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New York

President: Mr. Vieira/Mr. França Danese/Mr. Moretti (Brazil)

Members:

Albania	Mr. Spasse
China	Ms. Xu Hui
Ecuador	Mrs. Sánchez Izquierdo
France	Mrs. Paolini
Gabon	Mr. Nanga
Ghana	Ms. Williams
Japan	Mr. Miyamoto
Malta	Ms. Cassar
Mozambique	Ms. Mavale
Russian Federation.	Mr. Kuzmenkov
Switzerland	Mr. Hauri
United Arab Emirates	Ms. Matar
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Ms. White
United States of America.	Ms. Hoey

Agenda

Women and peace and security

Women's participation in international peace and security: from theory to practice

Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2023/725)

Letter dated 3 October 2023 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2023/733)

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The meeting resumed at 5 p.m.

The President: I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Flashing lights on the collars of the microphones will prompt speakers to bring their remarks to a close after four minutes.

I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Ms. Peters (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): I begin by congratulating the Government of Brazil for its exemplary leadership and unyielding stewardship during the month of October and during a time of great upheaval and grave uncertainty. I also thank our briefers for their presentations.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines welcomes the convening of this open debate on women's participation in international peace and security, bearing in mind more specifically the increased number of conflicts and the most recent outbreak of hostilities in Israel and Gaza. Our thoughts are with all those who have suffered the unbearable consequences of war, especially the women and children who, as always, are paying the heavy price of armed conflict settings and make up the vast majority of displaced persons. At this moment, women and children already account for more than 60 per cent of the casualties in the current war in the Middle East, and we know that will increase if we are unable to facilitate a ceasefire.

In that regard, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities on all sides and for a quest to embark on a just and lasting peace in accordance with the principles and provisions of resolution 242 (1967). The international community must intervene justly and mercifully to bring hostilities to an end and to ensure that international humanitarian law is upheld in Gaza for the sake of humanity.

As we commemorate the twenty-third anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), let us be mindful that the primary objectives of the Charter of the United Nations are to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights and to promote social progress and quality of life in larger freedom. The four pillars of the women and peace and security agenda, under the banners of participation, protection, prevention, relief and recovery, allow for

an elaboration of a targeted approach to those timeless principles. Today we take a moment to contemplate the progress we have made as a global community and the obstacles that still lie ahead. But we do so especially mindful of the women and children in the conflict-affected countries. We do so, too, with a profound sense of urgency of the necessity to ensure that our tools are fit for purpose. We do so now with the determination to redouble our efforts in putting them to good use. We remain cognizant that women constitute approximately half of the global population, including those residing in conflict-affected countries and regions, so we must ensure that solutions to, and the prevention of, conflicts are durable and inclusive.

In that connection, we offer these three points of emphasis.

First, despite the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), over two decades ago, women's participation in international peace and security processes, including those led by the United Nations, remains unacceptably low. It is high time that we take substantive and meaningful action to address that issue and ensure the full, equal, meaningful and active participation of women in all peace processes.

Secondly, United Nations political and peacekeeping missions play a critical role in capacity-building. To achieve the women and peace and security goal of equal participation of diverse women at every stage of peace processes, all United Nations-led organs and agencies must consistently apply gender analysis. The United Nations must demonstrate political will by providing financial and technical support and building national capacities to enhance women's participation. By doing so, every aspect of United Nations-led peace processes can ensure gender parity and justice at every stage.

Thirdly, women must be given equal opportunities to lead and participate in peace efforts. That includes being part of negotiations, acting as mediators and signing peace agreements. Women must also be involved in monitoring peace agreements, transitional authorities and all other political and economic processes related to building and sustaining peace.

In conclusion, it is undeniable that sustainable peace cannot be achieved while women are targeted in war and excluded from peace negotiations. Women's participation and empowerment are essential to resolving conflicts and building lasting peace. It cannot

be overstated that the inclusion of women in the peace process is non-negotiable if we are to have any hope of creating a peaceful future.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guatemala.

Mr. Búcaro Flores (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Guatemala thanks Brazil, President of the Security Council for the month of October, for convening this open debate on resolution 1325 (2000), a historic resolution on women and peace and security.

Today's debate is taking place amid the escalation of conflicts around the world, including the heinous attacks of Hamas against the State of Israel, which Guatemala emphatically condemns. My delegation joins others in expressing its gratitude for the briefings, especially that of the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the first woman to hold that position since 1949.

The adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) marked an important milestone on the path leading towards world peace and security. It was the first resolution to acknowledge the critical role played by women in peacebuilding and conflict prevention and resolution, as well as the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women and girls. The resolution has inspired the international community to take concrete steps to promote gender equality in conflict-affected areas. It has led to nine subsequent resolutions and frameworks establishing a comprehensive and evolving agenda to include women in peace and security initiatives.

One of its contributions has been highlighting the fact that gender-based violence often occurs in conflict areas and promoting measures to protect women and girls from sexual violence in such areas. Another has been an improved understanding of the specific needs of women and girls in humanitarian contexts, which has led them to seek help, and for various types of support, rehabilitation and care for survivors to be offered. Yet another has been the drafting and development of 95 national action plans. In this respect, let me underscore that Guatemala was the eighth country in Latin America and the second in Central America to establish a national action plan for resolution 1325 (2000), in 2017, through an annual road map for its implementation, demonstrating our country's commitment to promoting efforts with respect to the global agenda for women and peace and security.

I would also like to highlight that Guatemala has ratified various international conventions, resolutions and agreements aimed at shouldering legal responsibility for the protection of people and their fundamental rights. Guatemala's protection and promotion of women's human rights are primarily based on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Sustainable Development Goals.

I also would like to underscore our ongoing commitment to the noble work that women today carry out in peacekeeping operations, while taking into account the need to increase the number of female personnel. To date, Guatemala has deployed 372 women, 22 of whom have served as military observers, 6 as staff officers, 158 as military police contingents in Haiti and 186 in special forces contingents in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

As we commemorate the twenty-third anniversary of the adoption of the resolution, we acknowledge the progress made by Member States and the challenges that lie ahead of us. We must prioritize the prevention of gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict situations, while providing support to victims and survivors, respecting the basic of international humanitarian law, and demanding accountability from the perpetrators who bear physical or intellectual responsibility for such atrocities, in order to guarantee women's rights and, especially, ensure access to education and economic opportunities for former victims.

The full and meaningful participation of women in decision-making and peacebuilding processes is critical to achieving sustainable peace. We therefore encourage the Council to continue to consider the steps that must be adopted for the effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), for all Member States to continue to promote and protect the rights and needs of women in conflict situations, and for all of us together to achieve progress before the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of that historic resolution.

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

Lord Vaea (Tonga): I wish to congratulate Your Excellency on presiding over this meeting, and I am pleased to address the Security Council for the first time, on the anniversary of landmark resolution 1325 (2000), on the theme "Women's participation in international peace and security: from theory to practice".

Peace and security for Tonga mean the security of the people from a variety of widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood and dignity of the people. The impact of the intersecting crises of climate change, the coronavirus disease and disasters, including the volcanic eruption of 15 January 2022 in Tonga, creates a variety of insecurities that we, as a community of people, must address. The adoption by Pacific leaders of the Boe Declaration on Regional Security of 2018 and their endorsement of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent recognizes a comprehensive approach to security. Tonga's national women's empowerment and gender policy, as well as the Pacific Platform for Action for Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights, further create an enabling environment for mainstreaming gender across government policies, programmes and services, including budget allocations, and align well with the goals of women mediators' networks.

We propose that, in its support for climate action, the Security Council include: increased collaboration with the Peacebuilding Commission, other intergovernmental entities, the United Nations system and civil society to better support conflict-prevention efforts; the appointment of a special representative of the Secretary-General on climate and security and the deployment of dedicated staff, such as the climate security advisors; leveraging existing mechanisms, such as the climate security mechanism; integrating climate data in early-warning systems and other data and reporting tools, including regular reporting by the Secretary-General to the Security Council; incorporating climate risks in peacekeeping and special political missions' mandates; and encouraging climate-informed mediation, peacebuilding initiatives and peace operations, among others.

In conclusion, we look forward to continuous engagement with Member States, civil society and development partners in addressing the comprehensive crises facing the Pacific in our own way, which would build on and translate our community and traditional ties and would translate women's participation in international peace and security from theory into practice.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and National Community Abroad of Algeria.

Mr. Attaf (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation sincerely thanks you, Mr. President, for convening this debate and providing us with the opportunity to discuss the topic of women and peace and security, which my country has placed among its top priorities for our upcoming term in the Council.

