions must cease and their

perpetrators punished under the relevant international legal instruments.

It is therefore important that national legislation incorporate international criminal law, which provides for such acts and punishes their perpetrators. The Council must ensure that impunity is not the rule, but the exception. My country welcomes the fact that measures adopted by the United Nations to protect women and girls include guidelines that have been drawn up by the heads of military and police units in peacekeeping operations. The sanctions laid out therein against peacekeepers involved in cases of sexual violence meet the expectations of the international community and are designed to fully and completely protect vulnerable women and girls.

The international community has deployed immense efforts to promote such protection, but it will be successful only if women are involved in the crucial processes of conflict settlement. Unfortunately, women's organizations and civil society are very often excluded from such processes. Yet the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) requires enhanced cooperation among Member States, international and regional security institutions, and civil society.

The gaps in the implementation of peace agreements — which are undoubtedly complex — have led the United Nations and international human rights organizations to require the effective participation of civil society, in particular women's organizations. These organizations have, of course, an important role to play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. Their involvement in the settlement of conflicts is an opportunity to influence peacekeeping and peacebuilding policies. It is therefore appropriate for women to participate actively in the different stages of negotiations, as the peace process gains legitimacy and credibility when women participate in it.

In 2011, women were represented in 12 — or 86 per cent — of the 14 United Nations mediation support teams. However, only four of fourteen delegations to peace negotiations had a woman among their ranks. This deplorable state of affairs underscores the urgent need to impress upon the parties to conflicts that they should give a significant role to women in peace negotiations and in the implementation of peace agreements, as it is women's civil society organizations that ensure the sustainability of peacebuilding on the ground.

Women cannot play this positive role unless they are given responsibilities within the support structures for rebuilding the country. We are therefore welcome the participation of women in the facilitation and mediation processes for conflicts in countries such as the Central African Republic, Cyprus and Malawi. In this respect, we support the report of the Secretary-General, which encourages Member States and regional organizations that participate in peace processes to appoint more women as mediators, co-mediators and mediation advisors.

I note in that respect that my country since 2006 has included a gender mainstreaming strategy in our development policies and programmes. This strategy, in its preamble and in accordance with resolution 1325 (2000), affirms the important role that women play in the prevention and settlement of conflicts and in peacebuilding, and emphasizes the importance of their participation on an equal footing in all efforts to maintain and promote peace and security.

In translating this strategy into reality, Togo promoted the participation of women's civil society organizations in the signing of the comprehensive political agreement of 2006, which allowed the country to emerge from the socio-political crisis that began in 1990. They also played an active role in the work of the truth, justice and reconciliation commission, the results of which were accepted by almost all of the population. The importance that the Government attaches to the role of women in building the country is also evident in the election of many women to Parliament and the appointment of a number of others to Government and other positions of responsibility. The aim of the Government is to ensure that women's participation in our country's political and administrative life is increased to achieve in the long term percentages that reflect their real commitment and interest in public affairs.

To conclude, I wish to assure the Council of the support of my Government in the full and complete implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). We welcome the fact that on 31 October the Council adopted a presidential statement on this subject (S/PRST/2012/23), under the Guatemalan presidency.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): Pakistan joins other Council members in thanking India for convening today's important open debate on women and peace and security. The presidential statement on the subject (S/PRST/2012/23) is an expression of collective support

by all Council members for this common cause and of their strong commitment to address challenges to women's engagement at all levels. We would like to place on record our appreciation for the excellent work done by the United Kingdom and Guatemala in developing the presidential statement.

Pakistan attaches highest importance to the participation of women in all walks of life and has taken concrete steps to that end. Our national vision for women's empowerment is guided by the words of our country's founding father, the Quaid-e-Azam, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who said:

“No nation could ever be worthy of its existence that could not take its women along with the men and no struggle could ever succeed without women participating side by side with men. There are two powers in the world; one is the sword and the other is the pen. There is a great competition and rivalry between the two. There is a third power stronger than both, that of the women”.

In the recent past, Pakistan's parliament has passed a number of laws to eliminate discrimination against women and to promote and protect their rights.

We are thankful to the Deputy Secretary-General for his insights on the subject and for the efforts made by the United Nations, under the Secretary-General's leadership, to mainstream a gender perspective both within and outside the Organization. We also thank Under-Secretary-General Hervé Ladsous for his useful briefing on how the United Nations is carrying out the women, peace and security agenda in peacekeeping operations.

As one of the biggest troop contributors, Pakistan supports efforts to mainstream a gender perspective in peacekeeping operations. The appointment of gender advisers in the field has served a useful purpose, and the practice must be strengthened. Conscious of the importance of gender sensitization of peacekeeping troops, Pakistan has incorporated two United Nations standard gender training modules. We are proud of our women peacekeepers, who have served in a variety of capacities such as police officers, doctors and nurses in peacekeeping operations in Asia, Africa and the Balkans. Shahzadi Gulfam, a Pakistani woman police officer, received the 2011 International Female Police Peacekeeper Award in recognition of her outstanding performance in Timor-Leste. We are proud of her meritorious services.

Pakistan is also grateful to Madam Bachelet for her insightful presentation today. We commend the valuable role UN-Women plays in promoting the wider goal of gender equality in general and the women, peace and security agenda in particular. Pakistan will continue to play its part in strengthening UN-Women.

Human rights instruments, particularly the Geneva Conventions, proscribe torture, violence, rape and other forms of sexual violence and ill treatment of women during conflicts. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court characterizes those acts in the context of armed conflict as crimes against humanity. Despite such progress in the normative framework, women's suffering in conflict situations continues. There is growing awareness of their plight and there is increased focus on their protection. Still, women and girls continue to be the primary victims in conflict situations and to suffer disproportionately. To start with, they are vulnerable to violence and exploitation. What is worse, they are purposefully targeted and are largely excluded from the peace and reconstruction processes.

Resolution 1325 (2000) made an important contribution to the normative framework for the protection of women and girls in armed conflict. It elevates women from hapless victims of conflict situations to equal stakeholders in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in post-conflict reconstruction.

Women are true agents of change. Their involvement in different stages of conflict resolution and in peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities produces positive results that are needed for peaceful and democratic societies. To enable the Security Council and the United Nations system to do more to advance the protection of women in conflict situations and to enhance their participation in post-conflict processes, we propose the following measures.

First, the United Nations must develop a comprehensive strategy for conflict prevention and resolution, with special emphasis on the protection of women and girls in situations of armed conflict.

Second, the Security Council should continue to strengthen the provisions in its resolutions on full compliance with international humanitarian law and on ending impunity and ensuring accountability for the perpetrators of crimes against women, including in transitional justice mechanisms. The morally unacceptable scourge of gender-based violence persists

because a culture of impunity pervades situations of armed conflict.

Third, the Council must continue to include gender perspectives in its resolutions relating to peacekeeping operations and should support the appointment of well-trained gender advisers and women protection advisers.

Fourth, the United Nations and its agencies should develop ways to address the special needs of women and girls affected by armed conflict, especially with regard to health and psychological care.

Fifth, concerned States and the United Nations system must work to ensure the fullest participation of women, including all civil society actors, in peace processes as well as in post-conflict peacebuilding activities. Interaction with local women's groups to get first-hand knowledge of their concerns in conflict situations is always useful.

Sixth, the United Nations system and concerned States must cooperate to build the resources of gender justice in post-conflict situations, incorporating gender perspectives across the broad spectrum of reconstruction efforts.

Seventh, the necessary technical assistance must be provided, on request, to concerned States for reforming and rebuilding judicial, legislative and electoral sectors as well as for the economic, social and political empowerment of women within a culturally sensitive framework.

Eighth, the Council must demand from all parties to armed conflicts full respect for and compliance with international humanitarian law and other relevant instruments on the protection of women.

Today's debate underlines the important role of women's civil society organizations in the prevention and resolution of armed conflict and in follow-up peacebuilding processes. Concerned States and relevant United Nations entities should therefore make use of the talent and experience of women leaders from civil society to promote their active engagement and participation in a variety of appropriate roles to ensure the full and effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to express my thanks for the presentation of the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2012/732) and for the briefings by Ms. Michelle Bachelet, the Executive Director of

UN-Women, Under-Secretary-General Hervé Ladsous, and Ms. Bineta Diop, who spoke on behalf of the Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.

This is a good opportunity to consider the work being done by UN-Women, which as part of the General Assembly's strategy has integrated the international community's goals relating to gender equality and the empowerment of women. It is also a good opportunity to give special recognition to the enormous and dedicated work being done by Madame Bachelet, her team and all who collaborate with her to consolidate the agency as an institution and to raise universal awareness of the principles behind the mission of UN-Women.

Colombia has benefited from United Nations technical and financial assistance to ensure the introduction of a gender approach into its national policies and laws. We are firmly committed to implementing resolution 1325 (2000), specifically by gradually increasing women's representation in decision-making, supporting their peace initiatives, strengthening their access to justice, empowering them economically, creating jobs and identifying their needs. Our purpose is to ensure the effective enjoyment of women's rights in terms of equality and non-discrimination, through positive actions with a calibrated approach and through laws, taking into account the importance of giving special attention and protection to those affected by such events as armed conflict and displacement.

With regard to the body of the Secretary-General's report, our attention is particularly drawn to the prominent role assigned to the culture of preventing situations negatively affecting women, with special emphasis on conflict situations, through mechanisms such as early warnings, cooperation, constructive dialogue and effective support for them in the public decision-making arena. Also important are the considerations concerning the importance of including a differentiated approach in mechanisms for protecting women, in accordance with their special characteristics, and the full reinstatement of their rights and economic empowerment.

States should be aware of the challenge posed by the integrated implementation of a broad legislative framework and protection initiatives geared towards women and girls, as well as the difficulties involved in prosecuting and punishing the perpetrators of crimes affecting women and girls, particularly sexual violence and related crimes. Prevention strategies aimed at

eradicating all forms of violence against women and the special protection that should be provided to the victims of this scourge are of fundamental importance.

In Colombia's case, we should highlight the adoption of policies intended to include women, eliminating discrimination and promoting women's economic, political and social empowerment, and their more active participation in development, both in decision-making and in the benefits derived from it. We emphasize successful initiatives such as the forming of women's community councils, regional workshops for indigenous women, and local boards. Such instruments seek to strengthen women's links to public policies and to maintain an ongoing dialogue with institutional sectors and social organizations.

To that end, on 13 September, the Government of Colombia launched its national public policy on gender equality for women and the integrated plan for a violence-free life, a national event at which, moreover, Madame Bachelet was present, at the side of our President and his Cabinet. Through such means we intend to strengthen State action aimed at women's equality and empowerment and to combat the scourge of violence against women in Colombia. My country has also joined the UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign, coordinated by UN-Women.

With reference to Ms. Diop's mention of Colombia, I should state that we have welcomed the creation of a chapter of Women for Peace and its noble goal of contributing to the process currently under way. Regarding another reference to women's participation in the peace processes, I have just seen a photograph on the BBC showing, among the negotiators, a woman at the side of a man, both part of the guerrilla group's negotiating team. There are women in the Colombian Government's delegation as well. In fact, among the signatures on the document launching the negotiation agreements, there are those of women on both sides. There are women in the support groups as well. I can thus assure the Council that they will have a very important voice throughout the peace process in my country.

Concerning the indicators adopted to evaluate progress in implementing resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on the same subject, these have the potential to become an important tool for designing mechanisms for preventing harmful acts against women and girls and for strengthening the protection of victims. We believe it is important to emphasize that

such indicators should also be used in strict conformity with the mandate as laid out by the various resolutions. Maximum use should be made of the United Nations reports and special political missions as references for evaluating prevention. However, it is not helpful to take those findings out of context when they have already been discussed with States and do not contain new information regarding the indicators.

In any case, what is highlighted are assessments based on aspects particular to the internal functions of the United Nations, such as the percentage of instances of wrongful conduct by members of peacekeeping missions, the proportion of women in high-level positions in field missions, the percentage of field missions with gender experts, the degree to which measures to protect the human rights of women and girls are included in directives issued by peacekeeping missions, and the proportion of United Nations financing used to tackle gender-equality issues.

To deal with that assessment, States will have to include in their reports updated figures on the numbers and percentages of women's participation in their Government bodies and parliaments, as well as the percentage of temporary employment benefits received by women in the context of early economic recovery programmes.

It should be recognized that the primary responsibility for protecting women in matters related to peace and security belongs to States. Thus multilateral bodies and reports submitted should focus on coordinating procedures that facilitate performances, help to reduce duplication of efforts and build a coherent focus on the ground. The approaches should not concentrate exclusively on mechanisms designed to identify problems of human rights, since they do not contribute to lasting solutions. What makes a genuine contribution to reaching effective solutions is mechanisms geared to cooperation, constructive dialogue and effective support to countries.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson for attending today's meeting and for his statement. I have listened carefully to the briefings by Ms. Bachelet, Executive Director of UN-Women; Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Ladsous; and Ms. Diop, President of Femmes Africa Solidarité.

Women are a great force in the creation of human civilization. The promotion of gender equality and the

protection of women's rights have a direct bearing not only on women's vital concerns but also on world peace and development. Although women tend to be victims in conflict and post-conflict situations, they are also important partners in the prevention and mediation of conflicts and in post-conflict reconstruction.

In considering women and peace and security, it is important that the Council not only focus on the protection of women's security and safeguarding their rights in conflict and post-conflict situations, but also recognize the unique role played by women in peace processes and seek ways to bring them onboard in advancing global peace and security.

By adopting resolution 1325 (2000), the Council laid the foundations for the international community to establish cooperation in the field of women and peace and security. In recent years, thanks to joint efforts by Member States, international organizations such as the United Nations and regional organizations, progress has been made in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). In furthering the implementation of the Council's resolutions on women and peace and security, I wish to make the following four points.

First, the Council bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Council should focus on the prevention of conflicts, peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction and on creating an enabling political, security and legal environment for the protection and promotion of women's rights. When deliberating on conflict and post-conflict situations, the Council should include as central elements the protection of women and their rights. In honouring its commitment to women and peace and security, the Council should abide strictly by the mandate as conferred by the relevant Council resolutions.

The primary focus of the Council is on conflict and post-conflict situations. It is not an appropriate platform for establishing universal standards with regard to women's issues and human rights. The Council should strengthen its cooperation with the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Human Rights Council with a clear division of labour, thereby strengthening the exchange of information and communication.

Secondly, the national Governments of Member States bear the primary responsibility for protecting women's rights in conflict and post-conflict situations.

In our efforts to protect women's rights and strengthen their role in peace and security, we must respect the ownership of national Governments. It is important to respect the actions taken by national Governments for the protection of women's rights in view of each country's own specific conditions. In implementing resolution 1325 (2000), the international community may provide assistance to the countries concerned, on the basis of full respect for the views of that country.

Thirdly, it is important to value and enhance the status and role of women at the different stages of peace processes. In preventing conflict, keeping and building peace, it is important to take into consideration the special needs and concerns of women and to ensure that women enjoy full rights to participate in decision-making and the peace process, thereby helping to improve their disadvantaged status and effectively support their rights.

China supports the call for the Secretary-General to appoint more women to high-level positions such as Special Representative of the Secretary-General or Special Envoy entrusted with mediation good offices.

Fourthly, the international community should enhance its attention and support to the issue of women and development. Achieving women's development is the true foundation for achieving women's genuine empowerment. At present, international development support and technical assistance fall short of the needs of women worldwide. Achieving women's development therefore remains a daunting challenge in conflict and post-conflict situations. The international community should respond to calls from developing countries effectively and step up assistance for women's development in developing countries on a basis that is fully respectful of national ownership. The international community, while lending capacity-building support to the countries concerned, should also take note of the useful support role that women's groups and civil society organizations can play in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and national reconciliation.

Mr. Mehdiyev (Azerbaijan): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening the present open debate on women and peace and security. I thank the Deputy Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN-Women, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and the President and Founder of Femmes Afrique Solidarité for their statements and presentations. We are also grateful to the Secretary-General for his report on the topic (S/2012/732).

Azerbaijan reiterates its strong condemnation of all acts of violence committed against women and girls in situations of armed conflict and calls upon all parties to such conflicts to strictly abide by their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law. All the necessary measures must be taken to bring perpetrators of such acts to justice and to put an end to impunity. Azerbaijan welcomes the increasing attention of the Security Council and the wider international community to the topic. Indeed, the adoption by the Security Council of the landmark resolution 1325 (2000) was an important milestone that took up the issue of women and peace and security as a separate thematic issue and brought international visibility to the plight of women and girls in situations of armed conflict. The subsequent Council resolutions, presidential statements and other relevant documents have contributed to developing a solid framework and raising awareness of the impact that sexual violence has on victims, families and societies.

As the Secretary-General has pointed out in his report, 37 States have adopted national action plans to implement that resolution. Several countries have also adopted temporary special measures to increase the number of women in decision-making bodies. The protection of civilians has been included in the mandates of 8 of 16 peacekeeping missions.

The establishment of the post of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict has added a new dimension to the global efforts to fight that scourge. I would like to take the opportunity to wish Ms. Zainab Bangura, newly appointed Special Representative of the Secretary-General, every success in carrying out her important mandate.

Despite some achievements since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution remains too low. We support the appointment of more women as mediators, special representatives, special envoys and heads of missions. We take positive note of the issuance of Guidance for Effective Mediation on addressing conflict-related sexual violence in ceasefire and peace agreements, which provides mediators with normative standards and strategies. We look forward to the practical implementation of the Guidance.

There is a clear need to increase the number of female military and police personnel in United Nations missions, and we appreciate the efforts taken by troop-

and police-contributing countries to that end. At the same time, as the report of the Secretary-General underlines, increased numbers alone are not enough, and gender expertise is also needed. We stress the importance of regular training for gender advisers and of the promotion the role of women protection advisers in peacekeeping missions.

It is obvious that States bear the primary responsibility for enhancing women's participation in conflict-prevention and resolution and in peacebuilding, and all United Nations mechanisms should work closely with respective Governments to support and complement their efforts. We share the Secretary-General's view that international assistance for relief and recovery work is essential in supporting countries in ending violence and building peace.

We believe that women's civil society organizations, in close cooperation with the relevant Governments, can advance the women and peace and security agenda by bringing forward their concerns, priorities and rights in conflict prevention and resolution, and in the peacebuilding process. That will also allow women not only to benefit from the gains achieved in such processes, but also to be active contributors to peace, security and development.

More resolute and targeted measures are required to end impunity for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community, including those committed against women in situations of armed conflict. Among the pressing issues requiring urgent action and attention is that of women taken hostage and reported missing in connection with armed conflict. We are continuing our efforts to address that disturbing phenomenon, including through the relevant biannual resolution of the General Assembly and the Commission on the Status of Women, of which Azerbaijan is a main sponsor.

The heightened vulnerability of civilians in wartime, in particular forcibly displaced persons, refugees, women and children requires urgency, dedication and strong commitment in all protection efforts at the regional and global levels that must be free of selectivity and politically motivated approaches and purposes.