It has been 23 years since the Council adopted historic resolution 1325 (2000), which enshrined the international community's acknowledgment of the pivotal and vital role played by women, specifically in the prevention and mitigation of conflicts, and, most often, in arriving at their peaceful and sustainable settlement. In that context, my delegation welcomes the progress achieved towards implementing the requirements of that important resolution, especially with regard to incorporating the women and peace and security agenda more frequently and prominently into the work of our Organization and its various subsidiary bodies, at both the regional and national levels.

In addition, underscoring the statement made by the President of the Republic, Mr. Abdelmadjid Tebboune, while participating in the general debate of the General Assembly at its current session, my country in July my country a national action plan that will contribute to achieving the objectives of that United Nations resolution, whose aim is to consolidate the position of women in peace and security and their effective role in establishing peace everywhere, at all times and under all circumstances.

Algeria proudly safeguards the contributions of its women freedom fighters, who have had a role at every major stage of Algerian history, from the struggle against colonialism and the building of the sovereign nation-State to the current stage, with its challenges and opportunities to solidify the foundations of a State of rights and law and governed by the rule of law, while promoting economic development and social well-being.

There is no doubt that the adoption of the national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), as provided in recommendation (d) of the Secretary-General's most recent report (S/2023/725) on the issue, will contribute significantly to strengthening that orientation and consolidating the gains achieved by Algeria, especially in the following areas: first, recruiting women into the security and military forces, with a view to their effective participation in the maintenance of security and stability; second, supporting the appointment and promotion of women to leadership

positions in the security sector; third, raising women's and men's awareness of the importance of women's participation in the security and military sectors and promoting their involvement therein; fourth, advancing the presence of women in the various national, regional and international bodies related to peace and security; fifth, training women workers and leaders in security and military institutions on negotiation and conflict management and resolution, in preparation for regional and international peacekeeping missions; sixth, establishing a database of women with experience and potential in negotiation and peacekeeping; and seventh, involving feminist activists in civil society associations and movements across all fields.

Like other countries, Algeria has not been spared the repercussions of international and regional developments, particularly in the Sahelo-Saharan region, which has been witnessing an unprecedented situation with the increase, expansion and worsening of tensions, crises and conflicts, in the form of insecurity and instability that extends from the Red Sea to the Atlantic Ocean. Against that backdrop, the action plan adopted by my country, consisting of three main axes, namely, participation, prevention and protection, constitutes a proactive and preventive strategy aimed at the advancement of women's status in society and the acknowledgement of their role in peace and security issues, particularly by supporting their enduring and sustainable participation in negotiation processes, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

In conclusion, I pay tribute to, and express my respect for, Palestinian women for their resilience in the face of the Israeli occupation's brutal aggression against the besieged Gaza Strip and for their struggle against plots to defeat the Palestinian question. I also salute Sahrawi women for their perseverance in defending the Sahrawi people's right to self-determination, in accordance with the Security Council's own resolutions, terms of reference and stipulations. I express my admiration, respect and appreciation to all women around the world for their sacrifices, suffering and efforts towards promoting their presence and influence through their commitment to establishing peace, security and stability.

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

Ms. Taylor Jay (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): One year after announcing to the world the beginning of the participatory process to build Colombia's first national

action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), we come before the Security Council to tell the story of transformation that we are weaving to build peace in our country, a peace that is possible only with women, in all their diversity.

After more than 70 years of armed conflict in Colombia, the "total peace" promoted by President Gustavo Petro Urrego is a national priority. And a necessary condition for achieving peace is precisely to guarantee the participation of women in peacebuilding and sustaining peace. We cannot ignore that the war has permeated their bodies, victimized them, displaced them, marginalized them, altered their life projects and transformed their realities. For that reason, we regard the women and peace and security agenda as one of the main tools with which to defend the diversity and lives of women.

We are proud of the work we have done over the past year. After more than two decades in which the women of our country made their way alone, without the support of the State to decisively promote the agenda of resolution 1325 (2000), today we are changing that reality. We are pleased to announce that we have concluded a broad participatory process for formulation of our action plan. Throughout that process, more than 1,500 women of diverse backgrounds have narrated their lived experiences and shared their vision for the future across 20 spaces. Some countries have highlighted that effort by my country — it is certainly a milestone and a legacy bound to inspire the rest of the world. I would like to proudly highlight that work with Afro-descendent women, Black women, Raizal women, Palenquero women, Indigenous women, lesbians, bisexual women, trans women, queer women, rural and peasant women, young women, girls, signatories to the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, signed with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo in 2016, those who live in the border areas of our country, women with disabilities and those deprived of their freedom. Through meetings at the territorial level, we listened to the voices of women who lived in areas where the armed conflict had been most present. We convened a large national forum, bringing together more than 230 female leaders, to approve thematic tracks and the actions of our plan, as well as to listen to the recommendations for their implementation and to make them effective in the different territories.

Together with our institutions, we are now defining the indicators and the budget that will facilitate implementation in the short, medium and long terms and measure, over time, the real impact on the lives of all Colombian women through a follow-up, monitoring and control mechanism in each of the territories. That process per se has been a testimony to the immeasurable power of political participation and the empowerment of all our country's women. However, we did not achieve that alone. A feat of such calibre has been possible thanks only to the constant and determined support of UN-Women and other United Nations organizations and agencies, the Organization of American States and countries such as Sweden, Norway, Ireland, Canada, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Our heroines are in fact the women of our country, who, in their territories and different corners of Colombia, in all their diversity, have stood together to protect their rights. Thanks to that shared work, Colombian women's organizations and Colombian feminist organizations are actually changing our country. Today the gender approach, the voices, the experiences and the impact of women, young women, adolescents and girls cut across the different peace processes and dialogues taking place in Colombia.

I have come to this meeting today to invite Council members to spread and instil a sense of modernity in the work of the Security Council. Our experience and evidence show that the peace and security agenda requires and demands a gender, intersectional, territorial and human approach in order to be truly effective.

In Colombia, we believe that the time has come to look to new horizons to respond to current challenges, to understand security from a human security standpoint with a gender perspective. I invite Council members to view the experiences and resilience of women in all their diversity as the basis for building total peace in the world, which today we so long for and need.

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

Ms. Štiglic (Slovenia): I thank Brazil for organizing today's debate and the briefers for their valuable contribution.

Resolution 1325 (2000) did much more than recognize the vital contribution of women in peace and security. Together with succeeding resolutions, it set up a strong normative framework to increase

the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all peace and security efforts of the United Nations.

The world has changed since then, regrettably not for the better. Violent conflicts are raging around the globe at the highest rate since the Second World War. The number of women and girls living in conflict-affected regions has risen by a staggering 50 per cent since 2017. The current dire situation in the Middle East will only further exacerbate those numbers. In all conflict situations, we call for full respect for international law.

We are not on track to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 5 by 2030, and we know that conflicts amplify the existing inequalities and disproportionately affect women and girls through food insecurity, displacement, sexual and gender-based violence, human trafficking and disrupted access to health care, among other factors. Slovenia will respond to those challenges by increasing the share of its development assistance for gender equality and women's empowerment to 85 per cent by 2030, in line with its feminist foreign policy approach.

Even though the current situation does not give us many reasons for optimism, we must forge ahead, and we have seen some progress when it comes to accountability. And there are positive trends in peacekeeping. In that respect, we welcome the progress in the Department of Peace Operations on achieving the targets of the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy 2018–2028 and encourage further efforts on gender parity in military contingents.

The women and peace and security agenda can be realized only with strong political support and partnership with all relevant stakeholders, including regional organizations, civil society organizations and peacebuilders. Participation remains one of its key components. We are far from achieving the goal of full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace and other processes. Inclusive processes are key to ending conflicts and creating lasting peace.

The United Nations, including the Security Council, must lead by example. It needs to include gender dimension issues in its work more systematically. That includes all relevant country and thematic consultations. New mandates or mandate renewals should include gender-specific provisions. As recent decisions in this Chamber show, there is space for improvement also in the Council's work on sanctions, especially by including sexual violence as a designation criterion.

We commend the increase in women briefers in recent years. We strongly condemn any attempts to intimidate and silence them. They must be able to return to their homes and their work safely. The United Nations and Member States must work to prevent and address any retaliatory measures against them or their family members. We commend the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund for working in that area, and Slovenia will continue to support the Fund's activities.

On 1 January 2024, Slovenia will become a member of the Security Council for the second time. We will serve with the same dedication and the same sense of urgency as a voice in support of the half of the world's population that is left behind. Slovenia will join the shared commitments on women and peace and security and looks forward to working with partners on strengthening implementation on all aspects of the women and peace and security agenda.

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

Ms. Mudra (Ukraine): We thank Brazil's presidency for calling this open debate and thank all briefers for their comprehensive statements.

The delegation of Ukraine aligns with the statement delivered by the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security and the statement on behalf of the European Union. We would like to make few remarks in our national capacity.

Today's event marks the anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) aimed at promoting women's access to decision-making positions so that women can play their role as agents of change in security and defence structures. As an elected member of the Security Council for 2000-2001, Ukraine was involved in the preparation and adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), and, as a State, remains committed to its promotion, including the relevant supplemental resolutions.

Ukraine is implementing its second national action plan for the resolution 1325 (2000), which was amended and updated in December 2022 to address current needs and take into account the full-scale Russian aggression. The current updated national action plan recognizes that women in Ukraine must be actors and agents in the ongoing war, as well as in the recovery and reconstruction of the country.

For our country, the topic of today's discussion is of paramount importance amid the devastating gender-related consequences of the ongoing Russian armed aggression against Ukraine. Throughout our repeated calls for the full respect of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, Ukraine has sought to place victims and survivors at the heart of all efforts and ensure survivors non-discriminatory and comprehensive access to essential services, including sexual and reproductive health-care services and mental health and psychological services, as well as to gender-responsive justice. Such decisions were not arrived at by chance. Over 60,000 Ukrainian women are currently defending against Russia's aggression as part of the Ukrainian military. Ukraine has also increased the number of women who are part of Ukraine's Cabinet of Ministers. A platform on gender mainstreaming and inclusion during recovery that ensures the inclusion of the principle of gender equality in the process of the recovery of Ukraine and that provides for better coordination between executive authorities and other relevant actors, such as civil society and business representatives, has been adopted.

As the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security gathers to reaffirm the importance of resolution 1325 (2000), in preparation for its twenty-fifth year in 2025, we agree on the need to set goals for specific commitments. It is important that we unite in our call for ever-increasing gender equality and women's full, equal and meaningful participation in political and public life. That must remain fundamental to our common goal of lasting international peace and security, as called for in the Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace. To that end, we urge all Member States to continue to protect and promote women's human rights and ensure the full, equal and meaningful and safe participation and leadership of women in all aspects of peace and security, with the target of 50 per cent. Support to women's organizations and women activists is crucial in that regard.

In conjunction with that target must be the effective prevention and response to all forms of sexual and gender-based violence and discrimination. At the Nairobi Summit marking the 25th anniversary of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, Ukraine pledged to end gender-based violence and to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls by the year 2030. Towards achieving that goal, the Government of Ukraine has

since criminalized domestic violence, formed special police units trained to address situations of domestic violence, introduced the practice of emergency protection orders and shelters and criminalized the failure to comply with such orders.

After the de-occupation of a number of territories of Ukraine, we were faced with massive atrocities, including rapes and other forms of conflict-related sexual violence, committed by the Russian military against civilians. At this stage, it is impossible to find out how many Ukrainians have been subjected to those brutal crimes, given that such violations are barely reported. The first cases of sexual violence committed by Russian soldiers against Ukrainian women, girls, men and boys were recorded there, as documented by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine and the human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine.

To address and prevent conflict-related sexual violence, the framework of cooperation between the Government of Ukraine and the United Nations was signed. Ukraine became the first country to launch an all-encompassing coordination mechanism to combat conflict-related sexual violence. We also adopted a detailed implementation plan involving State institutions, civil society and international organizations. Ensuring survivors' non-discriminatory and comprehensive access to essential services, including sexual and reproductive health care and mental health services, as well as access to gender-responsive justice, is crucial. Ukraine remains committed to working closely with all stakeholders. I would like to invite the Group of Friends to visit our survivor relief centres, established in partnership with the United Nations Population Fund.

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

Ms. Totladze (Georgia): At the outset, we would like to thank the presidency of Brazil for convening today's open debate, as well as all the briefers for their valuable contributions.

Georgia aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union.

Sustainable peace cannot be achieved without women's full, equal and meaningful participation at all levels of decision-making. While gender parity in the peace and security dimension globally is yet

to be achieved, we welcome women's increasing participation in areas pertaining to international peace and security. Despite the progress, the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda remains too slow and accelerated efforts are needed, in accordance with landmark resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions.

Ensuring the meaningful engagement of women in the peace process is a high priority for the Government of Georgia. We are actively pursuing the policy of promoting the issues related to the needs of conflict-affected women, as envisaged in the most recent, fourth, national action plan for the implementation of the United Nations resolution on women and peace and security. The latest plan, which covers the period of 2022–2024, also envisages integration of a gender perspective into the security sector and decision-making processes, as well as meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention and resolution. In addition, it aims at protecting the rights of conflict-affected women by ensuring their physical, social and economic security. In that regard, Georgia remains committed to maintaining the issues of conflict-affected women, including internally displaced persons, on the agenda of the Geneva International Discussions, which is the only format of negotiations between Georgia and Russia on the security and humanitarian issues stemming from the Russian aggression and occupation of two regions of Georgia.

Regrettably, despite the efforts of my Government to empower conflict-affected women, Russia's ongoing occupation and effective control over Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions of Georgia, which was legally attested by the landmark decision of the European Court of Human Rights on 21 January 2021, hinders the peace process and prevents my Government from sharing the human rights protection framework with women remaining on the other side of the occupation line.

After 15 years of full-scale military aggression against Georgia and illegal occupation of its Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions, Russia continues to breach the ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008. The grave human rights situation in the occupied regions continues to cause immense suffering for the conflict-affected people on both sides of the occupation line.

Unfortunately, there were several cases of the detention of young Georgian women with fictional and absurd charges. Deliberately targeting female citizens

of Georgia is a dangerous trend with a strong gender dimension that aims to pressure, scare and humiliate the most vulnerable part of ethnic Georgian population in the occupied regions that are already victims of constant discrimination. Given those facts of human rights violations, it is of the utmost importance that international and regional human rights monitoring mechanisms be allowed in the occupied regions.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Georgia's readiness to continue integrating gender perspectives in decision-making, the advancement of women's rights and their meaningful participation in the peace process in line with the Security Council resolutions.

The President: I now give the floor to Ms. Ronner-Grubačić.

Ms. Ronner-Grubačić: I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States. The candidate countries Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the potential candidate country Georgia, as well as Andorra, Monaco and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

Gender equality is a universal value. Resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent women and peace and security resolutions remind us of our joint commitment to keep women's rights and their leadership at the core of security and political decision-making. The world faces alarming security and conflict shifts and geopolitical power competition. Advanced technology and cyberwarfare, as well as climate change redefine how we think about security. We have witnessed the weaponization of energy, food, migration movements and information. There are attempts to weaken the rules-based multilateral order. Against that backdrop, the leadership of women and their full, equal and meaningful participation at all levels of decision-making are essential. Our commitment to mainstreaming the gender perspective in responding effectively to those security threats is all the more important. While the space for civil society is shrinking across the world, women and girls have continued to play a critical role in resolving and mediating conflicts, promoting reconciliation and fostering stability in their communities and nations. Within the scope of today's discussion, allow me to highlight three concrete areas for further focus.

First, we should work resolutely for sustained, predictable and flexible funding for women's and women-led organizations. Funding cuts and

restrictions hinder women's financial independence and operational capabilities, which slows down the effective implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

Secondly, we need to act decisively to end and prevent all forms of violence, harassment, intimidation, threats and reprisals, on- and offline, as well as the spread of disinformation designed to discredit and silence women politicians, human rights defenders, peacebuilders and civil-society activists. That includes reprisals against women who engage with the United Nations, particularly the Security Council.

Thirdly, we should take strong measures to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership of women in diverse situations and conditions in political, military and security structures, as well as peace operations and missions. That must include transforming discriminatory structures and social norms that hinder such participation and working hard to remove barriers to it. The EU will take a coordinated approach to risk mitigation and the prevention of all forms of sexual and gender-based violence. We will also make sure that responses are victim- and survivor-centred and trauma-sensitive, including by ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, as well as mental health and psychological support.

In the EU's strategic approach to women and peace and security, women's participation is a cross-cutting priority that together with gender mainstreaming reinforces the implementation of the entire women and peace and security agenda. Over the past three years, we have increased the share of women among international staff in our civilian missions to 28 per cent. We have increased our funding for the EU Human Rights Defenders Mechanism to €30 million, and we continue to make the voices of Afghan women of diverse backgrounds heard through the Afghan Women Leaders Forum. In collaboration with all others, the EU will continue to promote women's leadership and participation in peace and security at all levels.

The President: I now give the floor to Mrs. Elardja Flitti.

Mrs. Elardja Flitti (*spoke in Arabic*): We do not doubt for a moment that much progress has been made in advancing the role of women and their participation in the processes of maintaining international peace and security, whether through their international and regional participation within military and police

peacekeeping forces or as leaders in the United Nations, including its peace operations and various political missions. However, there is still a lot of work to be done within the framework of the Security Council, especially considering the retreat we have seen from some hard-won gains in both legislative and executive bodies and institutions, as the statistics testify.