Azerbaijan notes the role that the relevant humanitarian mandates must play in that regard and thus ensure that all situations of armed conflict,

including of a protracted nature, receive due attention by the international community.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my national capacity as the representative of India.

At the outset, I would like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General for his remarks at this important open debate under the agenda item on women and peace and security. The fact that more than 50 countries have expressed their interest in speaking in today's debate reflects the importance and resonance of this issue.

I would also like to thank the Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN-Women, Ms. Michelle Bachelet, and the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Hervé Ladsous, for their detailed briefings. I also thank Ms. Bineta Diop, President of Femmes Africa Solidarité, for sharing their insights, and other Council members for their contributions to this debate.

Resolution 1325 (2000) highlights the impact of armed conflict on women and the need for effective institutional arrangements to guarantee their protection and full participation in peace processes. India has consistently held that the greater participation of women in the areas of conflict resolution, peace negotiations, peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction is a *sine qua non* for lasting peace and security.

My full statement is being circulated, and I shall therefore, in the interest of the efficient and effective use of time, merely make a few remarks by way of conclusion.

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

We agree with those who call for the increased deployment of female military and police personnel in United Nations peacekeeping operations and for appropriate training to enable them to effectively discharge their responsibilities.

India is the largest troop-contributing country in United Nations history. India was the first country to deploy a full female peacekeeping unit of 100 personnel in Liberia, in 2007. We have offered to contribute more such units. We are very proud of the exemplary record of our peacekeepers, both men and women, in the

protection of women, children and the weak in conflict situations.

In conclusion, let me reaffirm India's commitment to positively contribute to United Nations efforts in the area of women and peace and security. We also see civil society and local communities as valued partners in that endeavour.

I appeal to speakers to limit their statements to four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements, like the delegation of India, are requested to circulate the text in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I wish also to inform all concerned that we will be carrying on this open debate right through the lunch hour, because it is our intention to finish the debate by 6 p.m., as we have a very large number of speakers.

I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Khalek (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to express our appreciation for the convening of this annual open debate to review the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. Our appreciation is also extended to all previous speakers.

Egypt has read with interest the report of the Secretary-General (S/2012/732) on women and peace and security. Egypt would like to express its appreciation for the efforts made in the preparation of the report and for the progress that has been achieved over the past year, in particular with regard to the involvement of women in mediation efforts; in peace accords that include special provisions to improve security for and the situation of women and girls; and in the continuing efforts for the follow-up, monitoring and evaluation of the activities of United Nations missions. My delegation hopes that future reports will reflect an increase in the number of women who are in leadership positions and involved in the decision-making processes of the United Nations, in particular those related to peace and security.

Women are key and active partners in decision-making, conflict resolution, the development of peace strategies and the promotion of the culture of peace. The empowerment of women is therefore an instrumental factor and a cornerstone in the implementation of Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 1325 (2000), which remains

pivotal, as it affirms the responsibility of the international community to ensure women's rights in post-conflict situations and in peace processes.

Egypt reiterates its full commitment to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), in line with its international obligations as well as its conviction as to the central and indispensable role that could be played by women at all stages of conflict, with the aim of providing support and raising public awareness of the need to achieve peace.

In that context, Egypt also stresses the need for further efforts to include women in decision-making processes at all stages of peace negotiations and mediation, and the need to include the implementation of all relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

Egypt believes that providing women with equal opportunities in the context of decision-making processes reflects not only our commitment to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women but also a clear recognition by the international community of the essential role that women play in their societies.

Egypt deeply appreciates the role of the United Nations system in the area of peace and security and the increased political participation of women in a number of Arab States, as stated in the report, through its joint strategy with the Department of Political Affairs aimed at cultivating women's expertise in mediation and enhancing their role at all stages of mediation and negotiation, and their contribution to United Nations field operations.

Egypt welcomes the appointment of Ms. Zainab Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and reaffirms its commitment to fully cooperate with her. Egypt hopes that her reports to the Security Council will mark the distinction between violence in conflict situations and violence in non-conflict situations, with full neutrality, professionalism and objectivity.

Wars and armed conflicts have severe effects on all communities, including on men, women and children, but the Israeli occupation of Arab occupied territories has had severely negative impacts, especially on the status of Arab women psychologically, socially, economically, legally and politically. Arab women under foreign occupation bear a heavy burden because of the practices of the Israeli occupation, such as severe violations of human rights, the blockade that had led

to a deteriorating economic situation, restrictions on freedom of movement, and displacement and poverty.

Egypt stresses the responsibility of the United Nations system and of all international organizations concerned with women's issues towards women under foreign occupation, and the need to pay greater attention to their suffering and tragedy, in order to ensure them enjoyment of their rights, in compliance with the relevant provisions of international law, international humanitarian law and human rights law.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Barriga (Liechtenstein): At the outset, let me join others in commending you, Mr. President, for having organized this open debate, which highlights in particular the crucial role of women's civil society organizations in contributing to the prevention and resolution of armed conflict and peacebuilding.

We welcome the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2012/732), which reveals the lagging participation of women in mediation efforts and preventive diplomacy.

The slow progress made in ensuring the adequate participation of women in peace talks and the inclusion of women's and girls' rights in peace agreements remains worrisome. Of the nine peace agreements signed in 2012, only two contain provisions in that regard — the same low percentage as in 2010. Peace accords that fail to ensure the engagement of women in post-conflict governance often neglect their access to economic opportunities, justice and reparations.

When sexual violence is not addressed in the early stages of mediation, such as in ceasefire agreements, it usually remains ignored throughout the whole peace process. We therefore call on the Security Council and all relevant actors to increase efforts to promote women's participation in peace negotiations and mediation and to meet the specific concerns of women during post-conflict reconstruction. The Security Council should also, hand in hand with the General Assembly, address the lack of women as lead peace mediators, including by encouraging the Secretary-General to appoint women to such positions and to ensure that adequate gender expertise is provided in peace processes.

Women's civil society organizations are an important asset in this regard. We must ensure that their unique grass-roots perspective is taken into account

as we rethink how gender expertise is structured and deployed in the United Nations system. My delegation therefore welcomes the adoption of the presidential statement, which highlights the important role of women's civil society organizations in this area.

My delegation has long advocated for the consistent mainstreaming of the Council's thematic agenda into its country-specific work. A study recently published by the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security reveals the inconsistency with which the Council addresses women, peace and security concerns in its decisions on country situations. We believe that Council members should make greater efforts to ensure that their country-specific experts receive the information necessary to address those concerns in relevant mission mandates.

To support such efforts, my delegation has undertaken various initiatives. In partnership with Switzerland, we supported the publication of a handbook on the women and peace and security agenda by PeaceWomen. The handbook has just been released in its second edition and is available at the entrance to this Chamber. And I am particularly pleased to inform the Council that my delegation will launch, in close partnership with the Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination at Princeton University and with PeaceWomen, a series of panel discussions dealing with different aspects of the women and peace and security agenda. The first such event at United Nations Headquarters will take place on 12 December in Conference Room 1 at 3 p.m. The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Ms. Fatou Bensouda, will speak there about the work of the Court to prevent and prosecute sexual and gender-based crimes.

The President: I give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Mayr-Harting: I am speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The acceding country Croatia; the candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

We thank the Deputy Secretary-General; the Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN-Women, Ms. Michelle Bachelet; the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations,

Mr. Hervé Ladsous; and the President of Femmes Africa Solidarité, Ms. Bineta Diop, for their statements.

We find the focus of today's debate pertinent as we move forward in the practical implementation of our commitments in the field of women, peace and security. Conflict prevention, conflict resolution and building sustainable peace require cooperation between all stakeholders at all levels, and women's organizations play a particularly important role in that regard. We therefore welcome the focus on the contributions of women's civil society organizations to peace and security in the presidential statement adopted by the Council on 31 October (S/PRST/2012/23).

The number of national and regional action plans adopted for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) has continued to increase. This provides us with an opportunity to compare different experiences to guide the formulation of new plans and review the existing plans. Moreover, with 26 out of 37 national action plans now equipped with indicators, we are better placed to evaluate their actual implementation and results. The European Union adopted a comprehensive approach for the implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) in 2008. It has also established indicators to evaluate and assess gaps in its action plans. In March 2012, the European Union reported on its implementation of those resolutions in the context of our Common Security and Defence Policy. More than half of all European Union member States have by now adopted national action plans.

We value the increased reporting and briefings to the Council on the situation of women and girls in armed conflict. We take note of the Secretary-General's conclusion in his report (S/2012/732) that the information flow to the Council and its response remain uneven, and encourage further efforts in that regard. We welcome the insights provided by the updated information collected against the set of indicators on women and peace and security, and look forward to the continued provision and analysis of that data.

We need to continue to take real steps to move from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention. Eight out of 16 peacekeeping missions include the protection of civilians in their mandate. Early warning and response tools have been established, and an increasing number of actors, including civil society, are engaged in assessing risks and the escalation of violence in armed conflict, including through new technologies for incident and crisis mapping. However, we agree with

the Secretary-General that the gains made in access to information have yet to produce consistent early action.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report on strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution (A/66/811) and its annex I, entitled "Guidance for Effective Mediation", which highlight the importance of women's participation in peace processes. While women were present in 86 per cent of the United Nations mediation support teams involved in 14 peace negotiations in 2011, only four of the negotiating party delegations included a woman delegate. Only two out of nine peace agreements signed contained women and peace and security provisions.

Yet, as recent experience has shown, periods of transition offer a unique opportunity to break the cycle of women's marginalization and make significant gains in women's participation. We need to address factors discouraging women's candidacy and equal electoral participation, and security for women in elections. Provisions on women, peace and security should be included in peace negotiations as early as possible. We warmly welcome the concrete targets the Secretary-General has set for women and mediation, especially that of appointing a female United Nations chief mediator.

Women's perspectives and voices are essential to tackling the security, social and economic challenges facing communities emerging from conflict. The engagement of women's leaders and organizations needs to be systematically supported in peace processes to ensure their involvement from the early stages. Lack of security, limiting mobility and access, has an immense and negative impact on women's participation in decision-making in conflict and post-conflict settings. Moreover, women who engage actively to promote women's rights and perspectives often become targets for violence. We urge the Council to continue to work to ensure the protection of human rights defenders.

The EU Concept on Strengthening EU Mediation and Dialogue Capacities aims to promote the representation of women and the availability of adequate resources for dedicated mediation gender expertise from an early stage in mediation processes. Today, almost all of our 15 ongoing civilian missions and military operations have a human rights and/or gender adviser on the ground. We are stepping up predeployment training efforts on gender and Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security.

In July 2011, the EU set out an initial programme in response to a Libyan request for capacity-building training for both civil society and new public service bodies. As part of those projects, a course for women was delivered in Misrata in June to support women in leadership positions and emerging women leaders and managers. The partnership established with the EU, UN-Women and the United Nations Development Programme on enhancing women's participation in peacebuilding and post-conflict planning aims to promote close cooperation among all stakeholders.

The commitment to break down barriers to women's political and economic empowerment was also expressed at the high-level event on the margins of this year's General Assembly ministerial week on the Equal Futures Partnership, co-founded by the United States, Australia, Benin, Bangladesh, Denmark, Finland, Indonesia, Jordan, the Netherlands, Peru, Senegal, Tunisia and the European Union.

In conclusion, we are deeply concerned about the references in the Secretary-General's report to the continued use of sexual violence and threats of sexual violence as tactics of conflict over the past year, including in Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya, Syria and northern Mali. We welcome and further encourage drawing on the support of gender experts in United Nations commissions of inquiry.

We commend the work of the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Margot Wallström, and the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law. We welcome the nomination of the new Special Representative on sexual violence in conflict, Ms. Zainab Bangura, who brings extensive personal experience and a strong commitment to the post.

Finally, our actions need to measure up to our words. The European Union continues to be active with regard to women and peace and security in more than 70 countries. It supports the development and implementation of national action plans, non-governmental organizations and training for governmental agencies. Let me affirm our commitment to continue that work in cooperation with all partners, including women's organizations, whose contributions remain key to the legitimacy and sustainability of our efforts.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mr. Ragolini (Italy): Allow me to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for organizing this open debate of the Security Council. I also thank the Deputy Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN-Women, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and Ms. Bineta Diop, President and Founder of Femmes Africa Solidarité.

Italy aligns itself with the statement just delivered by the observer of the European Union, and wishes to make some additional remarks in its national capacity.

We welcome the debate's focus on the contribution of women's organizations to preventing and settling armed conflicts and to fostering peacebuilding. Throughout the world, women's rights advocates are fighting, and at times risking their lives, to ensure that women and girls are not excluded from decision-making about the political future of their country. They are fighting to ensure that their voices are heard when peace agreements are brokered and that they receive justice when the dignity of women is violated. We are here not only to pay tribute to their work and courage, but also to pledge concrete action to work with them towards together realizing the women and peace and security agenda.

Italy recalls the Secretary-General's appeal to involve women's organizations from the early stages of conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts. That should become standard practice. Women leaders also have an important role to play in transitions, including in the drawdown of United Nations and international missions, when the previous gains in gender equality can be at risk. As a country engaged in peace missions in the world, Italy is committed to ensuring that respect for women's rights is strengthened during such critical phases.

We cannot promote the participation of women and girls unless we ensure their full protection. The Security Council must be vigilant in that regard. The targeting of women human rights defenders is a matter of grave concern. The Secretary-General's report (S/2012/732) describes the use of sexual violence as a conflict tactic across a wide range of scenarios. Greater efforts are needed to increase the prosecution of such crimes at both the national and the international levels and to address the needs of survivors. In that regard, we welcome the appointment of the new Special Representative of the

Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Zainab Bangura, and we stand ready to support her fully in that endeavour.

Italy welcomes the presidential statement adopted by the Security Council on 31 October (S/PRST/2012/23) and the reaffirmation of its commitment to implement resolution 1325 (2000) and the follow-up resolutions. We strongly urge the Council to live up to that commitment, in particular by ensuring that all decisions on country-specific and thematic issues, as well as the authorization or renewal of mission mandates, are reviewed in terms of their impact on women and girls. We welcome the Secretary-General's commitment to increasing women's participation and representation in conflict resolution and prevention efforts. Women are formidable negotiators, mediators and peacebuilders. They are a resource that we cannot afford to leave untapped.

Italy is a long-standing supporter of the women and peace and security agenda. In December 2010, we adopted a three-year action plan to implement resolution 1325 (2000). Next year, we will review the plan in order to assess its progress. Action plans and strategies are indeed a critical tool to advance implementation and to enhance accountability at both the national and the regional levels. We also welcome the increasing work done by regional organizations, such as NATO, to mainstream women and peace and security in their action.

Support to Governments and civil society through development cooperation programmes has been another key component of Italy's efforts to advance the agenda, particularly in Afghanistan, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

I wish to conclude by echoing the Secretary-General. Effective conflict prevention is inevitably embedded in long-term investments in women's and girls' empowerment and in support for women's efforts to build peace. If we are serious about peace, we must also be serious about the rights of women and girls. The better we understand that equation, the more successful we will be in our efforts to ensure peace and development throughout the world.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Estonia.

Mr. Kolga (Estonia): First of all, I would like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Executive Director of UN-Women Michelle Bachelet, Under-Secretary-General Ladsous and Ms. Bineta Diop, the

representative of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, for their presentations.

Estonia aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union.

Women have always played a unique role in preventing and in solving conflicts. However, it was only 12 years ago that a resolution adopted at the international level was dedicated solely to that issue. Today, 12 years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), further implementing the principles enshrined in the resolution remains a challenge in many parts of the world.

We welcome the focus of today's debate on the role of women's civil society organizations in contributing to the prevention and resolution of armed conflict and peacebuilding. As expressed in many statements made here today, Estonia, too, is of the firm opinion that the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) requires cooperation among all stakeholders: Member States, regional and international organizations and civil society. The role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) cannot be overestimated. What could international organizations or States accomplish if there were no support for such work on the ground? Not much, I assume. Nevertheless, in reality, the role of civil society organizations remains too often, if not for the most part, unrecognized.

We find it particularly pertinent to stress the value of engaging women's organizations and female community leaders in all aspects of conflicts, from prevention to post-conflict engagement. They are a crucial factor in securing the credibility and legitimacy of international efforts. We therefore deplore the fact that women human rights defenders so often become targets in conflicts. Ensuring their safety and opportunity to be heard is of the utmost importance.

Promoting the rights of women is one of the priorities of Estonia's foreign policy. In all aspects of that work, special attention is paid to the participation of women's NGOs in policymaking and peace processes. Estonia contributes to international military and civilian missions in countries where conflict resolution and peacebuilding are directly linked to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and where the inclusion of a gender dimension in the planning and implementation of missions will enhance the efficiency of international efforts. Estonia intends to take on even greater responsibilities, and my country is proud to have

been elected a member of the Human Rights Council for the next term, 2013-2015. I can guarantee that one of our top priorities as a member of that Council will be the promotion of women's rights and participation.

There is a growing understanding that women and children are impacted uniquely and disproportionately by the effects of conflicts and their aftermath. Estonia has focused its development cooperation as well as its humanitarian assistance and human rights activities on supporting those vulnerable groups. We therefore regularly contribute to international programmes and funds, including UN-Women, the United Nations Population Fund, UNICEF, the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. In fact, Estonia is proud to announce that it is significantly increasing all of its voluntary contributions to United Nations agencies in 2013.

We welcome the fact that, at the national level, the number of countries that have given priority to women and peace and security through national action plans has continued to grow, and that 37 Member States have already adopted national action plans. Estonia adopted its national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in 2010 and has since shared its process of preparing an action plan with other countries. One of the most important conclusions of our 2011 implementation report is that NGOs play a crucial role in furthering the agenda of resolution 1325 (2000). The cooperation between the public sector and NGOs is crucial in that regard.

Estonia welcomes the important steps taken in that area within the framework of the United Nations in the past two years. However, the fact that, according to the Secretary-General's report entitled "Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution" (A/66/81), only four of the United Nations negotiating party delegations out of the 14 peace processes under way in 2011 included a woman delegate, which shows that there is still a lot of room for improvement. We would therefore encourage taking steps to ensure the inclusion of women in the ongoing peace processes. In a similar vein, it is regrettable that, in 2011, out of the nine peace agreements signed only two contained women and peace and security provisions.

We fully agree with the Secretary-General that the gender dimensions of mediation should be clearly and consistently articulated. Indeed, it is important

to raise gender-specific issues from the onset of the conflict analysis phase and during the earliest moments of the peace negotiations. That can help ensure that provisions dealing with gender equality are included in peace accords.

We are deeply concerned that, according to the Secretary-General's most recent report (S/2012/732), sexual violence and the threat of sexual violence continue to be employed as weapons of war in a range of conflicts. In some cases, even an increase of incidents was reported in 2011. Sexual and gender-based violence are gross human rights violations that are present in every armed conflict. It cannot be overemphasized how important it is to educate and engage men and boys to be active participants in preventing sexual violence.