Given the international community's need for more ideas and efforts to enhance the role of women and involve them in various political, economic and social fields nationally, regionally and internationally — especially where peace processes and the maintenance of international peace and security are concerned — and in the interests of saving time, on behalf of the League of Arab States I would like to focus on one of the four proposals included in our statement, whose full text will be transmitted to the Council within the framework of supporting and strengthening the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

The Arab League emphasizes the importance of focusing on the cohesion of that agenda nationally, regionally and internationally if we are to help women achieve their inalienable rights. In that regard, it must be pointed out that the Israeli occupation's continued barbaric violations of women's and children's rights in the occupied Palestinian territory not only affect Palestinian women there and their ability to participate in peace and security efforts, but also affect the ability of Palestinian women and girls to play their roles in ordinary political, economic and social life. We do not doubt for a moment that Israel's recent brutal and ongoing war on the defenceless people of Gaza is an attempt to destroy their communities, displace them to neighbouring areas and obstruct our international and regional efforts to achieve peace in the region and in occupied Palestine. Unfortunately, we have failed to achieve that peace for more than seven decades. The war is a flagrant violation not only of resolution 1325 (2000) but of international law, international humanitarian law and human rights, not to mention the customs and laws that the three tolerant religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam are founded on.

At the regional level, in an embodiment of the institutional cooperation between the Arab League and the Security Council, as a follow-up to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and based on the League's belief in the societal and institutional role of women in building, making, and sustaining peace, the Arab League and its member States have

established many constructive plans on the ground, including strategies aimed at protecting Arab women and enhancing their role, especially in hotbeds of conflict in our region. The most recent is the formation of an emergency committee to protect women during armed conflict at the regional level. We have also established the Arab Network of Peace Mediators, where experiences and benefits are currently being exchanged through close coordination and cooperation with UN-Women and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia as well.

In conclusion, in recognition of women's pivotal role in preventive diplomacy aimed at building, preserving and sustaining peace, in a manner commensurate with the role owed to women in our societies today, we still hope to see our next meeting for the upcoming year held in this Chamber, so that we can review together the achievements that women have realized on the ground nationally, regionally and internationally, as part of their continuing determination to truly be active partners alongside men in establishing international peace and security and keeping our planet safe, secure and stable, free of wars and all conflicts.

The President: There are still 61 speakers on the list. I would like to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously.

I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank Brazil for convening this important annual open debate. Mexico affirms its support for all women activists, human rights defenders, peacebuilders and civil-society leaders and condemns any indiscriminate or targeted attacks on civilian populations, particularly women and girls, in any circumstances, as they violate the principle of distinction enshrined in international humanitarian law.

Peace can be achieved only if it is inclusive. We therefore support women's full, equal and substantive participation in peace processes. Although the women and peace and security agenda has been built on a solid legal framework of 10 Security Council resolutions, women continue to be excluded from decision-making and peace processes. We believe that invaluable legal framework must be fully implemented. As our Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Ms. Adriana Bárcena Ibarra, has said, Mexico refuses to allow the progress-oriented international standards on gender equality that we

have worked so hard to build to be called into question. In that regard, Mexico is aware of the importance of ensuring women's human rights, women's sexual and reproductive health, including access to safe abortion, women's autonomy over their bodies and the provision of mental health-care services and psychosocial support.

Mexico was the first developing country to announce a feminist foreign policy, as we are determined to change the structures that prevent the advancement of women and the full enjoyment of their human rights. In my country's recent participation in the Security Council as a non-permanent member, we promoted efforts aimed at implementing that agenda. For example, in the Informal Experts Group on Women, Peace and Security, which we co-chaired with Ireland, we promoted measures for the Council to include a transformative approach to gender in its work. That is why we urge the current and future co-Chairs of the Informal Experts Group to continue upholding the central nature of gender equality and the scope of human rights for all women and girls, including the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence, in all international peace and security processes and all outcome documents adopted by the Council.

We recognize the good practices of the Council in recent years, for example, the statement of shared commitments to advance the women and peace and security agenda, which some 16 incoming and outgoing elected members of the Council signed in October 2021 to ensure that, during our respective rotating presidencies of the Security Council, we could close the persistent gap between words and deeds. Those commitments have contributed to increasing the participation of women civil society members in the meetings of the Council and highlighting the cross-cutting nature of the agenda.

United Nations peacekeeping operations strengthen women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace processes. However, we have still not yet achieved the goal of women making up at least 15 per cent of total deployed uniformed personnel. We encourage further progress in implementing the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy by 2028.

Mexico has been gradually increasing its participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations and, at the same time, the percentage of women among those in uniform. Currently, the percentage of Mexican women among those deployed stands at 40 per cent. Moreover, in coordination with the Ibero-American General Secretariat, my country promoted the creation in

June this year of the Ibero-American Network of Women Mediators, which promotes the meaningful participation of women in mediation and the peaceful settlement of disputes in the Ibero-American region.

National action plans are a key tool for promoting domestic policy that fosters gender equality in the area of security. Mexico's national action plan promotes the development of the women peacebuilders programme, which supports women's empowerment and leadership at the local and State level in efforts aimed at peacemaking, the prevention of gender-based violence and peacebuilding. We also recognize the contribution of the Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, which was established by the Generation Equality Forum that was co-chaired by Mexico and France in 2021, to advancing the women and peace and security agenda. We encourage the ongoing promotion of synergies to ramp up the implementation of the agenda on the ground.

Lastly, we reiterate Mexico's commitment to continue defending the human rights of women and girls in this forum and all multilateral forums.

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

Mr. Hwang (Republic of Korea): I thank Brazil for hosting today's important meeting. My gratitude also goes to the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of UN-Women, as well as all the other briefers, for their valuable remarks.

The Republic of Korea aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

The Secretary-General's report on women and peace and security (S/2023/725) provides another frustrating picture of our current reality. Exclusion, inequality and misogyny encapsulate the status of women across the world, as described in the report. In Afghanistan, women have been progressively erased from public life through the issuance of more than 50 edicts to suppress their rights. In the Sudan, widespread sexual violence terrorizes women and girls in Darfur and beyond. To address that reality and fully implement resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, we must recommit to the agenda and enhance the Security Council's role.

First, the full, equal and meaningful participation of women should be practice, not rhetoric. As that commences with listening to women's voices and

making their perspectives integral to decision-making, we welcome the increased number of women civil society briefers to the Council. As part of our own efforts, the Republic of Korea has been proudly hosting the annual International Conference on Action with Women and Peace since 2019. We look forward to hearing from a diverse constituency of women at the upcoming fifth Conference, to be held on 30 November in Seoul.

Secondly, ensuring a safe environment for women's participation is imperative. It is alarming that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights documented incidents of reprisals against 172 women and girls working with the United Nations in 2022. Furthermore, more than 30 women from civil society who addressed the Security Council last year were targeted for reprisals. We condemn all attacks and reprisals against women involved in human rights, humanitarian work and peacebuilding activities, especially those who are cooperating with the United Nations. We must ensure their safety through monitoring and reporting, as well as preventive measures, including robust mandates for United Nations missions to protect and promote women's participation.

Last but not least, women peacebuilders, as well as human rights defenders, should be provided with the necessary resources. We emphasize the importance of ensuring adequate, predictable and sustained financing for the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. The Republic of Korea increased its contribution to the Peacebuilding Fund to more than \$4.3 million this year and will consider further increasing its contributions, both to implement the women and peace and security agenda and to advance peacebuilding.

Taking full consideration of the dire need to support women's participation in all peace processes, the Republic of Korea is proud to announce that it will join the statement of shared commitments to advance the women and peace and security agenda as an incoming member of the Security Council. We will actively integrate the women and peace and security agenda into the agendas of the Council in various contexts, not only during our monthly presidency but also through the entire term of our membership of the Council. We will do our utmost to ensure the full, equal meaningful and safe participation of women and look forward to working closely with other Council members in that regard.

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

Mrs. Zin Zawawi (Malaysia): At the outset, my delegation would like to express its appreciation to Brazil for convening today's important debate. Malaysia would also like to thank the briefers for their insights and assessment.

Our delegation aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Viet Nam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

The landmark resolution 1325 (2000) reaffirms the significant role played by women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding initiatives. It calls upon Member States to increase the representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions. The resolution and other relevant resolutions are evidence of the unequivocal trust and confidence that we put in women as agents of change in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Today, 23 years after its adoption, it is time that we take stock of progress and get our priorities straight. Against the backdrop of heightened violence in armed conflict across the region, the regression in global efforts to advance the agenda of women and peace and security is highly regrettable. It is alarming that, despite notable achievements, the progress has been too slow or too narrow, or has been made easy to reverse. Women continue to be marginalized from peace processes and excluded from decision-making positions. It is unfortunate, but unsurprising, that that structural exclusion correlates with the prolongation of conflict, as reported in the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2023/725).