Estonia remains concerned about the lack of accountability for those who have committed gross violations of human rights. In that context, we would like to stress the role of the International Criminal Court (ICC), a significant actor in the fight against impunity for the most serious crimes of international concern committed against women and girls. We welcome the principles set out in the ICC's first-ever decision on reparations, in particular the confirmation that the needs of vulnerable victims — including women, children and victims of sexual and gender-based violence — must be addressed as a priority. Reparations can be used as a vehicle to empower women and girls and to address gender inequality, one of the root causes of violence against women.

As a member of the UN-Women Executive Board — which plays a significant role in contributing to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) — and of the Commission on the Status of Women, we support the objective of empowering women in society. We fully agree with the Secretary-General that translating norms into practice must, in the end, be measured against real change in the lives of women, girls, boys and men across the continuum from conflict to peace.

Finally, we have noted that, according to the data published in the Secretary-General's report, the information flow to the Security Council and the Council's response to women and peace and security concerns continue to be uneven, and we would like to encourage the Council to pay greater attention to the matter. In that regard, today's debate is a very good example of affording the question of women and peace and security the consideration it deserves.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Waxman (Israel): At the outset, I would like to express my appreciation to you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate on women and peace and security — a subject of great importance for all of us in the international community.

Israel believes that women must play an equal role in all aspects of the State and civil society. The Jewish people and the Jewish State have always understood that the progress of women is critical for the progress of all. The principle of gender equality has been a fundamental principle of the State of Israel since its inception. The World Zionist Organization, founded by Theodore Herzl as an umbrella organization for the modern Zionist movement, as early as in 1898 granted equal voting rights to women.

Gender equality is enshrined in our 1948 Declaration of Independence and in the 1951 Equal Rights for Women Law. Israel was the third country in the world to elect a female Prime Minister, Golda Meir, and women in Israel today hold senior leadership positions in Government, business, law and academia. Women take an active, vibrant and visible role throughout Israeli civil society. Israeli women from across the political, cultural and religious spectrum are involved in a broad variety of issues, including advocating for conflict resolution and peace.

Israel continues to strongly support the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and its subsequent resolutions. The Israeli Knesset, our Parliament, recognizes the importance of gender equality in peacemaking and conflict resolution. It recently enacted legislation requiring that Israeli women be included on all Government investigative committees and all Israeli peace negotiating teams. Israel is proud of the progress it has made in ensuring women's social equality and is deeply committed to empowering women worldwide.

In 2003, the Golda Meir Mount Carmel Training Center hosted an international conference for women leaders entitled "Women's Role in Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding". As a result of the conference, the Center initiated a series of seminars entitled "Women Building a New Reality". Those seminars promote dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian women. The past decade has seen over 1,000 Israeli and Palestinian

women participate in more than 20 such workshops. Just last month, the Center held its most recent seminar.

We are honoured to serve as a member of the Commission on the Status of Women — the principal global policymaking body dedicated to gender equality and the advancement of women. We are especially proud to serve as Chair of the Commission's Working Group on Communications on the Status of Women.

Israel welcomes the United Nations call to move from a culture of reaction to one of prevention. The Kampala Declaration of December 2011 represents a unique and historic opportunity to take meaningful action to prevent sexual and gender-based violence. We hope that the Declaration will end the impunity of the perpetrators of such violence and ensure that its victims receive the necessary and appropriate support.

It is important that we do more to ensure women's participation in decision-making on mission drawdowns and transitions. The United Nations must take the lead in the involvement of women and set an example for the international community. Israel supports the work of UN-Women in that regard. We encourage the United Nations to increase the number of women in United Nations leadership positions, including as special representatives and deputy special representatives of the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General's annual report (S/2012/732) on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) noted progress in investigating accusations of sexual misconduct committed by United Nations personnel in peacekeeping operations. That progress is encouraging. Let me emphasize that the United Nations should investigate all accusations swiftly, fully and transparently. In addition, all United Nations personnel must be properly trained in the appropriate conduct. The United Nations policy of zero tolerance must be strictly enforced. The reputation of all United Nations peacekeepers is at stake.

We echo the call of the Secretary-General to exercise special vigilance to protect women human rights defenders. Last month brought another reminder about what is at stake, when the Taliban attacked 15-year-old Malala Yousafzai, because she dared to promote education for girls.

We must recognize the clear link between promoting peace and promoting equal rights for women. In too many parts of the world, especially in the Middle East, women have been subjugated and denied even the most

basic of rights, including the right to vote, the right to drive and even the right to control their own bodies. That mistreatment of women cannot be ignored. It has created and will continue to create major barriers to understanding and conflict resolution. It is high time that the United Nations seriously address the dire situation of women in the Arab world. We know from our own history that when women lead, society gains. And Israel will continue to stand with the international community to work for the empowerment of women in all corners of the world.

The President: I now call on the representative of Thailand.

Mr. Sinhaseni (Thailand): Let me first commend India, as the President of the Security Council for the month of November, for convening this important open date on women and peace and security. We also thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2012/732) and Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson and Under-Secretaries-General Bachelet and Ladsous for their statements.

Thailand is a country where women have long played a role in peace and security. Today, Thai women can be found in executive and leadership positions in every area of activity, including business, education, charity, non-governmental organizations, civil society, and of course, politics. Thailand has also been active in promoting the role of women in society.

In implementing resolution 1325 (2000), Thailand established a subcommittee on women and the promotion of peace and security. A wide range of activities have been carried out, from raising awareness of women's rights to the exchange of views on legal issues aimed at ensuring equal access by women to justice and sound legal advice. In that connection, we are grateful to UN-Women for co-organizing a workshop on the subject of women and peace and security in Bangkok on 15 October. It was a valuable opportunity for representatives of UN-Women and Thai participants to engage in an extensive exchange of views, experiences and best practices.

Thailand shares the view of the Secretary-General that we should move from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention. To that end, we have established the Thai Women's Empowerment Fund to address the lack of economic opportunities for women by offering low-interest loans to help women develop their skills and careers. The Fund can also be used to strengthen

women's civil society networks and enhance women's role.

When the situation demands it, Thai women can also be effective agents of peace, as caring peacekeepers and peacebuilders. We were pleased to see the role of female peacekeepers mentioned in several parts of the Secretary-General's report. Thailand also attaches great importance to enhancing the role and participation of women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations. There are currently many Thai female military observers and officers serving in various United Nations missions. They are well trained in international humanitarian law and international law with regard to the rights and protection of women and children. Pre-deployment training for our peacekeepers, with the assistance of the International Committee of the Red Cross, also focuses on the issue of gender sensitivity in order to facilitate the building of trust.

Another milestone for women in Thailand was the admission of female cadets, in 2009, to the century-old Police Cadet Academy. After graduation, the first batch of female cadets will be assigned the important task of dealing with cases involving violence against women and children. Those female cadets were also inspired by the great work of their senior female police officers who participated in nation-building processes in Haiti and Timor-Leste. It is our fervent hope that those Thai female cadets will join United Nations missions in different parts of the world.

Finally, let me emphasize the necessity of the universal implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and relevant resolutions and their translation into practice. For our part, Thailand reiterates its readiness and commitment to join the efforts of the international community aimed at ensuring that the voices of women will be heard, their rights respected and protected, and their concerns and needs addressed. Their role and contribution with respect to peace and security must be both enhanced and recognized.

The President: I now call on the representative of Armenia.

Mr. Nazarian (Armenia): Allow me first to express my thanks to you, Sir, for convening this debate on a topic that my delegation is particularly pleased to see addressed. We join previous speakers in thanking the Deputy Secretary-General and Under-Secretaries-

General Bachelet and Ladsous and Ms. Bineta Diop for their statements.

All of the United Nations world conferences on women have recognized the linkages among gender equality, development and peace. Today, it is heartening to observe how much the issue has gained in terms of visibility and traction. It is now taken up in various intergovernmental bodies, including the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Peacebuilding Commission. Member States and civil society organizations at the national and global levels are demonstrating their commitment to tackle the challenge through concrete action.

Despite the measures taken to prevent and address violence against women, previous debates in the Council and reports from the field have made it clear that it persists. Efforts to address violence against women are often neither comprehensive, consistent nor sustained, and insufficient coordination persists among relevant actors.

Knowledge regarding the scope, prevalence, impact and cost of violence against women remains inadequate. Greater efforts are needed to collect more information and data of better quality on such violence. That would support policymakers in their efforts to design effective legislative and policy reforms, ensure the adequate provision of targeted and effective services, monitor trends and progress in addressing and eliminating violence against women, and assess the impact of the measures taken.

In its presidential statement of last month (S/PRST/2012/23), the Council underlined the primary role of Governments in enhancing women's participation in the prevention and resolution of conflict in areas affected by armed conflict. As noted by the Secretary-General, many peace processes now regularly include consultations with women's peace groups, and in many post-conflict countries, the number of women in Government has increased.

However, women have, by and large, remained excluded, especially in efforts to find workable solutions to conflict. In that regard, one of the most important tasks should be to increase the presence of women in decision-making processes. The inclusion of women at all stages of the peace process will ensure a more lasting and representative settlement. As such, we should further promote their participation and

recognize the important contributions that women have made in that regard.

This open debate serves as an opportunity to address the importance of women's political participation, especially in regions and countries affected by conflict. In that context, the efforts of the European Union (EU) to launch the second phase of its civil society programme, entitled "European Partnership for the Peaceful Settlement of the Conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh", may also prove useful in promoting a dynamic dialogue among a broad range of policymakers, media and civil society on all sides of the conflict. It also supports the wider participation of conflict-affected people, including women, in peace processes.

As a newly elected member of the International Organization of la Francophonie, we would also like to welcome the May 2012 agreement between UN-Women and the International Organization of la Francophonie, which will further strengthen and reinforce gender-responsive policies and actions among Member States.

In conclusion, let me mention that Armenia recognizes and welcomes the key role and critical efforts of the Security Council in preventing violence and combating impunity in conflict and post-conflict situations. We will work closely with the United Nations, civil society and the international organizations and institutions concerned to expand and implement the agenda of resolution 1325 (2000) to better the situation of women around the world.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mr. De Alba (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin by commending you, Mr. President, on your sterling leadership of the presidency of the Council for this month, and your clear sense of responsibility, including your presence here at this hour. Allow me to also commend you for the initiative to hold this debate on women and peace and security and to provide follow-up to the efforts of the delegation of Guatemala.

Mexico welcomes the presentation of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2012/732) and the subsequent statements by Ms. Bachelet, Ms. Diop and Mr. Eliasson this morning. We would also like to join other delegations in underscoring the importance of today's debate.

Twelve years after the historic adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), Mexico recognizes the progress that has been made in creating favourable conditions for the participation of women in all phases of peace processes. The deployment of women gender advisers in all peacekeeping operations is a very positive development that we hope to see replicated in peacebuilding processes. We also recognize that the inclusion of early warning and response mechanisms in the mandates of peacekeeping operations and special political missions play a very important role.

As a member of the Group of Friends of Mediation, my delegation welcomes in particular the inclusion of the gender dimension in the most recent report of the Secretary-General (A/66/811) on the strengthening of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution as well as in guidelines for effective mediation.

While recognizing the progress that has been achieved, it is also important to recognize the challenges and the work that remain, in particular with respect to the implementation of the resolution. We must identify additional actions that promote the participation of women's organizations in the peace processes and peace accords, an issue that has quite rightly been identified as central to the debate.

Unfortunately, peace processes and accords rarely include concrete provisions for promoting access to justice and women's representation in government bodies to enable inclusive access to power or prevent and punish sexual violence. This perpetuates the exclusion and vulnerable conditions in which half of the population lives and is an obstacle to peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The inclusion of women's organizations in peace processes and agreements is therefore necessary in order to overcome the injustices that often predate conflict situations, and offers a valuable opportunity to avoid structural problems of exclusion in the design of national institutions.

It is evident, in reading the concept paper circulated by Guatemala (S/2012/774, annex), that the work of women's organizations is truly admirable, especially since they are often intentionally excluded from official processes and political dialogue and yet are able to move forward. We recognize the importance of the work of such non-governmental organizations from the very onset of these processes. We echo the recommendation of the Secretary-General that his envoys, representatives

and mediators consult with women's organizations and with those affected by crisis — the victims.

Mexico also believes it essential that we include the gender dimension in all phases of building our new societies, in particular in the electoral processes. This is important not just when votes are cast, but also during the process of electoral observation and in subsequent political representation.

Regarding the transition of United Nations presences, including the drawdown of peacekeeping operations, we must ensure that these transition processes do not entail a reduction in the attention given to this topic, or put at risk the protection and security of women.

We have immense challenges ahead when it comes to fully including women in processes to promote peace and security. The inclusion of women in conflict resolution and in post-conflict situations is without a doubt essential. It is the only way that we will achieve the full inclusion of women on an equal footing for the building of societies that have better prospects for development and peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Mr. Seger (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland thanks the Guatemalan presidency for proposing this discussion, as well as the Indian presidency, which took it up again after Hurricane Sandy. We would also like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General for having presented the report (S/2012/732) on the implementation of the strategic framework for the promotion of women and peace and security. The report shows, in our view, the usefulness of the global indicators in measuring progress — or sometimes the lack of progress — in a systematic, transparent, honest and critical way.

Let me first address the main topic of today's open debate, the inclusion of women's civil society networks in the prevention and resolution of armed conflicts and peacebuilding. I will concentrate on three main issues that we believe to be crucial.

First, on mediation, the Secretary-General's report provides us with important facts and figures. Unfortunately, it comes to the conclusion that progress remains limited with regard to the inclusion of women in peace talks and the inclusion of women's issues in peace agreements. Our challenge today is to identify

opportunities for their participation and to offer them such opportunities at all levels. There is no shortage of capable and well-trained women, as a number of mediation training events for women and women's networks have taken place all over the world.

In the framework of our programme dedicated to dealing with the past, we have attached great importance to a gender-sensitive implementation of the transitional justice mechanisms. Women's perspectives and needs must be an essential component of all four principles of the fight against impunity: the search for truth, justice, reparations and guarantees of non-recurrence.

On security sector reform, gender-based violence can be rooted in traditional values and norms, stereotypes and structures that are transmitted through education and perpetuated by civil society. These stereotypes, values and norms are mirrored in the security sector, which is also one of the key areas to focus on in the fight against discrimination and gender-based violence. If the security sector is to be effective in fighting impunity for crimes committed against women, it must be reformed, taking into account sexist clichés and patterns of deep-rooted discrimination against women, and by including women's networks in the process.

Allow me to conclude with a quick advertisement. The NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security has prepared a report parallel to the work of the Security Council entitled "Mapping Women, Peace and Security in the UN Security Council: 2011-2012". We recently launched the report with Liechtenstein, and we warmly encourage all Council members and the entire United Nations membership to read it and to take into account its recommendations in their daily work.

Finally, I have the pleasure today to announce the launch of another important publication supported by Switzerland and Liechtenstein, the *Handbook on Women, Peace and Security*, by the NGO Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. It is the second edition of the *Handbook* and examines the degree to which the Security Council has incorporated women, peace and security into its geographical work over the past 12 years, specifically in the Council's country-specific resolutions. The *Handbook* also contains important recommendations and is available electronically as a smartphone application so that all can have access at any point to language involving women, peace and security. We encourage all Council

members to use the *Handbook* to better strengthen the links between geographical and thematic work.

If I may, I would like to distribute a copy of the *Handbook* to each member of the Council. I know it is lunchtime and I would very much have preferred to provide members with more material sustenance, but I do hope that this intellectual nourishment will also be of interest to the Council.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we would like to thank the Permanent Representative and delegation of India for having held today's debate, which was originally organized by the Guatemalan presidency of the Council in October. We also wish to thank the speakers who took the floor today. Special appreciation goes to Ms. Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director of UN-Women, for her sterling work for equality for women.

Each anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) gives us an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to its objectives and at the same time to focus on some of the many dimensions it covers. Today we have the opportunity to reflect on the central role of civil society, especially women's organizations, in the drafting and subsequent implementation of the normative framework launched by the Council in the year 2000. We wish to recognize the work undertaken by the civil society Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, which at the start of this year began specifically to push Council action in the matter. The encouragement and guidance of the Working Group were decisive for the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), and that continues to be the case for its effective implementation.

Allow me, as Ambassador of my country, to recall that Argentina has been one of the countries promoting resolution 1325 (2000). In my case, as an activist for human rights and the equality of women, I wish to recall that the resolution was a new "enough!" in women's fight for international peace and security, the prevention and eradication of all forms of violence against women, the elimination of impunity, and progress towards a real and legal equality between men and women.

It was this Organization that took on the calls by and the initiative of millions of women around the world in order to say "enough!" to a double situation of injustice and discrimination against women that consisted of, on

the one hand, silencing the voices of the victims and, on the other hand, hiding the faces of women and girls as rights holders and protagonists of social, economic and cultural changes that could promote, protect and ensure international peace and security and contribute to mediation processes and capacity-building for a real and lasting peace.

Twelve years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the decisive contributions from women's movements and organizations in conflict prevention, and the commitment of organizations focusing on the human rights of women and girls to make a reality of the responsibility to protect — those are no longer matters of opinion. The international community today shares the certainty that the inclusion and incorporation of women and their organizations before, during and after conflicts is not merely ethically necessary, but is also socially just and politically efficacious.

The best way that we have found to respond to the theme of this debate is to refer briefly to the National Action Plan of the Argentine Republic for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), which is in its final phase of adoption. It will be adopted by a presidential decree once the final review phase, is under way right now, has been completed. The Plan is the result of efforts by an interministerial working group in which nine ministries participated. From the beginning, women's organizations, feminist organizations and human rights organizations in our country have provided momentum and participated actively. Just to note some examples, objective 2 of the Plan — on an increase in political participation of women in peace negotiation processes, in conflict management and in decision-making — provides for holding periodic public debates with women's organizations, feminist organizations, human rights organizations and other civil society organizations that incorporate gender perspectives, in order to broaden the participation of women and the sharing of experiences.

In addition, the actions taken to comply with objective 3 — on the inclusion of the gender perspective in all peacebuilding and humanitarian assistance missions — include the promotion of joint work by national institutions with expertise in the area of women's equality and civil society, with particular emphasis on the situation of women in armed conflict, post-conflict situations and socio-natural disasters.

Finally, in the section of the National Plan that focuses on monitoring and follow-up, it is expressly

indicated that the Plan is the result of a participatory process launched by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, with the support of the Defence Ministry and with the participation of civil society organizations. To succeed, it requires coordination among different areas of the Argentine State and the cooperation of other countries in the region, civil society organizations and international organizations.

During its 1999-2000 term as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Argentina maintained an active participation in the negotiations and consultations undertaken with women's organizations and civil society organizations focusing on gender issues that culminated in the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). The same spirit and the same criteria will guide the implementation of our Action Plan and the participation of Argentina in the Security Council in 2013 and 2014. That is a responsibility with which we were honoured by the General Assembly on 18 October.

We wish to offer the Council our full willingness to contribute to the universalization of resolution 1325 (2000) and its effective implementation.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Rishchynski (Canada) (*spoke in French*): We would like to thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to take the floor.