Consistent with the goals of Malaysia's national policy on women, launched in 1989, efforts have been undertaken to ensure women's participation in the decision-making process at all levels in Malaysia. The formulation of Malaysia's national policies takes into account a gender perspective in the process of furthering our domestic and global peace and security. That also serves as a basis of the deployment of 868 personnel of the Malaysian Armed Forces and Royal Malaysia Police to five United Nations peacekeeping operations, 96 of whom are female. There is a pressing need for more women to be included in peace processes, as their qualities of compassion and empathic listening are invaluable assets in addressing issues such as gender-

based crimes and conflict-related sexual violence in armed conflict. As a member of ASEAN, Malaysia also fully endorses the Joint Statement on Promoting Women, Peace and Security in ASEAN, adopted in November 2017. The ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security, subsequently launched in 2021, is a further testament to our commitment to advancing the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda to promote sustainable peace and security for all citizens in the region.

Malaysia has women leaders in multiple disciplines of peace and security, including, inter alia, our Chief Justice, parliamentarians, top diplomats, peacekeepers and security force members. Fortified with courage and resilience, those inspiring ladies broke through the glass ceiling through their ambition and competence. Going forward, we will continue to ensure that women continue to play a key role in Malaysia's commitments to maintaining international peace and security.

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

Mr. Feruță (Romania): I would like to add a few points to those that were made in the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union and in the statement to be delivered on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security. Romania welcomes the most recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2023/725), as well as its recommendations.

The negative trends in the report are alarming. We are now in the first days of the seventy-ninth year since the United Nations was founded. We celebrated United Nations Day just yesterday. While we commemorate such a momentous event, it is appalling that 614 million women and girls were living in conflict-affected countries in 2022, which is 50 per cent higher than five years ago. We obviously need to do more to avoid complete failure, especially as we approach 2025, which will be the milestone twenty-fifth anniversary of the women and peace and security agenda and the 30-year commemoration of the adoption of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence and threats and attacks against women and girls remain on the rise in many areas across the world, including in neighbouring Ukraine. We will continue to call for holding perpetrators accountable and for survivors to be provided with support for integration.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are key pillars of the women and peace and security agenda. To that end, women should be guaranteed meaningful participation and leadership positions during peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. One success story in that regard has been women's representation in the front-line negotiation teams during the peace negotiations in Colombia. We need to duplicate such stories of women's meaningful and genuine participation in peacebuilding in other geographical ecosystems, from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the Sudan and South Sudan, as well as in the Central African Republic, Somalia and Mali. Likewise, we need to encourage local ownership and the protection of women civil society groups. Excluding women from societal and political arenas, or denying them access to justice, as is happening under Taliban rule, is not the way forward.

The promotion and protection of women's rights is a constant of our foreign policy and a priority of our membership in the Human Rights Council. My Government, the Romanian Government, has taken important steps to implement resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. The first national strategy and national action plan was adopted three years ago, in 2020. The Ministry of National Defence is currently drafting a second updated version for the period from 2024 to 2028. Romania has also taken important institutional measures in support of women's participation and representation in the defence and security sectors, including at the decision-making level. Romania and the United States are the current Chairs of the global Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network, comprising 100 members. Our Foreign Minister — who, I am happy to say, is Madam Foreign Minister — co-chaired a ministerial debate during the most recent high-level week.

Lastly, as part of ongoing efforts, member countries of the Network are invited to take part in the international conference of the global Network, to be held in Bucharest in almost two weeks, from 7 to 9 November. The event that we will be hosting will be a new opportunity to improve coordination between member States and regional organizations and strengthen the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

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

Mr. Šimonović (Croatia): I thank Brazil's presidency for organizing this debate and the briefers for sharing their valuable insights.

Croatia aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and the statement to be delivered on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security. I would also like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

Twenty-three years ago, resolution 1325 (2000) recognized the unique role of women in war and peace, urging Member States to ensure women's increased representation at all levels of decision-making, including in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. There have been some successes in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). However, we are facing negative trends today. Global security is declining, disrespect for international humanitarian law is growing, and women's rights and gender equality are under increasing threat. We need to improve global security and respect for international humanitarian and human rights law, and we need a stronger role played by women to achieve it. Croatia's experience clearly demonstrates that women not only bear an immense burden during conflict, but also have a crucial role to play in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. We are fully committed to promoting and implementing the women and peace and security agenda, as outlined in our second national action plan, which is currently in place.

We call on all States to uphold landmark resolution 1325 (2000) and follow-up resolutions and align their laws with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and general recommendation No. 30 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, on women and peace and security. They represent powerful tools at our disposal to safeguard women's rights and strengthen their participation and leadership in war and peace.

As Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Croatia prioritizes the role of women in peacebuilding and sustaining peace. We invite all Member States to support sufficient and predictable financing of the Peacebuilding Fund and its gender-sensitive programmes. We also emphasize the importance of continuous cooperation with our civil society partners, who must be systematically included in the implementation of the resolution 1325 (2000) agenda, conflict prevention and women-empowering activities.

Lastly, the New Agenda for Peace and the women and peace and security agenda are compatible agendas, and, as we prepare for the Summit of the Future, we should bring them together, bearing in mind that women's rights are human rights — in war and in peace.

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

Ms. O'Neill (Canada): As agreed, I am pleased to deliver two statements today. The second will be Canada's, and the first is on behalf of the 67 member States of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, representing all five regional groups of the United Nations and the European Union.

We recognize the determination of all women and girls in diverse conditions and situations who are building peace and preventing conflict.

We emphasize five points.

First, we urge all Member States and the United Nations system to redouble our efforts to protect and promote women's human rights and ensure their full, equal, meaningful and safe participation and leadership in all aspects of peace and security. We must raise the level of ambition regarding peace processes at all stages, with a target of 50 per cent. The United Nations should ensure that women's participation is a standard requirement in all of the peace processes it supports.

Secondly, we must dismantle the patriarchy and oppressive power structures, which stand in the way of progress on gender equality and women's full, equal and meaningful participation in political and public life.

Thirdly, we must create safe, secure and enabling environments—both on-and-offline—for all peacebuilders, peacekeepers, human rights and environmental defenders, civil-society leaders, journalists, media workers, advocates for gender equality and others to carry out their essential work. That includes strongly condemning gender-based violence that occurs through technology or is amplified by it, as well as any attacks, intimidation, retaliation or reprisals against women peacebuilders and human rights defenders and advocates for gender equality, especially those who cooperate with the United Nations. Member States and the United Nations system must give concrete support to the work of women peacebuilders and human rights defenders and take all necessary steps to prevent attacks and protect those at risk. We must also promote more predictable, sustained and flexible funding for peacebuilding by local and women's rights organizations and networks.

Fourthly, we call for full respect for international law and for preventing and responding to all forms of sexual and gender-based violence and discrimination, on- and offline. That requires putting victims and survivors at the heart of all efforts. It means ensuring their non-discriminatory and comprehensive access to essential services, including sexual and reproductive health-care services and mental health and psychosocial services, as well as gender-responsive justice. Where national institutions are not able or willing to act against perpetrators, we should deter such crimes with all the tools at our disposal, including by referring matters to the International Criminal Court. The Security Council has shown that it can use targeted sanctions against those who perpetrate or direct sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict, and we encourage it to take such action.

Finally, we encourage the continued development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national and regional action plans, together with women peacebuilders, of course.

I will now briefly address the Council on behalf of Canada.

Perhaps like many others around this table today, when we started preparing our national statement we looked at the one we made last year (see S/PV.9158), the year before (see S/PV.8886) and the years before that. We were struck by how almost all of those texts would be equally relevant today. I do not like to think how far we could go back in years and continue to find usable material — references to growing threats against women peacebuilders, appeals for more consistent implementation and even specific calls for recognizing and resourcing the leadership of Afghan, Haitian, Israeli, Palestinian, South Sudanese, Sudanese and other women working for peace, including Indigenous women in Canada and around the world.

Yet while many of the words we are using could be the same, this moment feels different. It feels especially raw and fearsome, as though so much of the work being done by so many to centre humankind, strengthen institutions and ultimately build peace is increasingly being lost every day. More than ever, the women and peace and security agenda can be pivotal. That means heeding women peacebuilders' calls, building new partnerships across traditional divides, silos and geopolitical blocs based on outdated power dynamics

and recognizing that the value that can best define how supposedly like-minded we are should be the desire for all people to live in peace with dignity and agency.

(spoke in French)

That means recognizing the funding gap facing women peacebuilders and their organizations and working to close it, in particular by ensuring adequate, predictable and sustainable financing. For Canada, it also means continuing to reflect with humility on our actions abroad, as well as at home.

(spoke in English)

Ultimately, we hope that we can all be seeking new text for this debate next year.

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

Ms. Lassen (Denmark): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries — Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Denmark.

We thank Brazil for convening this important debate and our briefers for their insightful remarks.