(*spoke in English*)

On behalf of the Government of Canada, I wish to thank the Indian presidency for convening this open debate that provides focus on the important role of women in establishing and maintaining peace and security.

As our Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Honourable John Baird, stated at the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations in September, women are the key to the development of pluralistic societies, and the full and active participation of women in all parts of civil society and throughout society as a whole is very important in that regard. Last year, our Foreign Minister met with women in Libya to discuss the role women could play in that country's transition. He also met with the Afghan Women's Network at the International Conference on Afghanistan in Bonn to hear their concerns. Canada also advocated for, and facilitated the inclusion of, women's civil society groups at the International Conference on Afghanistan this year, and continues to work with the

Afghan Women's Network to raise awareness of issues relating to women, peace and security among provincial and national officials, parliamentarians and influential community leaders.

(spoke in French)

Canada heartily welcomes the Secretary-General's recognition of the need to take effective measures to address conflict-related sexual violence such as rape as a weapon of war, and calls for the protection of human rights defenders. Governments have the responsibility to deal with the issues of women and peace and security. Civil society can potentially play a constructive role. For example, in Sierra Leone, for which Canada has the honour to chair the country-specific configuration for peacebuilding, the defence of women's rights by local organizations has led the State to act to protect particularly vulnerable groups of women, leading specifically to a new law criminalizing sexual offences and imposing stiffer minimum penalties for offenders. The law is a step forward in holding perpetrators of sexual violence accountable in that country.

Women can play an important role in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding. We therefore call for the continued constructive participation of women throughout peace processes, mission drawdowns and political transitions.

(spoke in English)

In conclusion, Canada wishes to note that the Secretary-General's report outlines the considerable progress that the international community has made on issues of women and peace and security, even just in the past year, but we are equally cognizant that much more remains to be done.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Austria.

Mr. Riecken (Austria): Austria aligns itself with the statement made earlier on behalf of the European Union.

We thank today's briefers, and are grateful to the delegation of India for rescheduling this open debate on the important topic of the contribution of women's civil society organizations to conflict prevention and resolution. We particularly welcome the participation in this debate of the representative of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.

Women and women's civil society organizations are all too often excluded from participating in peace efforts and negotiations. The very instructive data, collected against the indicators, contained in the Secretary-General's report (S/2012/732) clearly shows the need for improvement in the meaningful inclusion and participation of women from an early stage in all efforts towards conflict prevention and resolution, including peace negotiations and peacebuilding. Measures to improve women's security are crucial to ensuring their political and economic participation in post-conflict settings. We are concerned about the information in the Secretary-General's report on the high number of attacks on human rights defenders in some of the countries and territories reviewed in the past year. We fully support the Secretary-General's recommendation that the Security Council pay special attention to protecting women human rights defenders.

We should also step up our efforts with regard to women in decision-making positions. While temporary special measures, including electoral gender quotas, can be an effective tool for increasing women's political participation both as voters and as candidates, we agree that more attention must be paid to addressing the structural factors that discourage women's candidacy and electoral participation.

Much has been achieved in the 12 years since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). However, as the Secretary-General has pointed out, we clearly need to do more. The number of women in United Nations peacekeeping operations and political missions, including in senior positions in field missions, as well as appointments of women mediators, must be enhanced. We encourage the Security Council to include the consideration of issues related to women and peace and security in all its thematic and country-specific discussions, as well as to address it in missions' mandates.

In accordance with presidential statement S/PRST/2010/22, I would like to inform the Council about the measures taken by Austria in the past year to implement resolution 1325 (2000). Austria has completed the revision of its national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The revised plan, adopted in January, is guided by the United Nations indicators on women and peace and security. Civil society was closely involved in the revision process. This year Austria also adopted its third national action plan on combating trafficking in human beings. Women

are particularly vulnerable to becoming victims of this sort of organized crime, mainly for sexual exploitation.

Austria has developed an interdisciplinary training course on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. The training course is tailored to the requirements of command personnel active in international crisis management. It will be held for the first time in December at the Austrian Peace Center in Stadtschlaining, with participants from 20 Member States and international organizations. Modules on women in armed conflict will make up an important part of the course, with the objective for participants to develop a gender-sensitive needs analysis and practical solutions aimed at effectively addressing those needs. Nine mission gender advisers have been trained and their deployment began to the Balkans in 2011. After a first assignment to Kosovo, which proved extremely successful, Austria will continue that engagement in 2013. Furthermore, Austria will continue with its support to UN-Women and has offered support for developing a national action plan for partnering countries with a view to launching concrete cooperation early next year.

The President: I now give the floor to Ms. Skåre.

Ms. Skåre: Thank you, Mr. President, for letting NATO participate in this important debate. I would also like to thank the briefers for their excellent presentations.

Civil society organizations have been instrumental in promoting women's rights and gender equality. To a large degree, it was thanks to civil society that resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security saw the light of day 12 years ago. As much as States and intergovernmental organizations show leadership in advancing that agenda, we have to recognize the important role that members of civil society play as opinion leaders and sources of information, as well as in keeping us accountable.

While States have the primary responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the resolutions on women and peace and security, NATO, as a political-military organization, is playing its part within NATO-led operations and within our partnerships. We have a policy, we have an action plan and, together with partners, we are turning words into deeds.

On the political level, NATO is actively encouraging all its partners to adopt specific goals related to the promotion of women, peace and security issues in the various partnership programmes they develop with

our organization. The overall aim is to raise awareness and to work towards greater female participation in the areas of defence and security. Women are still underrepresented in peace and reconciliation processes, and we encourage States and our partners to ensure women's participation in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts.

At the operational level, NATO and its operational partners in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and Kosovo Force have demonstrated a strong commitment to promoting the important role that women can play, and have engaged with women leaders and activists to understand their views and perspectives. The Alliance has gender advisers and focal points at its various headquarters, as well as in operational theatres in Afghanistan and Kosovo. I work with these dedicated people and see the significant efforts they are making to mainstream resolution 1325 (2000) and related resolutions and to integrate the gender perspective into operations.

Experience to date has shown that having gender expertise, as well as having more female soldiers in theatre, improves our ability to conduct operations more effectively. For example, we have learned that female soldiers in Afghanistan are at times able to better connect with members of the population otherwise closed off from their male colleagues. This has led to greater awareness of the specific situation and area, and led to better dialogue and understanding between NATO forces and the local community. Our experience has also shown that training and education are strategic tools for security forces and for defence and security sector reform. If used correctly, they can be major force multipliers, as the attitudes of those trained can spread to walks of life beyond the security sphere.

As Council members are aware, the mandate of the ISAF mission was recently renewed, and the plans to hand over full security responsibility from ISAF forces to their Afghan counterparts are on course, as reaffirmed at the Chicago Summit. Throughout the transition process and beyond, we will continue to focus on gender-related training and to support the recruitment and retention of women in the security forces.

NATO works shoulder to shoulder with other international organizations maintaining international peace and security, and we seek to strengthen further our cooperation with the United Nations and others to

make sure we learn from each other's experiences and pave the way for greater efficiency and more results.

Since my appointment as the NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security, I have had the great pleasure of engaging in dialogue with women's associations in the security sector, women's rights activists, female parliamentarians and other representatives of civil society. I intend to deepen this dialogue.

NATO and its member States remain committed to upholding human rights and the rule of law. As we face up to the security challenges of the twenty-first century, we will continue to work with partners and other members of the international community to achieve better security and the greater empowerment of women.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Luxembourg.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you warmly, Sir, for having rescheduled the open debate originally scheduled by the Guatemalan presidency, and for giving us this opportunity to take stock of progress made and the challenges remaining in the advancement of women in the framework of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions. I would like to particularly welcome the focus in today's debate on the important role that women's civil society organizations play in the prevention of conflicts and their commitment to peacebuilding.

I also thank today's speakers for their enlightening briefings. While I fully align myself with the statement made by observer of the European Union, I would like to underline a few aspects that are of particular importance to us.

The latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2012/732) shows the headway we have made over the past two years. Let me mention the progress made in implementing the seven-point action plan on women's participation in peacebuilding, as well as the adoption of a strategic results framework on women and peace and security on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000).

There is a self-evident interconnection. There can be no prevention of conflict without the participation of women, and no participation without effective protection of the rights and the physical and moral integrity of women. It is therefore necessary to make

progress simultaneously on all these issues. It is also encouraging that a growing number of regional cooperation mechanisms and national action plans have been launched.

However, the overall result remains mixed. We can only share the Secretary-General's disappointment at the weak representation of women in peace talks, at the structural problems that limit women's participation in political life, and at the resurgence of violence against women. The figures concerning women's participation in politics in the broadest sense — of which conflict prevention and peacebuilding are but an extension — speak for themselves. Among the delegations involved in 14 peace processes in 2011, only four benefited from women's participation. During the same year, out of the nine peace accords that were signed, only two contained specific provisions on women and peace and security. The situation regarding political representation is no more encouraging. Women still represent only 20 per cent of members of Parliament, and only slightly more at the ministerial level. This is hardly sufficient.

The regions most affected by conflicts are, alas, often also the regions in which the social and political situation of women is the least advantageous. For this reason, we must lay stress not only on women's training for political participation, but also on improving material conditions so that women can participate in elections, as well as on protecting women during electoral processes, including before and after the elections.

In this context, since 2010 Luxembourg has supported an important programme set up by the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Through this programme, which is being implemented in close consultation with national authorities and women's civil society organizations, we are proud of having contributed to the significant increase of women's political representation in Timor-Leste following the parliamentary elections of July 2012. The mobilization of women has also been strengthened in Haiti through the organization of some 350 training workshops at the community level. In November 2011, we supported a regional workshop in Goma, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which allowed for an exchange of experiences among women's organizations in the Great Lakes region in the field of peace, security and the prevention of elections-related violence. This year, we are supporting the participation

of women in political life in the Republic of South Sudan through training and other capacity-building measures, which also benefit women's civil society organizations. Before the end of the year, again with the support of Luxembourg, a regional workshop will be held in Liberia in order to consolidate the achievements of the United Nations Mission in Liberia, to promote the role of women in peacebuilding in West Africa, and to strengthen women's regional peace and security networks.

"The future of men is women", wrote Louis Aragon. I leave the poet's assertion to listeners' interpretation. In any case, the conviction that women have a specific role to play in the future of a world liberated from the scourge of war is gaining ground. It is up to us to seize this chance by continuing to support women and women's civil society organizations in their actions for peace. The Security Council can count on Luxembourg to contribute to this collective endeavour.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Fernandes (Brazil): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this debate. It gives me great pleasure to see you, Sir, presiding over this meeting.

I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for his intervention. Brazil is grateful for the briefing provided by Ms. Michelle Bachelet and for the work that she has been doing as head of UN-Women. We also thank Under-Secretary-General Ladsous for his briefing and the representative of the non-governmental organization Femmes Africa Solidarité for her intervention.

Supporting and promoting women's participation in the maintenance of international peace and security is an increasingly important aspect of the Security Council's responsibility under the Charter. Since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), this body has contributed significantly to United Nations efforts to refine our collective understanding of the implications of armed conflict for women and, just as important, to support them as agents of peace. The establishment of UN-Women and the appointment of a Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict testify to the progress made.

There is, however, a long way to go before women are fully and duly integrated into national and multilateral peace efforts around the world. In various respects, such as the number of women representatives

and mediators; the number, substance and relative importance of provisions in peace agreements; and post-conflict strategies or policies, women's participation in peace and security processes is still insufficient.

We are therefore confronted with a real need for the United Nations, Governments and non-State actors to foster and support their involvement in the field of international peace and security. Among the several strategies that can be used to attain that goal, one of the most important is enhancing dialogue with women's groups in conflict and post-conflict situations. Frequent consultations with them, for example, can be an important vehicle to convey the specific concerns and needs of women to all stakeholders in peace efforts, including United Nations Special Representatives, mediators and special envoys.

Meaningful interaction with women's groups must also be an integral part of our peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities. Besides assisting missions in fulfilling their mandates, in particular regarding the protection of civilians, such groups can help ensure a sustained commitment to gender sensitivity. This is especially important when preparing mission drawdowns or transitions from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, as dialogue with women can stimulate national Governments and the United Nations family to streamline gender issues into their policies after missions leave the country.

Building capacity in the area of women and peace and security is also key. Late last year, Brazil signed a letter of intent with UN-Women, in order to deepen our cooperation regarding the training of peacekeepers on gender issues and the promotion of South-South cooperation on gender issues involving peacekeeping training centres in Latin America and Africa.

Women's economic empowerment in post-conflict situations is also vital to making them full partners in peace efforts and increasing their ability to contribute to the consolidation of peace. Responding to their needs in areas such as education, employment, land and property rights and health services will likely reduce the chances of relapse into conflict, for example, as women tend to be the first ones to appreciate tangible peace dividends in the daily lives of families and communities.

Although Brazil's reality differs greatly from that of post-conflict countries, some of our experiences may be useful for such societies. One interesting example is the Bolsa Familia, a conditional cash transfer

programme that has lifted millions of Brazilians out of poverty. Under the programme, women are the preferred recipients of transfers, and experience has shown that this practice increases their bargaining power within the family structure and communities.

It is also worth mentioning that, on the margins of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Brazil organized, in collaboration with UN-Women, the Women Leaders' Summit on the Future Women Want. The meeting highlighted the need to accelerate women's full participation in governance at all levels, including women's leadership in all decision-making processes. It also underlined the importance of ensuring the elimination of all discriminatory barriers preventing women from having equal access to, owning and managing productive resources and assets, and from contributing to and benefiting from the opportunities provided by the pursuit of sustainable development. Although this applies to all countries, we know that empowering women may be especially important in post-conflict situations, as it tends to enhance the chances of avoiding a relapse into conflict.

There is compelling evidence that women, when empowered, can have a significant positive impact on the lives of many people in their societies, particularly in countries emerging from conflict.

The Security Council is therefore called on to continue to make a significant contribution to ensure that such impact is fully felt in all pertinent situations on its agenda.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Spain.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): 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.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Chile.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile congratulates India on its presidency and thanks it for having convened this important open debate in the Security Council on women and peace and security.

My delegation thanks the Deputy Secretary-General for having introduced the report (S/2012/732), as well as the Executive Director of UN-Women Michelle Bachelet for her statement, and Mr. Hervé Ladsous and Ms. Bineta Diop.

The present debate is without a doubt an opportunity to strengthen action in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. This year's theme reflects the central role played by women's groups in the implementation of this agenda and the work they carry out in favour of peace and the empowerment of women.

Twelve years after the adoption of the historic resolution 1325 (2000), the Council has continued to make progress in providing guidance for the greater protection of women in armed conflict situations. Nevertheless, it can be seen that the situation of women in conflict and post-conflict situations has not improved. Likewise, many women's organizations around the world face particular risks and challenges, especially those in violent situations.

The international community bore witness to the case of Malala Yousafzai. In that regard, we view women human rights defenders are often targets of attack in conflict situations, which is greater protection and support are need for the participation of women and girls in peace processes and reconstruction.

The report of the Secretary-General presents the progress made since last year relating to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in four areas of action: prevention, participation, protection, and relief and recovery. It also covers the steps announced with a view to improving monitoring and evaluation systems aimed at fulfilling commitments relating to women and peace and security.

It should be underscored that in 2008 my country established a working group, composed of representatives of the Ministries for Foreign Affairs and of National Defence, the National Service for Women and civil society organizations, with the aim of developing a national action plan in keeping with the requirements of resolution 1325 (2000). In that regard, we have sought to create an action plan through an inclusive process of open and participatory discussions to faithfully represent the interests of our society.

The Chilean national action plan covers a range of actions aimed at promoting the inclusion of gender perspective in the understanding of and approach to conflict-prevention and post-conflict processes; respecting, guaranteeing and protecting the rights of women and girls; and generating conditions for the equitable participation of women in peace processes and decision-making with regard to international peace and security.

In our view, it is important to promote the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) through the exchange of experiences and international cooperation, both bilaterally and within the regional peacekeeping mechanisms in which Chile participates, in particular the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. We also believe it is important to join forces and pool resources to collect data and provide technical support so as to improve indicators for the adequate monitoring and evaluation of national action plans.

The universal promotion of fundamental human rights is one of the basic principles of Chile's foreign policy. In that regard, we will continue to join ongoing efforts to ensure women's participation in and contribution to conflict prevention and mediation.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Shin Dong Ik (Republic of Korea): This year marks the twelfth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. While the achievements of the past decade have been remarkable, there remain persistent gaps and challenges, including the low level of women's participation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding processes.

We are satisfied that the presidential statement adopted last year (S/PRST/2011/20) gave renewed attention to the issue of the participation and role of women in conflict prevention and mediation.

We also welcome the fact that this year's annual report of the Secretary-General (S/2012/732) provides us with valuable information on the issue and updates us on the progress in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

Against that backdrop, I would like to underscore the following four points with regard to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and women's participation in that regard.

First, my delegation welcomes the growing attention of United Nations human rights mechanisms on women, peace and security issues. We would like to encourage all Member States to cooperate closely with such mechanisms in order to ensure implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) at the national level. As the report of the Secretary-General rightly points out, consistency is crucial in ensuring robust progress on the women, peace and security agenda. We believe that the recommendations of United Nations human rights mechanisms, including treaty bodies and the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, serve as significant tools to ensure consistency in implementing resolution 1325 (2000).

Secondly, we need to pay more attention to the role and participation of women in post-conflict settings. It is regrettable that, of the nine peace agreements signed in 2011, only two contain specific provisions on women, peace and security. That means that we are missing invaluable opportunities to enhance women's political participation and empowerment in transition periods. My delegation notes that temporary special measures, including gender quotas in post-conflict elections, have proved effective in increasing women's representation in decision-making bodies. We believe that serious consideration should be given to such measures in other post-conflict situations.

Thirdly, my delegation would like to underline the crucial role played by women's civil society organizations in conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes. Their special expertise, skills and capacities have been critical to building confidence between parties and to integrating a gender perspective in transition structures. However, women's organizations still face a number of challenges, ranging from few opportunities to participate in formal conflict resolution or political dialogue, poor funding and cultural and social barriers to frequent security threats, which all prevent their long-term planning. In that regard, we welcome the fact that the report of the Secretary-General highlights the

importance of the financial sustainability of women's organization, as well as their sufficient representation in the formal peacebuilding discourse.

Fourthly, we should continue to strengthen efforts to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence. It is disturbing that there are continuing reports of rape and other forms of sexual violence not only in situations of armed conflict, but in the context of elections, political strife and civil unrest. We support the Secretary-General's recommendation in his report to ensure the gender-responsiveness of transitional justice mechanisms, including targeted outreach to victims, reparation programmes and explicit references to sexual violence, in the mandates of transitional justice actors.

We truly appreciate all the support shown for the Republic of Korea during our successful campaign for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for 2013-2014. As a staunch supporter of the Council's activities on women, peace and security and as current President of the Executive Board of UN-Women, the Republic of Korea will do its utmost while serving on the Council to address the most pressing issues on women, peace and security.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. Momen (Bangladesh): I thank Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri, Permanent Representative of India, and his country's presidency for organizing this open debate. I also thank the Deputy Secretary General, the Executive Director of UN-Women and the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations for their insightful presentations this morning.

I welcome the Secretary-General's most recent report on women and peace and security (S/2012/732). In the report, the Secretary-General calls for enhanced women's participation and a stronger commitment to addressing the challenges to women's engagement in the prevention and resolution of armed conflicts and in peacebuilding at all levels.

Twelve years ago, we adopted the landmark resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security in the Council. As a member of the Council at the time and one of its core sponsors, Bangladesh was closely associated with the adoption of that historic document. That was our humble contribution to ensuring the rights and role of women in peace and security. Thereafter, several resolutions, such as

resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009) and 1960 (2010) were adopted to strengthen the process initiated through resolution 1325 (2000).

There have been some developments in women, peace and security, such as the steps taken to implement the seven-point action plan on gender-responsive peacebuilding, the adoption of the United Nations strategic results framework on women and peace and security and the civilian capacity review. Prevention also gained an increased focus with the inclusion of the protection of civilians in the mandates of 8 out of 16 peacekeeping missions.

However, women and girls still suffer violations of international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law, including forced displacement, constraints on humanitarian access and sexual and gender-based violence. Therefore, much needs to be done.

The core message of resolution 1325 (2000) was to ensure women's equal participation at all decision-making levels. In the United Nations context, women's participation should be ensured through achieving a 50/50 gender balance, with a special emphasis on the recruitment of women at higher levels. In general, more female military and police personnel need to be deployed to United Nations peacekeeping operations. For an adequate global balance, women from the South should be considered with special preference for such leadership positions. For all gender-based violence, there should be a zero tolerance policy, and all incidents of such violence must be unequivocally condemned.

The participation of women in mediation and peacebuilding efforts needs to be enhanced. In 2011, out of 14 United Nations peace negotiations, only four included woman delegates. As agreements without gender-sensitive provisions can limit the opportunities for women to achieve basic security, as well as their political, economic and social empowerment, the gender dimension of mediation should be clearly and consistently articulated. It is also important to ensure measures to improve security for women in elections.

Poverty, the struggle and rivalry for resources, socioeconomic injustices and forced occupation lie at the heart of conflicts. They create a breeding ground for such social scourges as conflicts, including violence against women and girls, increase. The impact of that violence not only weakens the safety and security of women and girls but also tears the entire political,

economic and social fabric. Therefore, we need to prevent conflict and establish sustainable peace.

When we talk about the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), we see the presence of women's civil society organizations at the grass-roots level. They can help implement peace agreements, ensuring the protection of women's human rights defenders in conflict and post-conflict settings and integrating women's and girl's security into the priorities set during transitions, such as drawdowns of United Nations missions. We strongly believe that our debate and discussion should transcend boundaries and reach grass-roots women, who sometimes lack even the language to express their agony. That has to be done through people's empowerment — the empowerment of distressed people, particularly women at the grass-roots level.

In Bangladesh, from our experience of nation-building, we have embraced a perspective of women's empowerment and developed a model that our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina calls a "peace model". The central message conveyed in the model is the empowerment of people, including women and vulnerable groups, through a focus on seven interlinked issues. The model advocates empowering people by eliminating hunger and poverty, by providing them with skills, education and training, by including the excluded, by eliminating all forms of discrimination, by providing decent jobs, by guaranteeing participation in governance, and by ending terrorism. I am pleased to note here that at its sixty-sixth session the General Assembly adopted resolution 66/224, entitled, "People's empowerment and development", and we have proposed a follow-up draft resolution in the current session of the General Assembly. We seek Members' support for it.

Women occupy top political leadership positions in our country, from the Prime Minister to ministers of many important ministries. The Constitution of Bangladesh guarantees the equality of men and women, within the broad framework of non-discrimination on the grounds of religion, race or gender. The Government has adopted the National Policy for the Advancement of Women and the National Action Plan for the Advancement of Women. The Women's Development Implementation Committee, headed by the Minister of Women and Children Affairs — basically the Prime Minister — monitors the implementation of policies for women's empowerment. The result is highly positive. To cite just one example, the enrolment of girls in both

primary and secondary schools exceeds that of boys, helped by a waiver of tuition and the provision of stipends for girls in the secondary level.

The Government has enacted laws to protect women against domestic violence, and is currently implementing a number of innovative projects for developing women's capabilities. In order to involve women in decision-making processes, the Government has adopted a quota system for women in the national Parliament and in recruitment for our civil service jobs — alongside direct election and open competition. It also expanded effective gender-based budgeting in 20 of the country's ministries. It has been providing microfinancing, mostly to women, and has started providing small business enterprise loans to women-run small and medium-sized enterprises at preferential rates.

In the maintenance of international peace and security, we take pride in our modest contribution of troops and police to United Nations peacekeeping missions. We have made the necessary provisions to recruit women in the police and military. We are pleased that we could deploy two full contingents of all-female formed police units to the United Nations peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Haiti. We are committed to continuing our contribution of women to operations for the maintenance of peace and security. I am pleased to report that our all-male troop contingents are fully briefed on gender issues and we have zero tolerance for sexual misconduct.

In conclusion, I reiterate that we in Bangladesh have been making our best efforts to ensure women's empowerment and participation in all spheres of our lives. We know that much more needs to be done. We are willing to replicate in our national policy any good practices that we learn about from around the world, and we are similarly ready to share our experience with others.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Croatia.

Mr. Mikec (Croatia): We thank the Indian presidency for holding this debate on the specific role of women's civil society organizations in conflict prevention and conflict resolution and recovery — the first on this particular issue.

Croatia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union. I would like to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

The issue of the overall empowerment of women has a special place in both the internal and external policy of the Government of Croatia. We deem the role of women's civil society organizations to be an indispensable part of those policies. A perception of women as victims often obscures their significant role in conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding processes, as well as the significant role of women's civil society organizations worldwide. The implementation of our national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security is therefore one of our priorities.

With regard to enhancing the specific role of women's civil society organizations in situations of armed conflict and peacebuilding, I would like to underline that legislative, judicial and public awareness-raising measures are part of the synergy of the process. In our experience, one of the best ways to bring into focus the specific role of women in the area of peace and security is certainly by strengthening relevant legislative measures and institutional frameworks, particularly in the judiciary and education, together with gender mainstreaming efforts and gender training programmes within State administrative bodies.

However, the existence of laws does not guarantee their exercise in practice, in particular in traditionally conservative societies and cultures. Therefore, the closer cooperation of State bodies with broad layers of society and the more intensive involvement of men in all gender equality promotion activities remain essential. Finally, all such efforts can succeed only with the full and honest cooperation of Government bodies with women's civil society organizations, which is crucial to increasing and improving public awareness.

Moreover, empowered women's civil society organizations not only play an important external observer role in State measures, but also can direct State actions according to the real needs of women citizens. It is therefore essential to encourage and support Governments and civil society organizations to work jointly to create targeted campaigns, seminars, forums and workshops aimed at raising public awareness and knowledge of the importance of the greater participation of women in all activities and decision-making processes related to peace and security.

In our view, an indispensable part of the whole process is the development of focused and concrete regional cooperation. An example from our own region of South-East Europe is the Regional Women's Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice in Southeast Europe, established in 2006, which has grown into a respected, internationally recognized, strong lobby group for women. The Lobby is a real-life example of women contributing to their own empowerment and inclusion in peace and security matters and decision-making processes. It is fully supported by Croatia's and other States' highest officials.

The honest commitment of Governments to women's civil society organizations is essential, particularly in the context of armed conflict, post-conflict situations, transition periods and the withdrawal of United Nations missions. There must be a commitment to giving proper attention to gender equality issues, with appropriate levels of security and protection and sufficient funding. All such measures involving coordinated efforts of State bodies and women's civil society organizations should also contribute to a safer environment for women's human rights defenders and activists.

Our common efforts in enabling women and women's civil society organizations to participate in all activities of conflict prevention, peace processes and rebuilding societies is of the utmost importance, as their role is vital in fostering sustainable peace and stability. Croatia has stood and stands ready to engage actively with relevant women's civil society organizations and their respective Governments to share with them our positive experiences and practices in conflict, post-conflict and transition, in support of our joint efforts.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Slovenia.

Mr. Marn (Slovenia): I would like to thank India for organizing today's important discussion and to express special thanks to Ms. Bineta Diop for her insightful briefing.

Slovenia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union and welcomes the adoption of the presidential statement (S/PRST/2012/23) on 31 October. Slovenia views issues related to the promotion of the rights of women as one of the key priorities in the field of human rights.

We welcome this year's focus on the role of women's civil society organizations in contributing to the prevention and resolution of armed conflict and to

peacebuilding. We consider the role of women's civil society organizations important in ensuring that the needs and rights not just of women as citizens, but also of members of all vulnerable groups, are taken into account, since women are usually represented among caregivers to the most vulnerable members of their families, communities and societies.

I would like to also welcome the Secretary-General's annual report on women and peace and security (S/2012/732) and to express my country's support for the recommendations contained therein on more solid progress throughout the women and peace and security agenda.

We fully support the need to ensure consistency in the implementation of international norms and standards on the human rights of women and girls and in efforts to prevent and resolve conflict and build peace. We commend the increased number of explicit references to women, peace and security in commitments made with respect to actions of the Security Council, including specific instructions included in mission mandates on promoting women's rights, their protection and empowerment and support for the development of civil society. We therefore encourage the Council to consistently continue that practice in order to ensure that all country-specific and thematic decisions in terms of the establishment or renewal of mission mandates include such provisions.

Let me highlight the importance of addressing the challenges to women's and girls' participation and representation. We welcome the increased number of women on the roster of mediation experts and among the Secretary-General's Special Representatives and Deputy Representatives. We consider that in some situations, women mediators or representatives facilitate interactions with local women and civil society organizations. We also consider that investing in education for girls is of key importance to assure them the prominent role they deserve in their communities and societies in the future.

There are many persistent obstacles to women's participation and representation in public decision-making processes. An important one is the lack of security. Sexual violence and other forms of gender-based violence, as well as a lack of accountability and, consequently, impunity for such acts impede women from actively engaging in public life and decision-making. It is therefore important to

ensure gender-responsiveness in transitional justice mechanisms.

In conclusion, allow me please to shortly brief the Council on the implementation of Slovenia's national action plan to implement the resolutions on women and peace and security adopted two years ago. Slovenia is preparing its first report in accordance with the action plan to review the progress on implementation since its adoption. We have continued to contribute to the implementation of resolutions on women and peace and security in international and regional organizations at various levels. During the period under consideration, Slovenia actively contributed to promoting the implementation of the resolutions in the Western Balkans by contributing to the development of some of the national action plans in the region.

As the promotion of gender equality and women's rights in conflict and post-conflict situations has also been high on Slovenia's foreign policy agenda, we have strengthened efforts to promote women's rights in general and in specific country situations, especially in the framework of the United Nations Human Rights Council and its various mechanisms, including the universal periodic review.

The promotion and protection of the rights of women and girls was raised also by Slovene high-level representatives in various international forums. Slovenia has made progress in training civilian and military personnel to be deployed to international operations and missions on issues regarding women, peace and security. In the past two years, the participation of policewomen in training programmes of international missions increased immensely.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden.

Ms. Burgstaller (Sweden): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Nordic countries, namely, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

I would like to begin by thanking the Indian presidency for organizing this debate. I also thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General Michelle Bachelet and Under-Secretary-General Hervé Ladsous for their valuable remarks at the beginning of this meeting. I also wish to express special thanks for the valuable insights of Ms. Bineta Diop on behalf of civil society.

The full implementation of all Security Council resolutions on women and peace and security is a priority for the Nordic countries. The issues at stake are central to the core mandate of the Security Council, namely, the maintenance of peace and security.

We welcome the presidential statement adopted by the Council on 31 October (S/PRST/2012/23). We are also grateful for the report of the Secretary-General (S/2012/732) and fully support its recommendations.

The Nordic countries echo the concern about the lack of implementation, as shown by the information collected and analyzed while using the indicators. We call for renewed urgency and greater consistency in implementing the resolutions on women and peace and security, all of which were unanimously adopted and are thus binding and relevant to all Member States.

Not providing protection for women in conflict constitutes serious neglect; not tapping the resources of women in building peace is seriously wasteful.

The Nordic countries support civil society, in particular women's organizations that tirelessly work to prevent and solve conflicts, build peace and stability and defend human rights, while often putting themselves at great personal risk in difficult conditions. Their work contributes to more sustainable and legitimate peace. They deserve our full political and financial support, as well as physical protection.

The Nordic countries work with numerous civil society organizations from many different countries and we plan to do so in the future. The implementation and review of our own national action plans has greatly benefitted from our close cooperation with civil society. This year, through a series of meetings with women's rights advocates from several countries on the Council's agenda, the Security Council has had an opportunity, before renewing mission mandates, to hear directly from women who are working for peace and security in their respective countries. We are encouraged by the steps taken by the Council in its country-specific work to address the concerns brought forward by those women advocates.

The incorporation of a gender perspective in peace and security efforts is not only necessary, but effective and strategically opportune. Not only women, but whole families and communities will benefit; as will national institutions, the overall security situation and the rule of law, which is strengthened through,

for example, measures to address impunity for human rights violations, including sexual violence.

Women and men must have full and equal opportunity to participate in all political processes linked to conflict resolution and the promotion of stability, peace and security. That includes conflict prevention, mediation processes at all levels, including contact groups and informal consultations, as well as formal negotiation, peace-agreement implementation mechanisms and donor conferences. It is of particular importance to support women's full and effective participation in post-conflict constitutional and electoral processes, including through special measures and security arrangements. Special attention should also be paid during times of mission drawdown.

That of course requires everyone to do their part. As committed Member States, we commit to supporting women's active participation and to fostering a gender perspective in all our peace and security efforts. That includes promoting women's inclusion in peace processes and ensuring that personnel and troops are adequately trained to take women's rights and perspectives fully into account.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/66/811) on strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution and its annex I, entitled "Guidance for Effective Mediation". Both the report and the Guidance highlight the importance of the role of women. We call on the Secretary-General to nominate women as chief mediators and special envoys and as members of mediation teams.

Let me finish by commending UN-Women for its crucial work in leading and coordinating the United Nations system work on women and peace and security. We commend the work of the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Margot Wallström. We also welcome the appointment of her successor, Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, and look forward to working closely with her, as well as with the United Nations Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict.

In conclusion, 12 years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), we, the Nordic countries, renew our commitment to the equal right of women to determine the peaceful future of their societies. We recognize that full and effective participation of women and men alike enhances the legitimacy of peace

processes, as well as the prospect for a durable and lasting peace. We have a collective responsibility to translate that awareness into further actions.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand.

Mr. McLay (New Zealand): New Zealand appreciates the opportunity to mark the twelfth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) and thanks both last month's President, Guatemala, and now India for organizing this very important debate.

It is appropriate that this particular debate should focus on the role of women's civil society organizations. Resolution 1325 (2000) was neither created in a vacuum, nor did it result from the foresight of Member States. Rather, it was women's civil society organizations that were particularly instrumental in the initial passage of resolution 1325 (2000), as the culmination of many years of active campaigning, and they continue to play a key role in ensuring the inclusion of gender perspectives in all United Nations debates on peace and security issues.

We particularly note the important role played by women's organizations in our own region. They were vital components of peace processes in Bougainville in Papua New Guinea and in the Solomon Islands. And we anticipate that Papua New Guinea will speak on that in some detail shortly. As Luxembourg highlighted in its statement to the Council, that was also the case in Timor-Leste. Again in our own region, in September of this year, we were very pleased to see the launch of the first Pacific Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, on which occasion Prime Minister Puna of the Cook Islands underscored the contribution that Pacific women's civil society organizations had made to the development of that Plan. We repeat that sentiment in this forum today. Indeed, we emphasize the need to mainstream gender perspectives across all issues in the peace and security agenda.

We also welcome the Secretary-General's report on women and peace and security (S/2012/732) and draw attention to several points. First, in planning for the transition phase in peacekeeping missions, we must ensure that we do not lose gender expertise and the United Nations-led advances for women, peace and security. It is critically important that the full women, peace and security agenda be considered as part of the planning for drawdown and handover, as has just been highlighted by the representative of Sweden in her statement.

Secondly, we must continue to push for an enhanced role for women in political-level peace discussions, both as mediators — again as highlighted by the representative of Sweden — and as principal political actors. That can be best achieved through the increased political representation of women in both elected and appointed posts, a point that was highlighted by Croatia among others.

We are pleased at the growing acknowledgement of the need to address the negative impact of armed violence on women and the need to integrate gender perspectives into disarmament policy and practice, particularly with regard to small arms and light weapons. For most of us, those arms are indeed the real weapons of mass destruction, killing over half a million people each and every year.

In that regard, we particularly commend the leadership of Trinidad and Tobago in bringing to the United Nations the issues of women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, and we are very pleased that this year's First Committee draft resolution (A/C.1/67/L.35/Rev.1) was adopted by consensus. We hope we can make further progress, drawing on the positive outcomes from this year's United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. New Zealand particularly highlights the importance of further research and analysis to improve our understanding of the role that women can and must play in that area.

At a time when many national action plans are up for review, New Zealand is very pleased to acknowledge that, as we continue to develop our own plan, we are learning much from the experience of many others. Overall, however, we must all continue to push ahead with the women, peace and security agenda through ongoing and enhanced collaboration among Member States, international, regional and subregional organizations and civil society. New Zealand will certainly play its part in that important endeavour.

The President: I now call on the representative of Lithuania.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): Let me begin by thanking India for convening this open debate on women and peace and security. Lithuania aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. My delegation appreciates the analysis and recommendations of the

Secretary-General contained in document S/2012/732, which notes the significant progress achieved at the normative level. We believe that the focus should now be on implementation, which must be consistent, coherent and comprehensive. Continuous engagement by the Security Council on the subject is required, because mainstreaming gender perspectives into conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation remains an unfinished business.

In that ongoing endeavour, civil society organizations have an important role to play in monitoring implementation, holding international and national leaders to account, providing ideas and feedback on what works and how it works best and giving a voice to the most vulnerable groups. Furthermore, as some countries are renewing their national action plans, civil society organizations can provide useful inputs on the best practices and lessons learned, which would be helpful in further improving those plans.

Lithuania adopted its national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in December 2011. One of the first things we did in drafting the plan was to turn to women's non-governmental organizations for their input. Their insights and practical experience helped make our plan more focused, measurable and results-oriented. Lithuania will continue working with women's organizations, including in developing gender awareness and gender adviser training programmes intended for our future peacekeeping and civilian police mission participants.