In a time shaped by the proliferation of armed conflict, we must redouble our efforts to implement resolution 1325 (2000). That is essential if we are to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and succeed in meeting the ambitions of the Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace.

The full framework of the women and peace and security agenda is robust and extensive. However, progress on its implementation is unacceptably slow. The report of the Secretary-General (S/2023/725) is clear. A majority of peace processes continue to take place with no women mediators, negotiators or signatories. Women human rights defenders and peacebuilders continue to be exposed to violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, harassment, reprisals, threats and intimidation online as well as offline. Women's rights organizations remain critically underfunded. Yet it is evident that the full, equal and meaningful participation of women at all levels in political and peacebuilding processes, as well as in peacekeeping, is essential to lasting peace and security. In that regard, we would like to draw attention to the open letter of 16 October signed by 617 civil-society organizations, and echo its call to support women's full, equal, meaningful and safe participation and leadership. History has taught us that

inclusive peace processes are more likely to produce sustainable results. All over the world, women have successfully contributed to more robust democracies and longer-lasting peace. Positive political change and development are in high demand, and women must be in the driving seat. We would like to highlight three lines of effort.

First, local women-led groups play an indispensable role in preventing conflicts and building peace in communities, fostering dialogue and responding to crises. As the Secretary-General's report points out, local mediation can be a key entry point for women's participation in peacemaking when high-level negotiations are deadlocked. We must do more to ensure that those groups can participate meaningfully in all political processes — including track 1 processes — not least by providing flexible funding, for example through mechanisms such as the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, access to capacity-building and protection against reprisals. It is equally important to exert political pressure when women are excluded.

Secondly, the United Nations must take concrete steps to ensure greater diversity and representation of women, including young women, in the mediation teams it leads or co-leads. The United Nations must set and lead by example to achieve a fundamental normative and practical shift. Women's full, equal and meaningful participation is ultimately about breaking power structures and sustaining peace.

Thirdly and finally, it is the responsibility of Member States, with support from the United Nations, to address all cases of violence, harassment, intimidation or threats, both on- and offline, against women peacebuilders and human rights defenders. The Nordic countries emphasize the importance of ensuring zero tolerance for such harassment and the need for strengthened accountability mechanisms in that regard. We reaffirm the Secretary-General's call to dismantle oppressive power structures, which stand in the way of progress on gender equality and women's full, equal and meaningful participation in political and public life. The Nordic countries remain committed to working with partners, including women's and feminist organizations, to advance the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

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

Mr. Dang (Viet Nam): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

ASEAN affirms that women's empowerment is not just a moral imperative but a strategic necessity. Failing to harness women's full potential not only impedes the progress and security of more than half of the world's population, it also hampers our collective progress and security. Women are not mere statistics in conflict data. They are effective peacemakers, agents of change and architects of reconciliation. Their absence is not an oversight but a critical flaw.

Despite the existence of robust frameworks, discriminatory gender norms continue to pervade societies globally. Women remain absent from peace negotiations and political decision-making processes, or at least significantly underrepresented in them. Moreover, conflict disproportionately subjects women and girls to sexual violence, displacement and hindered access to justice.

The realization of the women and peace and security agenda demands an unwavering commitment across multiple societal strata. Adequate resources must be channelled to empower women for leadership roles, and existing laws and policies should be rigorously enforced. The dismantling of entrenched social and cultural barriers is essential and can be achieved through targeted education and awareness campaigns. The role of political will in that context cannot be overstated.

Implementing the women and peace and security agenda has long been recognized as essential to achieving sustainable peace and prosperity in the ASEAN region. ASEAN is committed to ensuring gender equality and the full protection of women's rights. We also remain steadfast in our objectives to maintain regional peace, address shared security concerns and advance development and prosperity for all citizens. The women and peace and security agenda in ASEAN is guided by its commitments to implement resolution 1325 (2000) and other related resolutions on women and peace and security.

Since the adoption of the 2017 joint statement on promoting women and peace and security, ASEAN has achieved important results in implementing the women and peace and security agenda through concerted multisectoral efforts and partnerships. The ASEAN Women for Peace Registry was established in 2018 as a creative initiative to mobilize resources and consolidate

knowledge for capacity-building and advocacy on the gendered approach to peace and conflict in the region. Aligning the efforts of the ASEAN Committee on Women, the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children and the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation have been pivotal to ASEAN's collective action in mainstreaming women's rights and gender equality in peace and security.

The ASEAN defence sector is actively dedicated to translating the women and peace and security agenda into actionable collaboration. ASEAN women, military and law enforcement officers have also made a positive impact globally through their active participation in the United Nations peacekeeping operations.

To further enhance women's engagement for sustainable peace, ASEAN has embraced an all-encompassing approach to women and peace and security from the angle of preventing and countering violent extremism and focusing on disaster management and climate change to promoting women's participation in peace processes and post-conflict rehabilitation.

Recognizing the mutual reinforcement and interconnectivity of economics and peace, regional efforts are being made to articulate the women and peace and security agenda in the context of economic integration. Women's economic empowerment is also enforced as a form of conflict prevention, resolution and recovery.

ASEAN member States have also undertaken respective concrete steps across the spectrum of peace and security at the national level. We have increased the participation of women in military and police roles in United Nations peacekeeping operations. Additionally, several ASEAN member States have enacted laws and policies aimed at preventing violence against women and girls in conflict-related situations.

In conclusion, ASEAN reiterates its full support for the women and peace and security agenda. We remain committed to working hard and hand in hand with the United Nations and partners worldwide to bring about meaningful changes both in policies and on the ground. Only by empowering women as equal partners in preventing conflict and building peace, can we build a just, inclusive and resilient world.

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

Ms. Chan Valverde (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Women's advancement has stalled, and their underrepresentation continues in multiple official processes and bodies related to the maintenance of international peace and security. Yet women continue to bear a disproportionate burden in conflicts. We must act urgently to avoid further setbacks as we approach the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000).

In that regard, let me make three points.

First, most resolutions under the women and peace and security umbrella deplore sexual and gender-based violence as a weapon of war. However, the Council has yet to examine online gender-based violence within its normative framework, let alone its intersectionality.

While women and girls face serious barriers to Internet access and connectivity in rural and conflict-affected regions, online violence prevents them from participating in discussions and participating in private or exclusive spaces, affecting their full and meaningful participation in areas from the negotiation of peace agreements to the consolidation and maintenance of peace. Costa Rica further regrets that online gender-based violence continues to be perceived as less serious than violence that takes place in the real world.

Secondly, it is clear to Costa Rica that States lack a firm commitment to empower women's full, equal and meaningful agency and participation, as there continues to be a significant gap in funding at both the international and local levels. To close that gap, Costa Rica calls for greater involvement of civil society and the private sector. States must collaborate with women's organizations at the local level and recognize their experience and capacity, thereby laying the groundwork for transformative change.

Thirdly, it is the duty of States to create safe and enabling environments for women to carry out their work independently and without undue interference, including in situations of armed conflict, and to address threats, violence and incitement to hatred against them, as is well established in resolution 2493 (2019). However, in 2020, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights verified the killing of 35 women human rights defenders in conflict-affected areas. The Council should promote the participation and protection of women human rights defenders, peace activists and survivors, fully taking into account their rights, safety, dignity and the long-term needs of those individuals and their families.

Women have always had a voice. They have shown tremendous leadership and worked on the ground for peace and security. Therefore, this debate should not focus on what can be given to women, but on dismantling the barriers to their participation, advancing the objectives of resolution 1325 (2000) and honouring the immeasurable legacy of the women who have come before me.

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

Ms. Brandt (Kingdom of the Netherlands): I would like to thank Brazil for organizing today's important debate and the briefers for their statements, and above all, for the work they are doing to make women's participation a reality on the ground, indeed translating it from theory into practice.

At the outset, we join others in expressing our concern about the impact of the escalating violence on women and girls in Israel and the Palestinian territories.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands fully aligns itself with the statements of the European Union; the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, on whose behalf we just heard a statement; and the Feminist Foreign Policy Plus Group.

There can be no lasting peace, if we do not take into account half of the population's voices, perspectives and lived experiences. And still, there are few examples of truly inclusive peace processes. Too often, masculine power dynamics decide the course of conflict and our peace and reconciliation efforts. We could not agree more with the Secretary-General — women's full, equal and meaningful participation in building peace should be the norm, not an aspiration or an afterthought.

Today we would like to highlight three areas for action and share some of our own initiatives.

First, the Kingdom of the Netherlands is committed to creating a safe environment for women to participate in political spheres, online and offline. That means the participation of all voices, including LGBTI voices. Through our SDG5 Fund, we support women's inclusion in political and decision-making processes across the world, helping partners to address barriers that women may face, opening up spaces within political parties, changing laws, improving women's access to economic resources and elevating women's social status.

Secondly, local, women-led and feminist organizations are crucial in advancing the women and peace and security agenda. We need to support those organizations as they work to break through the barriers to women's participation in peace processes, as we do through our long-term programmes such as Leading from the South.

Thirdly, through our feminist foreign policy, the Kingdom of the Netherlands aims to address the root causes of gender inequality across all aspects of our foreign policy, at all times, including in times of crisis. That also requires self-reflection and proper evaluation of our own policies because we all need to learn, and it is important that our efforts to advance gender equality should not happen in silos, but be integrated throughout our policies.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands remains strongly committed to women's full, equal and meaningful participation. We should stand together to achieve that and to counter attempts to reverse the progress made so far.

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

Mrs. Hanlomyuang (Thailand): Thailand aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Viet Nam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

At the outset, I wish to thank Brazil for this important open debate and all the briefers for their contributions.

Thailand is fully committed to advancing the women and peace and security agenda. We are convinced that women are active agents for transformative change to achieve sustainable development and peace. However, despite our continued efforts to promote the women and peace and security agenda, it is clear from the Secretary-General's report (S/2023/725) that we need to do more to strengthen its implementation.

To that end, we wish to highlight the following four points.

First, political will is key. We must continue to promote women's leadership and meaningful participation by translating the women and peace and security agenda into national policies and programmes at all levels. On our part, Thailand's national measures and guidelines on women and peace and security provides a framework for a whole-of-Government

approach and partnership with the international community. We are also finalizing our national action plan on women and peace and security to further strengthen women's involvement in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Secondly, we must foster an environment where uniformed women personnel can participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations in a sustainable manner and mainstream gender perspectives in United Nations peace and security efforts. In that regard, Thailand supports the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy in peacekeeping operations, while believing that the New Agenda for Peace should place greater emphasis on, *inter alia*, education, empowerment and respect for gender.

Through our efforts to empower and equip women personnel with the required skills, Thai female participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations is rising, and we pledge to sustain that trend. Our goal for 2024 is a minimum level of 10 per cent women in our Horizontal Military Engineering Company.

Thirdly, integrating the women and peace and security agenda into regional platforms is equally important. In our region, we adopted the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security in order to mobilize the whole of ASEAN to advance the women and peace and security agenda. The ASEAN Women for Peace Registry was also developed as a tool to galvanize expertise to support ASEAN member States in implementing that important agenda.

Lastly, multi-stakeholder partnerships are crucial for putting the women and peace and security agenda into practice. We must continue working with all stakeholders to promote capacity-building and technological progress and to ensure public awareness and support, with a view to creating an enabling environment for women to take part in peace and security issues and beyond.

In conclusion, Thailand stands firm in our commitment to the women and peace and security agenda. We are committed to working closely with the United Nations, other Member States and stakeholders in our efforts to further drive forward this agenda for the benefit of all.

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

Ms. Oehri (Liechtenstein): We welcome today's debate on the participation pillar of the women and peace and security agenda, which has had immense impact on the ground since its inception more than two decades ago. In many parts of the world, women are key agents of political change and contribute to sustainable peace as peacekeepers, mediators, lawyers and journalists, among others. Their inclusion in peace talks has proven indispensable for lasting peace agreements, and they have played crucial roles in humanitarian settings. In that connection, we welcome, in particular, the important gender-sensitive lens of the International Committee of the Red Cross. The recent escalation in the Gaza war underlines the need to ensure full respect, at all times, of international humanitarian law and, specifically, the protection of civilians, as well as to meet the special needs of women and girls in armed conflict.

Despite important achievements in the implementation of the women and peace and security participation pillar worldwide, women's equal, full and meaningful participation remains the exception rather than the rule. Often among the most active agents of change at the grass-roots level, they routinely face discriminatory practices that exclude them from the more formal processes, such as peace talks and negotiations. Translating the women and peace and security agenda from theory into practice means empowering actors whose legitimate claim for participation continues to be neglected and ignored. To do so, we must listen to, invest in, and include women in all decision-making processes, also in line with the recommendations by the New Agenda for Peace and the New Vision for the Rule of Law. Looking ahead, we must ensure that the Pact for the Future recognizes and further promotes women's critical role in global disarmament and the maintenance of international peace and security.

Women human rights defenders, like the civil society briefers today, are on the front lines of the fight for women's rights in conflict and post-conflict situations. They operate in the hypermasculinized context of war to push against centuries of discrimination and violence faced by women and girls. By documenting violations of human rights law and international humanitarian law, they contribute to accountability and justice, as well as to peace processes that pay due attention to gender. In her most recent report, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders underscores the critical work of women in

Yemen, Syria and Myanmar in that regard. Due to their pivotal engagement in human rights, gender equality, reproductive health and LGBTI rights, however, they face elevated risks of reprisals and violence. Despite progress in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, the international community has made little progress in better protecting human rights defenders in conflict-affected settings. Liechtenstein condemns the increasing attacks on, and reprisals against, women human rights defenders and deplores any attempt to obliterate their important contribution to just, sustainable and lasting peace.

As recognized by the Secretary-General's report (S/2023/725), women in politics, too, face online and offline abuse and harassment or violence at an alarming rate — a phenomenon that, sadly, affects women at all levels of political engagement and in all parts of the world, including our own region. For instance, according to a study by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, among female members of Parliament in Europe, more than half had been the target of sexist attacks online, while almost one fourth had suffered sexual violence in the course of their term in office. Protecting women from intimidation and violence is a key factor in their empowerment and enables them to play an active role as agents of change. Only thus can we achieve equal representation of women in positions of leadership, which is a basic prerequisite for a peaceful, just and inclusive world.

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

Ms. Pavluta-Deslandes (Latvia): I thank Brazil for organizing this debate and the briefers for their presentations. Latvia aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the European Union and by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

Over the past 23 years, the women and peace and security agenda has evolved to recognize the disproportionate effects of conflict on women and girls and the crucial role that women play in achieving sustainable peace and security. The agenda calls for our collective efforts to address the dire situations of women and children, most urgently in the Middle East, the Sudan, Syria, Iran and Afghanistan and in Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine — and the list goes on.

The agenda also invites us to adapt to a changing peace and security landscape. Speakers before me have

addressed different aspects of women and peace and security — allow me to touch upon the women, security and climate nexus. In regions across the world, climate change is increasing threats to peace and security. Sea-level rise, floods and droughts are causing livelihood losses. Increased competition for resources escalates tensions into conflicts in areas already struggling with political and economic instability, and again women are the first affected. Low-income rural women depend on natural resources, and that renders them vulnerable to changes in the availability of those resources.

In countries in which women can overcome barriers to their participation, they contribute greatly to the enhancement of peace and security, climate-resilient communities and sustainable resource management. We have seen that happen in Sierra Leone, the Sudan, Colombia, El Salvador and Ecuador.

Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) was adopted 23 years ago. In 2015, the Council recognized the impacts of climate change on peace and security, but only last year did it include in the mandate of a peacekeeping mission gender-sensitive risk assessments of climate change. We also highlight the approach of the Peacebuilding Fund, to which we are regular contributors. Last year, the Fund invested resources aimed at promoting women's participation in climate change adaptation. We welcome those steps and encourage the Council to further integrate climate-related security risks into the women and peace and security agenda.

We all have a lot of work ahead to ensure that women's participation in peace and security becomes reality and practice, not just theory, and Latvia is committed to that.

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

Ms. Jiménez de la Hoz (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the European Union and the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

I thank the President for organizing this open debate on such an important agenda, which, despite its normative development and the large number of action plans adopted in different regions of the world, still has a long way to go to achieve the full and meaningful participation of women in all spheres of society.

In Spain, the action plan for feminist foreign policy 2023–2024 is focused on obtaining concrete results in the area of gender-based discrimination and establishes mechanisms for coordination between the various actors involved and for accountability.

Regarding the women and peace and security agenda, we believe there are two fundamental issues, and I would like to highlight these. The first is prevention, which involves prioritizing conflict prevention and addressing underlying causes, such as gender inequality, by bringing more women into positions of political, economic and security power. Training can also play an important preventive role, and I would like to highlight the European Union Gender Military Training Discipline, which is a course on a comprehensive approach to gender in peace operations, led by the Ministries of Defence and for Foreign Affairs of Spain and the Netherlands and through which nearly 1,000 people of more than 50 nationalities have been trained. Furthermore, we are very satisfied with the results obtained by a new training initiative organized by Spain's Ministry of Defence, which is the first course on gender advisors in peace operations. It was conducted virtually in Spanish, and more than 3,000 students from 23 countries attended.