As a member of the Group of Friends of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and the Group of Friends of Mediation, Lithuania concurs with the Secretary-General that the gender dimension of mediation must be clearly and consistently articulated. Women must be part of the process, as mediators and peace negotiators, as that makes it possible to take into account their needs for political, economic and social empowerment. Special envoys, United Nations mediators, peacekeeping operations, political missions and peacebuilding support offices should regularly consult with women's organizations on the ground and maintain their efforts aimed at facilitating and supporting women's equal participation as active agents of change with full involvement in peace negotiations, post-conflict reconstruction, electoral processes and recovery. We call on the Security Council to make sure that all peacekeeping missions' mandates have an integrated gender perspective.

An important factor affecting women's greater participation in conflict resolution and post-conflict recovery is their safety and security. Sadly, women and girl activists and women's rights defenders are often subject to intimidation and violent attacks, including sexual violence. We must step up our efforts to provide protection for women human rights defenders and must tackle impunity with due severity and determination.

Creating an enabling environment for women's equal participation also requires a change in mentality and efforts to overcome existing gender stereotypes and prejudices. That, in turn, demands consistent efforts to involve male local activists, traditional leaders and, more generally, the male half of the communities concerned, including boys.

Furthermore, it is of the utmost importance that sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations staff and related personnel should be fully eliminated. Such cases constitute a double breach of women's rights and dignity, by both local militants and warlords and by those who are supposed to protect them on the ground. We fully support the Secretary-General in his call to enforce a zero-tolerance policy vis-à-vis sexual exploitation.

My delegation would like to stress the importance of further efforts in raising awareness of, and ensuring consistent adherence to, the implementation of necessary measures in the codes of conduct of States' armed forces. Sharing best practices and encouraging the integration of measures for the protection of women in armed conflicts into operational documents should be a part of our efforts.

Finally, let me also note that my delegation supports the Secretary-General on the need to look into the gender aspect of armed violence fuelled by the availability, limited control and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. In that regard, my country looks forward to the upcoming final conference on the arms trade treaty in March 2013 and strongly supports calls for including a gender perspective in the future treaty, including in connection with the need to retain the obligation on exporting States to avoid arms being used to commit or facilitate gender-based violence or violence against children.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Latvia.

Ms. Freimane-Deksne (Latvia): Latvia aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the

European Union and would like to make a few remarks in our national capacity.

I thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2012/732) and Ms. Bachelet, Mr. Ladsous and Ms. Diop for their statements.

The topic of today's debate is of particular importance. The sustainable political, social and economic development of a country is possible only with a strong civil society that is involved in all stages of decision-making, including in conflict prevention and resolution and peacebuilding. Women's civil society organizations play a particular role in that regard by voicing women's rights and concerns early on, laying the foundations for non-discriminatory and inclusive decision-making processes and, most importantly, contributing to overall international peace and security.

In order to increase the representation of women's civil society leaders in peace processes and post-conflict peace consolidation, formal arrangements — such as on the security of women human rights defenders, security prior to and during elections and childcare arrangements — and capacity-building in leadership, conflict analysis and negotiation skills should be provided. Capacity development for women's leaders and organizations during and after conflict is crucial for women's further effective participation in the political and economic life of a country.

Latvia participates in capacity-building in several conflict situations and post-conflict countries. Women's leadership, participation and economic empowerment are among the main priorities of our capacity-building initiatives. Latvia has shared its experience and implemented projects in Afghanistan, Iraq and other countries. In all those initiatives, the Latvian Government has closely cooperated with women's civil society organizations, and activities in that regard continue. Women's non-governmental organizations in Latvia are also implementing their own capacity-building projects, for example by facilitating the establishment of women's resource centres in Central Asia, sharing expertise in the prevention of human trafficking and providing assistance to victims in Iraq.

Latvia believes that women's political leadership and economic empowerment are key to ensuring women's participation in the prevention of conflict, conflict resolution and long-term recovery efforts. They are also part of UN-Women's main thematic priorities and, as a member of the UN-Women Executive Board

beginning in January 2013, Latvia will contribute to their implementation. To reaffirm Latvia's commitment to promoting the empowerment of women at both the national and international levels, Latvia expressed its intent to join the Equal Futures Partnership at the launch event hosted by Secretary of State Clinton on 24 September, as well as to announce new commitments in that regard in the spring of 2013.

We fully agree with the statement made by Ms. Bachelet in the Security Council in April (see S/PV.6759) that we should build on women's role as agents of conflict resolution and sustained recovery, without focusing exclusively on the way conflict victimizes women. The role of women is important in the whole crisis cycle, from the prevention and resolution of conflict to peacebuilding, post-conflict reconciliation and reintegration. Women leaders and women's organizations can provide important input in decreasing the challenges facing women in conflict zones and can function as early-warning mechanisms to prevent backsliding on women's rights and to sustain progress in women's protection.

The international community's involvement in scaling up women's community initiatives and improving their access to national and international dialogue and mediation processes is of particular relevance. The Security Council recognized as much in its presidential statement on this topic last year (S/PRST/2011/20). Women civil society representatives should be systematically invited to participate in international dialogues, contact groups, international engagement events and donor conferences, as well as regularly consulted on conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts. The Security Council should provide regular and even responses to women's peace and security concerns by, inter alia, inserting specific instructions for women's engagement in the establishment and renewal of mandates, ensuring regular reporting on women's human rights violations by United Nations peacekeeping and special political missions and continuing to use Arria Formula meetings and other formats to facilitate open dialogue with women's civil society representatives.

Moreover, the United Nations itself should live up to its own standards by ensuring women's adequate representation in peacekeeping operations at different levels and by improving training on gender-specific issues for military and police in peacekeeping missions. The United Nations gender expertise

is crucial for capacity-building and for increased engagement of women's civil society representatives in peace-making and peacebuilding processes, as demonstrated by recent examples in South Sudan, Somalia and Yemen. In that regard, Latvia welcomes the formalization of the gender expert position in the Mediation Support Standby Team and the inclusion of gender advisers in all multidimensional peacekeeping operations and political missions. We look forward to the results of the review on how gender expertise is structured and deployed within the United Nations system.

In conclusion, let me reiterate Latvia's commitment to the promotion of gender equality and the participation of women and their civil society organizations at all levels and in different contexts of decision-making. We encourage further coordinated work by United Nations institutions and Member States in effectively implementing resolution 1325 (2000).

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Yamazaki (Japan): I thank the Deputy Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN-Women and the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations for their informative briefings. We also thank the representative from civil society and welcome her participation here today.

Japan welcomes the report of the Secretary-General (S/2012/732), which demonstrates the clear commitment of the Secretary-General to the issue being discussed today. We are very much aware that the Secretary-General announced "Working with and for women and young people" as one of the five priority agenda items for his second term.

We are very encouraged that, under the strong leadership of Ms. Bachelet, UN-Women has been resolutely promoting the agenda of women and peace and security as one of its priorities. It is with great satisfaction that we note that, during her recent visit to Japan, Ms. Bachelet had an opportunity to meet and exchange views with members of Japanese civil society, political leaders, including the Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and Minister for Gender Issues, and leaders of the private sector, the press and youth groups.

The security of women and girls is an indicator of peace and stability. In that regard, we note that the Secretary-General's report refers to the fact that Afghan women's groups have voiced concerns over

the potential for a peace deal to be made at the cost of women's hard-fought rights. On that point, we would like to mention that, in July, Japan hosted the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan, which reaffirmed and further consolidated the international community's partnership with the Afghan Government in the Partnership for Self-Reliance in Afghanistan from Transition to the Transformation Decade (2015-2024). Thirty Afghans from civil society, half of whom were women, were invited to the Conference. It should be noted that, the Tokyo declaration which resulted from the Conference, stressed the importance of the participation of civil society organizations and women's groups in support of the peace process and the culture of peace and human rights in Afghan society, in particular in the light of resolution 1325 (2000).

Relief and recovery initiatives for women in conflict or post-conflict situations are also key when conflict prevention efforts unfortunately fail. As an example, in close collaboration and consultation with a wide range of women's civil society organizations in the Sudan, Japan supported finding employment for women in poverty, including widows, women in rural places and women with disabilities.

As to refugees and persons displaced as a result of conflicts, Japan supported the efforts to prevent sexual violence in Ivorian refugee camps located in Liberia by providing lighting and electricity in common areas of the camps, as well as vocational training that included awareness-raising activities. That effort also included our support to establish a relief and recovery system, including legal support and mental care to victims of sexual violence. In the Republic of Uganda, Japan implemented awareness-raising activities for sexual violence prevention in communities of refugees from neighbouring countries, and over 10,000 people participated.

As we move towards the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of the resolution, Japan, for its part, will continue to exert its utmost efforts towards the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in cooperation with our partners, and in particular with women's civil society organizations.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Adi (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me, first of all, to thank Ms. Michelle Bachelet for presenting the report of the Secretary-General on

women and peace and security (S/2012/732). We would like to tell her how much we appreciate her work since she assumed her post.

The Syrian Arab Republic has sought to develop in a qualitative fashion the lives of women, as well as to advance their status, based on international commitments and in line with the principles of our national Constitution. In so doing, we confirm the implementation of our commitment. In that regard, pursuant to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Syrian Arab Republic has presented its second and third periodic reports on its implementation of the provisions of the Convention.

Unfortunately, in the wake of the events taking place in my country today, armed terrorist groups supported, financed and armed by regional and international Arab sides, are seeking to push my country backwards and negate the social progress that Syria had achieved in terms of gender equality. Individuals or elements in those armed groups — be they Takfirist, Wahabists or Salafists — are seeking to sow psychological panic within society by turning back time to the Dark Ages, particularly with regard to the role of women in Syrian society. As a result, working women now are fearful in going to work, and girls are afraid to go to school or university.

The armed groups are continuing to violate women's rights in Syria and are hampering the evacuation of injured and sick people, including women, children and disabled persons, to areas where refuge is being offered, as was the case in the city of Homs, where representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross were present. Furthermore, those armed groups have committed numerous types of sexual violence, targeting women and girls. All such incidents have been documented and reported to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

We also deplore the fact that some people are exploiting the difficult situation that Syrian female refugees are finding themselves in in camps in neighbouring countries — marrying Syrian women under the pretext that they are going to help them escape their difficult situation through what has come to be crudely called sexual jihad. That is in addition to the sexual violence and abuse that have been perpetrated against those women, in violation of all international human rights agreements.

Despite all of that, Syria is continuing to deal with the challenges it faces as it seeks, specifically, to liberate the occupied Syrian territories in the Golan Heights by promoting efforts to reach a just and comprehensive peace based on the resolutions of international legitimacy in order to bring an end to the suffering of civilian Syrians resulting from Israeli occupation, in particular, Syrian women. In that regard, my delegation reiterates its call to the Secretary-General to include in his reports references to the challenges, harrowing reality and types of violence that Arab women are having to face in occupied Palestine and in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights.

Syrian women in occupied Golan have not been spared repeated detention. Since the Israeli occupation in 1967, nearly 2,500 Syrian citizens have been detained in Israeli prisons, including women and children. Women who live in the occupied Golan region do not have the right to return to their country of origin; even those who are sick and require humanitarian or emergency attention are not allowed to cross the border except with a permit.

We hope that Ms. Bachelet and UN-Women will undertake to provide the necessary assistance to Syrians to achieve gender equality and to empower women to help find an end to the bloodshed by cooperating with the Syrian Government, first and foremost, and by continuing to exert pressure on external parties in order to prevent them from spreading bloodshed and conflict within the country and getting them to put an end to their terroristic interference and their violations of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. We would also call on them to play an active role in terms of protecting the rights of Syrian women and advancing their status in the Israeli-occupied Syrian Golan.

Finally, we would call particular attention to the threats stemming from the unilateral economic measures that have been imposed against my country by international entities in violation of international legitimacy, which are negating its economic and social development and hampering the active exercise by the Syrian people of their full rights, especially their right to development.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands.

Mr. Schaper (Netherlands): My delegation welcomes this debate, and would like to make

a few remarks in addition to the statements by the observer of the European Union and others underlining the importance of women's civil society organizations in contributing to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

The Netherlands has placed gender equality at the heart of its policies for decades. On the international level, we support female leadership, the follow-up to resolution 1325 (2000), women's economic empowerment and the elimination of violence against women.

In December 2011, the Netherlands launched its second 1325 national action plan, covering the period 2012-2015. As we see it, the plan is unique of its kind, since it is based on and encompasses close cooperation between Government, civil society and research institutions. It brings together Dutch Government ministries and research institutions and 32 civil society organizations, including multinational non-governmental organizations (NGOs), women's peace movements and diaspora organizations. Our national action plan is based on many different sources of knowledge and experience and is designed to be both ambitious and feasible. It has a thematic and a geographical focus. Thematically, it is fully dedicated to enhancing female leadership and political leverage in conflict-affected societies. Geographically, it focuses on six countries — Afghanistan, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, the Sudan and Colombia — as well as on the Middle East and North Africa region.

As a result of that approach, the Dutch national action plan includes many joint activities that benefit from the complementarity between Government bodies and civil society in the Netherlands and their partner organizations in the focus countries. I would like to mention a few examples in that regard.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Netherlands will support the national women's fund in promoting Congolese women's participation in the coming elections. We will also support women in the eastern part of the country who can play a mediation role in the conflict that is still raging in the Kivus. Similarly, in Burundi as well as in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, the signatories to the Dutch national action plan will support a regional organization programme that will cooperate with local women's and media organizations to increase public support for women's political participation and to

strengthen the capacity of women's organizations to campaign, including by using media technologies.

In Afghanistan, a group of signatories is working with a local telephone and Internet provider to start a programme connecting poor rural women and men with more modern youth in the main towns via an SMS platform, using SMS-based blogging. The objective is to keep the rural poor better informed on national women's issues and to foster dialogue between rural poor and urban youth. In Libya, we support a capacity-building programme to enable women to make a meaningful contribution to the development of the new constitution.

The Dutch Government also attaches a high priority to the financial implementation of its second national action plan. An amount of €2 million is available annually for the period 2012-2015 for programmes in the six partner countries, with the same amount reserved for the Middle East and North Africa regions. Last year, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs established the Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women fund (FLOW), the largest women's fund in the world. Between 2012 and 2015 FLOW will invest €78 million in women's organizations, many of them in conflict-affected areas. Finally, a new fund is being established with the Dutch NGO HIVOS and the accounting firm of PriceWaterhouseCoopers to strengthen the financial and organizational management of women's organizations in the Middle East and North Africa regions. In that way, we hope to be able to share and support the commitments made during the Equal Futures Partnership event hosted by United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton last month.

In conclusion, the potential role of women's organizations in any social or political transformation is huge. Women can and should play a pivotal role in their societies, and they deserve our support in helping them to take the lead more effectively. Transition processes like the ones in the North Africa region are an opportunity for women to translate their influence into formal roles. The same is true for women and their organizations working in fragile countries. Women across the world involved in peacebuilding, reconciliation and democratization will continue to find the Netherlands at their side.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland.

Ms. Anderson (Ireland): I would like to thank the delegations of Guatemala and India for preparing and scheduling today's important debate. To respect the time constraints, I will touch on just a couple of points, and circulate a slightly longer written text.

The first point relates to transitions. The Secretary-General's report of 2 October bluntly states that "considerable obstacles persist to women's participation and representation in public decision-making in relation to peace and transition processes" (S/2012/732, para. 65). Times of transition are absolutely critical; as a society is being reshaped, opportunities can be either seized or squandered. If such periods of transition are used to comprehensively strengthen women's political and economic participation, the foundations will be laid for more just, more stable and more prosperous societies. The prospect of critical transitional opportunities being squandered should concern us all deeply. And the risks are clearly and visibly there. Although we are witnessing parts of the world, especially the Arab world, undergoing social and political tumult and transformation, when the smoke clears there tends to be one striking constant: women still struggling to secure a place at the table. It would seem that there is a deep-seated reluctance, even more ingrained than fear of authoritarian rulers, to let women play their rightful role in charting the way forward.

The empowerment agenda is not an outsider's agenda; it is one that is arising organically from within those societies. Women, either individually or in civil society organizations, have demonstrated, often at great personal cost, their hunger and passion for change. And we know that change is both necessary and possible. The Secretary-General points out in his report that a combination of strong gender analysis, active efforts by his Special Adviser on Yemen and close engagement with women leaders and groups resulted in the inclusion of gender-specific commitments in the Yemen Transition Agreement.

In its recent statements on women and peace and security, the Security Council has recognized the primary role and responsibility of national Governments. That is indeed true, and we all recognize the importance of national ownership. But national ownership can never become a rationale or alibi for inaction by the rest of us. For example, Member States taking an active role in supporting the Syrian opposition coalition that is trying to organize itself have themselves a responsibility to

seek to ensure the adequate representation of women in that opposition.

It may be objected that in the immediacy of a crisis there are other priorities requiring more urgent attention. But there is a clear message in the Secretary-General's report, that is, if a proper role for women is not built in at the key moment, it will become much harder to graft it on later. Women's role and concerns are time and again pushed down the priority list; they become in effect preamble or postscript issues, instead of getting the front-and-centre treatment they need.

To make just a quick point in relation to civil society, the Secretary-General's report makes specific mention of one model for civil society engagement, namely, the election "situation room". It was my privilege recently to co-host at the Irish Mission a panel discussion on the contribution made by the women's situation room to ensuring peace and stability during the Senegalese presidential elections held earlier this year. Ms. Bineta Diop, who addressed the Security Council this morning, was our main speaker. It was immensely encouraging to hear about this participative, bottom-up initiative. In the dynamism and proactive participation of civil society at the grassroots level, empowering and building on the capacities and real-life experiences of local women, the women's situation room is a model to be emulated and replicated widely.

The challenge is to document and disseminate such initiatives in different countries so as to transform single experiences into mainstream policy. The strength of civil society initiatives often lies in their spontaneity and local buy-in; the weaknesses can be in ensuring structure, durability and transferability. The Senegalese experiment was a particularly successful one, and it is encouraging that UN-Women and the United Nations Development Programme are working to ensure that it is properly recorded and adapted for use in other situations.

It is evident from the Secretary-General's report that there is a substantial and expanding conceptual infrastructure dedicated to women and peace and security issues. As in so many other areas of United Nations work, the challenge is implementation, implementation, implementation. We need to ensure that fine words in New York translate into measurable and meaningful results on the ground. These regular Security Council debates are worthwhile insofar as they allow us to make that connection.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Fiji.

Mr. Thomson (Fiji): Allow me at the outset to thank you, Sir, for having convened this important debate, which provides an opportunity for all Members to contribute to the discussion on the global women and peace and security agenda.

Fiji recognizes the importance of resolution 1325 (2000) and acknowledges the progress that has been made globally towards achieving its objectives. We appreciate the specific actions taken in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), as identified in the Secretary-General's report (S/2012/732), and we thank the Secretary-General for his report. We also appreciate the increased coordination and coherence in policy and programming in the area of women and peace and security through the work of UN-Women, and particularly in the Pacific region through a strengthened UN-Women's office in Fiji.

We recognize, however, that national implementation will remain the key to meeting the objectives of the resolution. In that respect, Fiji is working within the framework of its Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development to create enabling environments for women in both the public and the private domains. Recognizing the importance of women in public leadership positions, the Fiji Government has a target of achieving at least 30 per cent representation of women in all Government-appointed boards and committees. Meanwhile, Fijian authorities continue to implement and raise awareness of the Crimes Decree (2009) and the Domestic Violence Decree (2010), which contain provisions, inter alia, on sexual violence and trafficking.

Since our open debate in the Security Council on this subject last year (S/PV.6642), the Pacific region has taken the lead in developing and launching a regional action plan on women, peace and security. The plan will support national efforts to ensure that women are included as active participants at all stages of conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding. It is a landmark achievement for our region, and I would like to acknowledge the collaborative efforts of various United Nations agencies with regional intergovernmental organizations and with the Fiji-based civil society organization FemLINKPACIFIC, which allowed the plan to be articulated at the regional level.

In considering the crucial role of women as agents of positive change in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, Fiji has made a concerted effort to increase the number of well-qualified female peacekeepers that it sends to United Nations peacekeeping missions across the world. In its most recent nominations of police personnel for rotation in the United Nations Mission in Liberia and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, 55 per cent of police personnel nominated for deployment by Fiji were women. Bearing in mind in particular the growing role of peacekeeping missions in supporting the capacity of local authorities, Fiji will continue to send its best qualified people to mentor and train local counterparts, in particular in dealing with sexual violence and encouraging women's participation in helping to build post-conflict societies.

A discussion of women, peace and security is incomplete without factoring in the security challenges posed by the consequences of climate change. This is so because for exposed countries like Fiji, women and children are among the most affected by natural disasters. The realities of climate change and the consequent proliferation of natural disasters are inescapable challenges for our people and for our land. Adverse impacts on food security and access to arable land, as well as the destabilization of communities, disproportionately affect women. Women must therefore be part of the policy formation dialogue at the community and national levels with regard to responses to climate change.

We also recognize that women play a leading role in the rebuilding of communities after natural disasters. We therefore appreciate the theme of this year's International Day for Disaster Reduction that women and girls are the "Visible force of resilience".

Finally, we acknowledge that much progress has been made, but it is self-evident that the international community still has a long way to go to ensure that the dignity, peace and security of women worldwide are realized.

Mr. Rakhmetullin (Kazakhstan): I thank you, Sir, for having convened this open debate on women and peace and security, which enables the Security Council to focus on the paramount role of women and their civil society organizations in contributing to the prevention and resolution of armed conflicts, as well as to peacebuilding. Today's deliberations provide a

valuable opportunity to assess the extent of the real, positive and lasting change that we can make in the lives of women affected by armed conflicts.

Promoting the rights of women is at the core of the human rights policy of my country, and Kazakhstan, as a member of the Executive Board of UN-Women, wholeheartedly supports the multilateral effort in that direction. At the same time, we need to assess and overcome the factors facing women's organizations, such as the lack of security, resources and access to information, to ensure their effective involvement in the peace and security agenda. Those and many other obstacles can be overcome by including women's groups in strategies for the prevention, resolution and recovery from conflict. It is therefore critical to strengthen women's interventions not just at the international but also the national and regional levels.

We believe that the fourth ministerial meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, to be held in Jakarta this December, will reaffirm such a strong commitment to implementing resolution 1325 (2000) as an integral part of the development agenda. My delegation also appreciates the efforts made by the United Nations system to strengthen mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on regional initiatives. We propose encouraging Member States to report on their commitments and actions plans related to women and peace and security.

My country is of the conviction that gender mainstreaming is an absolute necessity and a prerequisite for ensuring a place for women on the peace and security agenda. Gender mainstreaming should be an inalienable component of peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and not an add-on or secondary concern. We have seen a positive trend of women themselves being the driving force for bringing the gender perspective to conflict and post-conflict situations. In this regard, Kazakhstan welcomes the increasing number of national action plans that are being designed and implemented worldwide, as well as the broad inclusion of indicators to assess women's participation in peacekeeping and peacebuilding in these national plans.

It is noteworthy that half of the field missions managed by the Department of Political Affairs have gender advisers. We fully support the process of including women's participation in field missions to ensure that programmes focus on the specific needs of

girls and women as a means to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women.

As we assess progress, there is also an acknowledgement of the reality that much more needs to be done so that resolution 1325 (2000) is no longer merely a statement of aspirations, with little action to record since 2000. We have to be conscious of the voices of women around the world who feel unrepresented in international and regional peace processes.

In designing peacebuilding strategies, we need to be more sensitive and take into consideration the knowledge and insights of local women at the grass-roots level. It is also important to gather information about the incidence of sexual violence, insecurity and human rights violations as perceived by women, and for women to be represented at all levels. Local women's networks and grass-roots organizations therefore need to be consulted in the process of designing our gender-responsible policies and programmes. We also need to draw on traditional and indigenous methods of conflict resolution used by local women's groups and avail ourselves of the wisdom of elder women.

Advisers on gender issues must also consistently take account of and utilize the information gathered by local women's organizations. Every effort must be made to ensure that their perspectives are heard and considered by the highest decision-making entities and structures. It is equally important that women be fully represented in those bodies in field missions and all other platforms. Wherever necessary, training, capacity-building and assistance need to be provided for women's full participation in the areas of non-governmental organization leadership skills, advocacy, management, administration, communication and dealing with the media, for only then will true empowerment be possible. We can benefit from best-practice models, lessons learned and exchanges of information between missions and United Nations country teams.

My delegation would therefore also propose United Nations system-wide coherence on gender empowerment in conflict resolution through closer coordination between United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. Furthermore, the best results will be achieved if all stakeholders, together with Member States, the private sector, academia and the media form a strong partnership to achieve our common objective.

In conclusion, we commend the Security Council's continuing attention to the urgent and

critical issue of further promoting the full realization of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, and at the same time we call for greater efforts on our part to include women in our deliberations.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Botswana.

Mr. Ntwaagae (Botswana): Let me begin by thanking and congratulating the Indian presidency of the Council for the initiative to hold this open debate today on women, peace and security, with a focus on the role of women civil society organizations in contributing to the prevention and resolution of armed conflict and peacebuilding.

We believe that today's open debate will offer an opportunity to reflect on the lessons learned and the actions needed to accelerate the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions, as well as related international commitments on women and peace and security.

Botswana welcomes the Security Council's continued focus on issues related to women, peace and security, particularly its call for the enhanced participation, representation and involvement of women in the prevention and resolution of armed conflicts and in peacebuilding, as well as a stronger commitment to address challenges to the engagement of women at all levels.

We sincerely thank the Secretary-General for his informative report (S/2012/732) and for the detailed analysis it contains on the progress made in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

By taking part in today's deliberations, Botswana reaffirms the great importance and its recognition of the contribution and role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and renews its commitment to address issues related to women and gender equality at the national level.

Botswana's support for United States-led resolution 66/130, aimed at encouraging the greater political participation of women and their expanded role in decision-making and peacekeeping, and which was adopted by the General Assembly's Third Committee in 2011, is a practical demonstration of our strong commitment in that regard.

Since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) in 2000, significant progress has been made in its implementation, as demonstrated by the notable efforts

made by the United Nations system, Member States, civil society and other actors. In that regard, a number of activities covering a broad range of areas have been undertaken over the past decade.

As noted in the Secretary-General's report, we are encouraged by the fact that the number of countries that have articulated their priorities on women and peace and security through national action plans has continued to grow.

We are, however, concerned that despite the normative framework and the wide range of activities spurred by the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the underrepresentation of women in formal peace processes, as well as violence against women and girls, continues. This situation certainly has to be corrected.

To that end, Botswana reiterates its strong condemnation of all violations committed against women and girls, including sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict and post-conflict situations. In that connection, we wish to stress the importance of promoting and protecting the human rights of women and girls in the context of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and bringing to justice those responsible for crimes of that nature.

My delegation is convinced that peace is inextricably linked to the issue of equality between women and men, and, as such, we fully share the view that gender equality should be recognized as a core issue in the maintenance of peace and security.

In this regard, we also believe that if women are to play a key role in conflict-prevention and peacebuilding processes, the obstacles and challenges that limit their involvement need to be addressed, including their underrepresentation in formal peace and security processes.

The effective participation of women's civil society organizations in conflict prevention and resolution is essential for the sustainability of peace processes. Learning from the examples of success stories concerning the involvement of women and women's organizations in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, as was the case in Rwanda, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste, we also recognize the important contribution of women's civil society organizations in the prevention and resolution of conflict. To that end, the need to facilitate the inclusion and participation of women in all efforts aimed at peacebuilding remains critical.

Furthermore, we are also of the belief that in order to achieve the goals of resolution 1325 (2000), the efforts of women's civil society organizations should be encouraged and supported.

I wish to conclude by reiterating the call made in General Assembly resolution 66/130 regarding the need to enhance the role of women in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution, in accordance with resolution 1325 (2000). In the same vein, I wish to also stress the importance of creating enabling conditions for women's participation during all stages of peace processes and of countering negative societal attitudes regarding the full and equal participation of women in conflict resolution and mediation.

I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity you have given me to address the Council.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Nigeria.

Mr. Sarki (Nigeria): At the outset, I would like to note that this statement was supposed to have been delivered by the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Ms. Viola Onwuliri, but, as the meeting was postponed and rescheduled for today, I am very happy to deliver this statement on her behalf.

On behalf of my delegation, Mr. President, I should like to join other speakers in commending your leadership of the Security Council for this month. We also commend your initiative of organizing this debate on women and peace and security. We wish also to commend the delegation of Guatemala for the presidential statement (S/PRST/2012/23) that it put forward under its presidency.

We thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the subject (S/2012/732). We also thank Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson for his introductory remarks this morning, as well as Under-Secretaries-General Michelle Bachelet and Hervé Ladsous, and Ms. Bineta Diop for their statements.

The Council adopted resolution 1325 (2000), which was a milestone achievement towards the recognition of the importance of women's equal participation and full involvement in the maintenance of peace and security, including conflict management, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding. It is particularly significant that this debate is breaking new ground by focusing on the specific role played by women's

civil society organizations in the areas of conflict prevention, resolution and recovery. We are delighted to see Ms. Diop involved in this activity for so long.

It is common knowledge that women seldom or hardly ever initiate violent conflicts, yet they bear a great burden on various levels: physical, psychological, economical, social and political. Their suffering is compounded by their exclusion from key decision-making processes that could potentially lead to peace and stability.

Today's discussion affords us the distinct opportunity to reflect on our achievements so far, but more importantly to make an assessment of outstanding requirements to realize those objectives. As the Council strives to ensure that the provisions of the women and peace and security agenda are integrated into its work, it stands to benefit from the unique grass-roots perspectives that women's civil society organizations could provide. In that regard, we acknowledge the progress made in the promotion of women's rights in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding, as demonstrated by the increase in the number of dedicated implementation frameworks, strategies and coordination mechanisms.

We believe that more needs to be done to create an enabling environment for the participation of women in all stages of the peace process. Such efforts to create the right conditions for ensuring women's full participation should include increasing their participation and representation in preventive diplomacy and in conflict resolution and peacebuilding initiatives. They should also include strengthening the capacities of the relevant Government institutions and women's organizations involved with conflict and post-conflict issues.

Nigeria recognizes the central role of UN-Women, working in close partnership and collaboration with the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and for Children and Armed Conflict, respectively. The gaps and challenges hindering the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) are indeed substantial. National, regional and international actors must rededicate themselves to addressing them. We believe that developing and implementing national action plans constitutes a viable strategy for fulfilling the obligations under resolution 1325 (2000).

As a signatory to the Dakar Declaration of the Economic Community of West African States, Nigeria

has committed itself to accelerating the national and regional implementation of that important resolution. Nigeria is also committed to fulfilling its obligations under the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights on the rights of women in Africa. Violence, poverty, lack of access to education and health care, and limited economic opportunities all combine to undermine the role of women and girls in conflict prevention, peace negotiations and peacebuilding. It is therefore necessary that we develop and take measures to address these inherent obstacles.

Promoting women's equality and empowerment is, in our view, one of the best ways to address the root causes of conflicts and thereby prevent them. We recognize the relevance of and relationship between the Council's preventive diplomacy initiatives and its women and peace and security agenda.

We remain committed to improving the status of women in all parts of Nigeria and to enhancing their vital and meaningful participation in conflict resolution. Nigeria has over the years proved its consistent commitment to the achievement of women's empowerment and gender equality. Gender equity and equality have gained a high degree of prominence in Nigeria's national development agenda. At the level of legislation, for instance, the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill, as a means to further enhance women's equal access to social and economic activities and resources, is now before our National Assembly for consideration. The Bill seeks to domesticate the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the protocol to the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights on the rights of women in Africa.

In compliance with those principles and the provisions of the various gender frameworks, and as a means to confront the challenges of meeting gender equality and women's empowerment, Nigeria, under the leadership of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, has for the first time attained 33 per cent representation for women in the decision-making process, appointing, for instance, 13 women ministers in the federal Cabinet. We have also attained 50 per cent representation in the judiciary, with the Chief Justice of the Federation being a woman for the first time in Nigeria's history.

In the area of assistance to women, Nigeria will ensure the provision of social security and safety nets that can guarantee a better future for vulnerable members of society, especially women and children.

We look forward to the high-level review to be held in 2015 on the progress made in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and will remain confident that this and future initiatives of the Council will play pivotal roles in national, regional and global strategies on the women and peace and security agenda.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia.

Mr. Khan (Indonesia): At the outset, please allow me to join the previous speakers in expressing the appreciation of the Government of Indonesia for the convening of this open debate on women, peace and security. I would also like to thank the Executive Director of UN-Women and the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations for their important briefings.

Let me begin by quoting the message of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon that

“sustainable peace is possible only with women's full participation — their perspectives, their leadership, their daily, equal presence wherever we seek to make and keep the peace”.

In keeping with that message, Indonesia does not view women as merely passive victims of conflict situations. They are also agents and important contributors to the many dimensions of peacebuilding processes. Therefore, Indonesia is committed to implementing resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security and will work to ensure women's full participation at all levels in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

While we have covered significant ground towards fully implementing resolution 1325 (2000), progress has yet to be made in implementing some key aspects of that resolution. We recognize that decisive action must be taken in the following areas. First, the number of women involved as United Nations peacekeepers needs to be increased in the future. Secondly, the security, legal and justice infrastructure required to ensure the safety and security of women in many conflict and post-conflict settings needs to be strengthened. Thirdly, the level of participation of women in peace negotiations, preventive efforts and key decision-making processes related to peace and security needs to be enhanced.

In light of those objectives, Indonesia has taken steps at various levels towards their achievement. For example, women personnel have been actively involved as military and police observers in Indonesia's

contingents in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

On the other hand, the measures already adopted by Indonesia have advanced its implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Among other things, the Government of Indonesia is currently in the process of drafting a presidential decree to establish a legal basis for the drawing up of a national action plan on the implementation of that resolution.

When completed, the action plan will facilitate the integration of gender issues into the policies, programmes, activities, data collecting mechanisms and reporting systems of each ministry and related institutions that have a bearing on peace and security matters. The plan, which will operate at the central and the regional levels, will cover all phases of a peace process from prevention to conflict resolution, as well as recovery from social conflict.

Under the leadership of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, the action plan will focus on creating greater awareness of the role of women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes, on strengthening the capacity of various stakeholders within Government and civil society organizations, and on building a strong participation in and ownership of the plan to ensure accountability in its implementation. In that regard, the role of UN-Women is greatly appreciated in providing technical assistance and advocacy in our process to develop the action plan.

Indonesia is also conducting schools of peace for women programmes in post-conflict areas, where the principle of non-violence has been introduced and capacity-building activities are being implemented. Those programmes will ultimately empower and enable women to become equal partners in achieving peace, rather than merely suffering as victims of conflict.

Two years ago, a number of women's civil society organizations, supported by the Indonesian Government, organized the Asian Women Peacemaker's Conference on the interfaith perspective in realizing the role of women peacemakers in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). As a result of that two-day Conference, in addition to identifying a number of important issues related to the protection, promotion

and participation of women in peace and security, the following recommendations were made.

First, States should prepare a national action plan to ensure implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) as part of their national agenda, strategy and commitment. That should be accomplished through detailed national policies. Secondly, States must undertake bureaucratic reform, in particular security sector reform, to support the prevention and resolution of conflicts from the inter-faith and women's perspectives. Thirdly, States should ensure the protection of the rights of women as victims of conflict and promote their empowerment and participation at all levels of the decision-making process, especially in peacebuilding efforts.

In conclusion, Indonesia wishes to further underscore the fact that women should not be confined to serving only as key building blocks of and instruments for peace and security, but also have the confidence and potential to be agents of change, skillfully reshaping and rebuilding communities affected by conflict.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Elbahi (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this open debate on women and peace and security. It is one of the most important items of the Security Council's agenda.

Mindful of the need to strengthen the role of women in society, in 2007 my Government adopted a national strategy for the empowerment of women, which focused on six main pillars: health, the environment, education, economic development, women's active participation in decision-making, conflict settlement and peacemaking, and the protection of their rights. In order to implement the pillars of that policy, the State drew up a detailed action plan as part of its five-year plan for 2007-2011.

In addition, a number of administrative units have been established to review the position of women and improve the gender balance within the various Government sectors and ministries at the national and provincial levels. Those units continue to form focal points and to guide plans and strategies for the empowerment of women and to promote their participation in society.

My Government has also set up a number of economic projects for women, such as funds to promote women's employment in the unofficial sector and

their socioeconomic development, as well as smaller women's projects financed by mandatory alms and earning graduates. Microcredit initiatives have also been established to finance small family businesses and farms. Those projects focus on the economic self-sufficiency of women in rural areas, in particular in Darfur, Southern Kordofan and the Blue Nile.

My country has made great strides in empowering and advancing women and in strengthening their participation in society. For example, national legislation has provided for equal pay for equal work since the 1970s. A law enacted in 2003 stipulates that men and women receive pensions at the same age. We have also enacted a law in 2008 on increasing women's participation in Parliament by up to 25 per cent. Women have been able to stand as candidates and to vote since the 1950s and 1960s. In the most recent elections, the list of presidential candidates included a woman.

Now, 66 per cent of Government officials are women; 28 per cent serve in Parliament. Their participation in the private sector is 54 per cent. They contribute 87 per cent of the gross domestic product. In the judicial sector, women account for 80 per cent of the judges. There are 50 female diplomats, including ambassadors and heads of diplomatic missions. Women also participate in the armed forces, the police and security forces, and have reached the rank of Major-General. They also play an active and successful part in the private and business sectors.

My country adopted the rural development plan for women, which is an integrated project focusing on the States of the Sudan, in particular Darfur state. The plan covers issues and concerns of rural women and funds microprojects to alleviate poverty, to promote training and to further raise awareness of women's health and nutrition, human rights and peacebuilding. Thirty per cent of the national budget has been earmarked for microprojects.

My Government has also established a number of specialized units at the national and provincial levels to coordinate women's activities in the areas of peace and development and to provide guidance to women on gender equality. In that connection, we note that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes give particular priority to the status of women in close coordination with the relevant United Nations agencies, including UN-Women. That is with

a view to implementing the plan of action called for in resolution 1325 (2000).

Along with our policies of empowerment, my Government developed a strategy to combat gender-based violence in 2005. We established a unit within the Ministry of Justice to combat violence against women and girls, as well as a specialized police unit within the Ministry of the Interior. We have had a national strategy in place since 2008 to combat female circumcision.

After the outbreak of rebellion in Darfur, the Criminal Act of 1991 was amended to include clauses on crimes against humanity and war crimes and to revise article 149, on rape and adultery. The Consultative Council for Human Rights devoted special attention to publicity in order to raise awareness of issues related to violence against women in the state of Darfur, in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund and the human rights division of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur. That publicity included announcements of medical registration so that victims of rape could be suitably compensated. In that connection, we note that the latest cooperation agreement signed with the Government of South Sudan will have a positive effect on women's lives and advancement in both countries.

The situation of women in armed conflict is inextricably linked to the root causes of conflict. That is why we call for measures to address such root causes as poverty, lack of development and problems of climate change.

In our view, measures taken by the Security Council should be based on the country reports presented by States and the accurate information contained in the periodic reports of the Secretary-General. They should not be based on reports from non-governmental organizations or the mass media.

In concluding, we hope that the deliberations of the Council on this important matter will lead to the development of an integrated approach to addressing the issue of women and peace and security. After all, women constitute half of society, if not, in a certain way, all of it.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Afghanistan.

Mr. Tanin (Afghanistan): As this is my first statement before the Council this month, allow me to begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your

assumption of this month's presidency of the Council. I would also like to welcome your focus in this debate on the specific role played by women's civil society organizations in conflict prevention, resolution and recovery. Thanks must also be extended to Ms. Bachelet and Mr. Ladsous for the expertise they provided through their briefings earlier today. I also thank the Secretary-General for his report on women and peace and security (S/2012/732).

In the 12 years since its adoption, resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent related resolutions have been helpful tools, not only to bring to the attention of the international community the importance of the women and peace and security agenda, but ALSO to strengthen women's participation rather than simply branding them as victims. The Afghan Government remains committed to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in Afghanistan and its promotion worldwide.

Afghanistan is designing a comprehensive plan for implementing resolution 1325 (2000) through its National Action Plan for Women. The Government of Afghanistan is fully committed to implementing the Plan, which will be a four-year plan focused on women and peace and security. We appreciate the generous support of the Government of Finland for help in the drafting process.

We have established a steering committee comprised of seven line ministries, the Commissioner for Human Rights and members of civil society, which meets under the chairmanship of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to effectively coordinate the implementation of the National Action Plan. In addition, we have established a technical working group at the Director General level from those line ministries and an advisory committee, which includes the United Nations offices in Kabul and international staff. The inclusion of United Nations partners has been invaluable in bringing together knowledge and expertise from post-conflict countries in order to enable Afghanistan to move towards a fuller implementation of the National Action Plan. We are looking forward to the support of UN-Women in assisting the Afghan Government in the implementation of the National Action Plan for Women.

Cooperation on the bilateral level has also played a significant role in ensuring that our architecture to implement resolution 1325 (2000) is firmly in place through the provision of technical and financial

support, and we look forward to engaging with our bilateral partners through the transition and beyond.

The Secretary-General expresses concern in his report in regard to the slow global progress in women's participation and representation in peace talks. The Afghan Government recognizes the vital role that women have to play in the peaceful resolution of conflicts, and remains committed to focusing on women's rights throughout the peace process. Women are playing an important role in Afghan-led reconciliation, including through participation in the High Peace Council.

We see a marked improvement in the position of women through a pronounced presence of women in political and social life. Currently, there are 69 female members of Parliament, making up more than a quarter of the total number of parliamentarians. There are also encouraging signs for the future of women's social participation. In 2001, 5,000 girls were enrolled in school in Afghanistan; now, according to figures from 2011, there are 2.7 million girls enrolled in schools across the country. The continued participation of young women in education will ensure a brighter future not only for them but also for Afghanistan as they become the police officers, Government officials and leaders of the next generation.

Additionally, we have ensured that there are strong links between women in Government and civil society groups to coordinate activities to encourage more involvement of women at all levels. Our civil society has been vital in helping Afghanistan to rebuild itself from decades of conflict.

Women's civil society groups have been particularly crucial in acting as a united voice for Afghan women. An informal advisory group comprised of Afghan Government representatives, women Parliamentarians and civil society members meet directly with President Karzai on a regular basis to discuss issues of women's security, women in leadership, women's rights and cases of violence against women. Civil society organizations played a defining role in the drafting of the Elimination of Violence Against Women Law enacted in 2009, and offer continuing support for the National Action Plan. Currently, a strong coalition of civil society groups has focused on providing training on the legal and civil rights of women and the relevance of implementing resolution 1325 (2000) to men and women alike in provincial districts.

Violent attacks against innocent Afghan women, men, girls and boys in some parts of the country remain a threat to the overall peace and security of Afghanistan. Violence against women and girls in the country is unacceptable. The Government of Afghanistan and the international community must continue to address ongoing violence with a view to bringing much-needed lasting peace to Afghanistan and promoting a stable situation in which the human rights of all Afghans can be fully respected.

To that end, by focusing on training and equipping the army, we have seen an encouraging growth in the number and capacities of our security forces. Those efforts have included women's participation in the Afghan National Army, in which they serve in a variety of capacities, including highly technical roles, such as pilots. Women also continue to join the Afghan National Police, despite receiving threats against their lives and discouragement, at times even from their own families. Women's participation in those capacities ensures that women in the community have trusted mentors within the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police.

The Government of Afghanistan looks forward to continued cooperation with the international community in its efforts to honour and implement resolution 1325 (2000) in Afghanistan and worldwide. Through resolution 1325 (2000), the international community made a commitment to the women and peace and security agenda that still requires our full attention and dedication.

Mrs. Zarrouk Boumiza (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to commend the Security Council presidency for its initiative to hold this important public debate on women and peace and security, and to thank the Secretary-General for his excellent report (S/2012/732).

Tunisia's interest in the issue is based on its renewed commitment to promoting the rights of women and on its conviction that peace, development and democracy will not be achieved without women acting as active partners in the processes of preventing, mediating and resolving conflict.

It must be recognized that there is much greater awareness today of the multifaceted discrimination faced by women in conflict and that significant efforts have been made with a view to remedying that situation. As women are among the primary victims

of armed conflict, together with children and the elderly, it is important to assign them prominent roles in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and even more importantly in the prevention process, to which it is never too late to devote particular attention. Significant headway has already been achieved to that end, such as the appointment of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the deployment of women protection advisers within peacekeeping operations.

Debates such as today's have also enabled us to develop a more coherent and coordinated approach to the protection of women in armed conflict, and contributed in particular to a more systematic integration of the gender perspective in peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions and in the transition from a reactive to a preventive culture, as manifested by the inclusion of the protection of civilians in the mandates of 8 peacekeeping missions. Other steps have been taken to improve the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) at the regional level, such as the drafting by the League of Arab States of a regional strategy on women, peace and security.

For its part, Tunisia has begun to establish an action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The plan encourages, *inter alia*, the training of women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding with a view to deploying qualified personnel in United Nations operations on the ground, and in particular to improving predeployment training by placing particular emphasis on special measures with a view to protecting women from all forms of violence.

We are compelled to acknowledge that, despite the progress achieved, much remains to be done to achieve all the goals set out in resolution 1325 (2000). It is critical that the Council remain seized of the issue and take further dynamic steps to enhance the protection of women in armed conflict.

In that respect, we believe that national ownership of the relevant Security Council resolutions remains the best way to achieve their effective implementation. My delegation is also convinced that all national actors, including civil society, should be able to contribute actively to promoting the peace process, since a State can lay the foundations of a lasting peace only with the inclusion and support of all of its citizens.

As indicated in the latest report of the Secretary-General, we also believe that civil society represents a

key partner in post-conflict situations and that women's organizations in particular can contribute significantly to enhancing early warning mechanisms allowing us to preempt the escalation of violence against women and to support awareness-raising initiatives to that end. Women's organizations can also play an essential role in developing women's capacities and enabling them to participate actively in conflict prevention, mediation and resolution processes. That is why it is important to further mobilize technical support for such efforts.

In the same vein, we believe that men also play a crucial role in the promotion of gender equality. The initiatives of civil society organizations that are either led by men or that focus on raising men's awareness on gender equality deserve particular attention, since the struggle of women to enjoy all their rights can succeed only with the full involvement and engagement of men.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that my country remains at the disposal of the United Nations for any undertaking geared towards the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and of other international instruments aimed at strengthening women's full and broad participation in the decision-making process and in establishing a culture of respect for women's rights.

Mr. Çevik (Turkey): Allow me to congratulate India for its successful presidency during the month of November and to thank you, Sir, for organizing today's open debate.

I wish to express our thanks to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2012/732). We appreciate presidential statement S/PRST/2012/23, which was adopted at the end of October. I take this opportunity to also thank Under-Secretary-General Bachelet and to assure her of my country's full support and cooperation.

Since the adoption of the landmark resolution 1325 (2000), thanks to the efforts of the international community, including non-governmental organizations and women's organizations, progress has been made across a broad range of issues concerning the protection and promotion of women's and girl's rights in conflict-affected situations. However, as today's debate has shown, many obstacles remain.

We agree with the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General, which guide us towards particular areas requiring increased

and improved effort. In that context, I would like to highlight three aspects in my intervention today.

The first is the valuable role that women can play in mediation efforts. As a co-chair of the Group of Friends of Mediation, Turkey, together with Finland, endeavoured to ensure that the very first United Nations resolution on mediation (resolution 65/283), of 2011, reflected the main elements of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security.

Secondly, there is conflict-related violence against women. As a way of tackling that problem, we believe that the Security Council should, as appropriate, ensure that ceasefire agreements include sexual violence in their definitions. On this occasion, we would like to welcome the publication of the Guidance for Effective Mediation, which is contained in the Secretary-General's report entitled "Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution" (A/66/811, annex I), which addresses conflict-related sexual violence in ceasefire and peace agreements, and we encourage its increased utilization.

Thirdly, there is the interface between security and development and the role women can play in that respect. As we embark upon a process to develop a set of sustainable development goals for post-2015, we believe that gender equality and the empowerment of women should be at the centre of all our solutions and commitments. That would also help further the agenda on women and peace and security.

Before concluding, I would like to underline the valuable contribution of UN-Women in pursuing United Nations gender-related efforts in a more systematic and coordinated manner. That is evident also in the women and peace and security agenda. In that respect, we welcome the joint strategy on gender and mediation launched by UN-Women and the Department of Political Affairs. We also commend the seven-point action plan for gender-responsive peacebuilding, spearheaded by UN-Women and the Peacebuilding Support Office.

I wish to conclude by underlining my country's commitment to the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and the four subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security, namely, resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), and 1960 (2010).

The President: I now give the floor to Trinidad and Tobago.

Ms. Boissiere (Trinidad and Tobago): Trinidad and Tobago welcomes yet another opportunity to participate in the discussion on the important subject of women and peace and security, and we commend the Council for its organization of this forum. We also express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the issue (S/2012/732), as well as to the Executive Director of UN-Women and to the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations for their informative briefings and to the representative of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security for her presentation this morning.

Trinidad and Tobago is fully committed to the achievement of the goal of gender equality and the empowerment of women. In that context, we agree strongly on the need to strengthen efforts to ensure that women are equally represented in all spheres, including at all levels of decision-making processes in the field of peace and security, given the important and valuable contributions that women have made and can continue to make to conflict resolution and peacebuilding initiatives.

As a State that subscribes to the rule of law in the promotion and maintenance of peace and security, as well as in the empowerment and advancement of women, Trinidad and Tobago has implemented in its domestic legal system its obligations under the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the 1977 additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions, in addition to other fundamental instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Notwithstanding the importance of the implementation of the provisions of important legal instruments and agreements on peace and security, Trinidad and Tobago is also of the view that the prosecution of those accused of committing crimes against women and girls during armed conflict is a critical factor in achieving lasting peace. We believe that any failure to prosecute the perpetrators of grave crimes against women and girls would not only contribute to the culture of impunity, but would be at variance with resolution 1325 (2000). Consequently, as a founding member of the International Criminal Court, Trinidad and Tobago has given domestic legal

effect to the Rome Statute, which established the Court, and encourages others to adhere to the instrument.

Trinidad and Tobago comes from a region that has become a significant casualty in the diversion of small arms and light weapons, which has led to an increase in armed violence in our country. That places a tremendous burden on women in our society — economically, socially and psychologically — as they are forced to cope with the numerous consequences. The Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago has therefore formulated a number of initiatives to address the problem. However, since the problem involves the entire international community, we believe that a systematic approach is required to appropriately address the challenges posed by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The problem clearly requires a coordinated international response. In that regard, Trinidad and Tobago, a strong advocate for a robust and legally binding arms trade treaty, was disappointed by the failure of the United Nations to adopt such a text earlier this year. Nevertheless, we remain hopeful that Member States can reach agreement on that fundamental instrument and that it will be successfully adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty to be held in March 2013.

Trinidad and Tobago agrees that the full, equal and effective participation of women is critical to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and related resolutions, as well as to the implementation of the future arms trade treaty. Their participation would also be especially relevant, in as much as the Treaty relates to the prevention of the transfer of conventional weapons, which are likely to be used in the commission of gender-based violence against women and girls.

In an effort to create greater awareness of the important role of women in matters relating to peace and security in general and those relating to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control in particular, Trinidad and Tobago successfully hosted, at the margins of the high-level segment of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly this year, a ministerial panel discussion on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. The event witnessed the participation of Government ministers and other Government officials, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and representatives of civil society. The event was also marked by the adoption of a ministerial declaration on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

Additionally, efforts have been undertaken during this session of the General Assembly to strengthen draft resolution A/C.1/67/L.35/Rev.1 on the subject of women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, which was first piloted by Trinidad and Tobago in the First Committee in 2010. The draft resolution was again adopted by consensus during this session of the First Committee, with a notable increase in sponsorship. That further demonstrated that States continue to recognize that there cannot be sustainable peace and security without the full, effective and equal participation of women.

Trinidad and Tobago also commends and supports the significant role of United Nations agencies and bodies in gender-mainstreaming initiatives and in providing information about the ways in which women have contributed and can continue to contribute to peace in our societies. UN-Women, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean have done a significant amount of work in that area, and we look forward to their continued efforts in that regard.

Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to working with other Member States, as well as its partners at the regional, hemispheric and international levels, to provide an environment that promotes the involvement of women as equal partners in matters related to peace and security, including at all levels of decision-making processes.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Mr. Bliss (Australia): Australia welcomes the convening of this open debate on women and peace and security. We commend Guatemala and India for bringing the Council's focus to the particular role played by women's civil society organizations. We thank Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson, the Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN-Women, Ms. Bachelet, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Ladsous, and the representative of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, Ms. Diop, for their briefings to the Council, and reiterate our support for continued briefings on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Australia looks forward to working with others to move the women and peace and security agenda forward during our term on the Council.

We join other States in condemning the ongoing high incidence of sexual violence in conflicts, and support all efforts to prevent such crimes and to put an end to impunity for perpetrators of such crimes. That must be a priority for the Security Council and other parts of the United Nations system.

There is a clear consensus that the early involvement of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding promotes lasting peace and helps in the realization of gender equality. The fact that the Council has increasingly recognized that reality as it discharges its functions is to be welcomed.

As the Secretary-General's report (S/2012/732) makes clear, women's organizations play an indispensable role in enabling women to prevent conflict and to promote and build peace. But women's organizations can only operate effectively in safety and with support. In that regard, Australia strongly supports the Secretary-General's call for the protection of women's human rights defenders during conflict situations, given their specific vulnerability.

Australia commends the increasing inclusion of references in United Nations mission mandates to the promotion of the rights, protection and empowerment of women. The gender awareness and responsiveness of United Nations personnel is critical, and Australia is pleased to be supporting these efforts through provision of training, a best practice toolkit for United Nations peacekeepers on conflict-related sexual violence and, in partnership with UN-Women, the development of a documentary and toolkit for peacekeepers, civilians and humanitarian personnel on women, peace and security.

In addition, such issues must not be overlooked in mission drawdowns and during transitions from peacekeeping to peacebuilding. Australia supports the Secretary-General's calls for the embedding of sector-specific gender experts, including in post-conflict recovery programmes, in order to ensure that the rights of women and girls are protected.

The importance of the United Nations leading by example in the area of gender equality is essential. Australia is concerned at the significant decrease over the past 12 months in the share of women holding senior positions in United Nations peacekeeping, political and peacebuilding missions. We support the Secretary-General's call for a review of this situation, in consultation with UN-Women.

Women's participation in post-conflict peacebuilding is also crucial. The international community must work to facilitate women's full and equal political participation in post-conflict election processes, including by addressing the structural impediments that discourage women's candidacies. Ensuring women's safety during electoral processes and addressing their particular socioeconomic disadvantages are key factors in facilitating women's participation in formal decision-making roles.

In our region, Australia was pleased to announce in August our partnership with members of the Pacific Islands Forum on a new 10-year Pacific women's initiative. It aims at redressing the dramatic under-representation of women in decision-making settings, by bringing Governments and civil society groups together to develop policy and to help change perceptions about women's and men's roles in communities.

In March, Australia launched its National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. Women's organizations played a pivotal role in shaping the Plan, and we consider their ongoing role in monitoring compliance to be central to the Plan's success. We encourage all States who have not implemented such plans to do so, and to engage women's organizations in developing, implementing and evaluating these plans. In recognition of the growing role of regional security organizations to international peace and security efforts, we urge them also to introduce strategies on implementing resolution 1325 (2000).

Australia supports the United Nations efforts to facilitate the sharing of best practices between States and women's organizations. We also recognize the leadership of UN-Women in coordinating global efforts to promote and implement resolution 1325 (2000).

Our actions to pursue the women, peace and security agenda do not occur in a vacuum. Work to

promote the participation of women and girls in peace and security processes needs to take place within the broader context of work to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. The message is simple. Women and girls need to be actively involved in decision-making, not only to ensure that their human rights are adequately protected, but to prevent the outbreak of further conflict and to ensure that peace endures.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda.

As this is most certainly the last open meeting of the Council that I will be presiding as part of the second presidency of our current tenure on the Security Council, I would like to take this opportunity to express the sincere appreciation of the delegation of India to the members of the Council, especially my colleagues the permanent representatives, the political coordinators of each delegation and their respective staff, and to the Secretariat for all the support that they have given to us.

To say that this has been a busy month would be an understatement. We tried our best to achieve convergence and consensus on several important issues on the agenda of the Council. We could not have done this alone or without the hard work, support and positive contributions of every delegation and the representatives of the Secretariat, as well as the interpreters, translators, meeting services and sound engineers. I want to thank each and every one of them individually and collectively. As we end our presidency, I know I speak on behalf of all Council members in wishing the delegation of Morocco the very best of luck in the month of December.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.