Recently, Spain has also been working on regional rapprochement projects for mediation, focusing on the role of women. At the Ibero-American level, together with Mexico and a dozen countries in the region, we created the Ibero-American Network of Women Mediators, which seeks to provide training and create a committee of women experts in mediation. With similar objectives, we work with the Economic Community of West African States and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

The second issue I would like to highlight is the protection of women in crisis contexts, including in the digital environment, which is the best tool to enable their participation. We commend the courage of women human rights defenders, who continue to speak out despite the threats and intimidation to which they are subjected. In Spain, of the more than 400 defenders who have benefited from the protection and temporary shelter programme for human rights defenders, half are women. I would also like to highlight that we have evacuated some 2,000 Afghan women, including human rights defenders, judges and journalists, and we are working with other countries and civil society representatives to bring the Taliban before international criminal justice mechanisms. Moreover, for the drafting of our third

national action plan on women and peace and security, Spain will take into account the views of Ukrainian women, so as to support the women and peace and security agenda in that country.

As we approach the twenty-fifth anniversary of the agenda, we must protect women peacebuilders more firmly than ever so that the agenda ceases to be a promise and becomes a reality.

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

Mr. Abdushev (Kazakhstan): We commend the Presidency of Brazil for convening this open debate on women and peace and security dedicated to women's participation in international peace and security. We also thank Secretary-General António Guterres, UN-Women Executive Director Sima Sami Bahous, International Committee of the Red Cross President Mirjana Spoljaric Egger and the civil society representatives for their in-depth and insightful briefings, which reflect the urgency of increasing the role of women in promoting and maintaining peace all over the world.

We acknowledge that while much progress has been made, there is a long way to go to fully implement the women and peace and security mandate. We must bridge the gap between words and actual action, and fully integrate the four pillars of the women and peace and security agenda — participation, protection, prevention and relief and recovery — in our national programmes and policies. Only then will the robust women and peace and security normative framework become a critical tool for conflict prevention and resolution and effect transformative change across all three pillars of the United Nations.

Kazakhstan has been consistently working to strengthen the role of women in sociopolitical life and achieve the highest international standards in gender policy. Gender equality is one of the key priorities of the large-scale political and democratic reforms aimed at building a new Kazakhstan, a socially just democracy based on the principle of leaving no one behind and ensuring equal conditions for all. We have achieved significant progress in addressing gender issues on several fronts, improved our gender equality index by 60 per cent, introduced a 30 per cent quota for women and youth in Parliament and local representative bodies, and increased the proportion of women managers in State-owned corporations to 30 per cent as well.

We are implementing the first national action plan on resolution 1325 (2000) for 2022–2025, which is a whole-of-government strategy developed in inclusive consultations with the United Nations and civil society. The action plan will further contribute to increased women's engagement in decision-making at all levels, their deployment in United Nations peace operations and improved gender-sensitive training for armed and security forces. We have a strong political will, all the necessary resources and a results-based monitoring and evaluation plan to achieve those goals. We have also recently joined the multi-stakeholder Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, launched at the Generation Equality Forum in 2021.

National efforts must be reinforced by commitments at the regional level. In the context, the five countries of Central Asia, with the support of the United Nations, have created the Women Leaders' Caucus to develop effective ways to fully realize the creative and peacemaking potential of women throughout Central Asia.

At the regional level, our country focuses on Afghanistan through a multidimensional approach of conflict prevention and resolution, recovery, reintegration and humanitarian assistance. The lack of access to quality and inclusive education, especially in rural areas, is the main obstacle to achieving women's empowerment. Therefore, together with the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme, Kazakhstan continues to implement a programme to educate Afghan girls in its universities. We encourage donor countries to allocate a greater number of scholarships to women and girls from conflict-affected countries. Kazakhstan also contributes financially to a regional programme for Central Asia and Afghanistan, the United Nations-European Union-led Spotlight Initiative and several other important regional initiatives. Kazakhstan will continue to support the women and peace and security agenda and multilateral efforts to achieve gender equality, peaceful societies and inclusive governance.

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

Mrs. Cedano (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): After the genocide of 1994, women represented more than 60 per cent of the population in Rwanda and faced the monumental task of rebuilding a nation that had been destroyed. Their leadership and

tireless efforts not only transformed the social fabric of the country but also laid the foundation for lasting peace and national reconciliation. And in Afghanistan, where their situation is devastating and extremely alarming, women continue to fight against oppression and for the defence of human rights. Despite the obstacles and regardless of the size of the challenges we face, women remain undeterred.

Women and girls continue to be targets of gender-based violence, including sexual violence, which not only destroys lives but also destroys confidence in institutions and undermines trust in institutions of peace. We must arm ourselves with a sense of urgency and determination in order to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice and that the victims receive the support and the protection they deserve. The absence of women in peace processes prolongs violence and instability and makes it difficult to build equitable and peaceful societies. To change that, it is necessary to consider women as active agents of change and not as passive victims. The Security Council has the responsibility to promote the inclusion of a gender-based perspective in all its decisions and policies and ensure that every resolution and every action it takes reflects a genuine commitment to gender equality.

The Informal Experts Group on Women and Peace and Security has already undertaken critical work on the analysis of the Council with respect to the situation of women and girls and gender issues on the ground, providing knowledge, information and targeted recommendations. That work contributes notably to the development of policies, strategies and initiatives that are more effective in promoting gender-based equality and guaranteeing the rights of women and girls in conflict situations. However, it is important for the recommendations of the Group to be disseminated systematically and made public with a view to creating the necessary support and ensuring that all parties — all of us — can support it in its work. It is a matter of not only complying with legal requirements but also creating a world in which women and girls can prosper without fear of violence and discrimination.

The priorities of the Secretary-General for the women and peace and security agenda during the current decade come at a key moment for bringing about significant change. In that regard, it is absolutely necessary to guarantee adequate, sustainable and predictable funding for peacebuilding and peacekeeping. It is fundamental for women and young people who are

peacebuilders, as well their organizations and initiatives, to receive sufficient financing. And it is equally critical for enterprising women to be agents of change in the environments that are affected by conflict. Collectively, we can build a world in which the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in decision-making related to peace and security can be the norm and not the exception.

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

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): We would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting to evaluate progress in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. We also thank the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN-Women, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the civil society representatives for their valuable recommendations this morning.

We are meeting today at a time when more than 2.3 million people in the Gaza Strip are living a humanitarian disaster, in which women bear the heaviest burden. According to United Nations reports, there have been more than 5,000 victims, including 1,300 women. The State of Qatar wishes to express its condemnation of all atrocities against civilians, especially women and children, and we categorically reject the complete siege, which deprives people of the essential supplies and services they need to survive. We must guarantee the unhindered, safe and immediate supply of humanitarian aid. We reiterate our appeal to all parties for a de-escalation leading to a complete ceasefire and the immediate release of all hostages, especially civilians.

The State of Qatar welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2023/725). We reiterate our commitment to the full implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, pursuant to resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions. The effective and active involvement of women in peacebuilding contributes greatly to improving conflict and post-conflict desired outcomes.

The State of Qatar is working to empower women and enable their effective participation in all areas in our country, including in the political, security and economic spheres. The level of participation of Qatari women is the highest among the countries of the region, thanks to an explicit governmental policy that promoted the role of women and created opportunities for them to make major contributions at the national and international levels.

As an active member of the Peacebuilding Commission, the State of Qatar is proud of its effective contribution to the meeting of the Commission held on 14 September on the role of education in peacebuilding in the context of the International Day to Protect Education from Attack, which is commemorated on 9 September every year. We call on Member States to guarantee quality, transformative and inclusive education for all and for that education to be fair for women and girls, as an essential tool for peacebuilding, protection and empowerment.

The Education Above All Foundation in the State of Qatar is implementing initiatives that ensure building the capabilities of young men, women and girls affected by conflict through a programme to protect education in situations of conflict and insecurity, which provides those groups with the knowledge and skills necessary to make them active participants in making a positive change in their communities. I am pleased to recall an initiative for the capacity-building of young people in the Middle East and North Africa in such areas as humanitarian action, under the auspices of the Reach Out To Asia Foundation and the Education Above All Foundation in the State of Qatar, in order to promote the leadership and participation of young people, including women, at the local, national and international levels.

In cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme and the Education Above All Foundation, the State of Qatar launched an initiative for women in conflict areas to support women and girls in the context of conflict and crises situations.

The State of Qatar is also committed to monitoring the implementation of the outcome of the High-Level Global Conference on Youth-Inclusive Peace Processes, which we hosted in cooperation with Colombia, Finland and the United Nations in January 2022. That includes a five-year strategy on young people and peace processes, as well as guidelines to operationalize the plan with respect to young people, peace and security, while emphasizing the vital role played by young girls.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the commitment of the State of Qatar to continue effective support to, and participation in, the efforts made at the national, regional and international levels to implement the women and peace and security agenda.

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

Mrs. Iileka (Namibia): Resolution 1325 (2000) was adopted 23 years ago with a clear vision: to promote women's participation in efforts and processes aimed at pursuing peace and security, enable the prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls, support the protection of women in conflict and non-conflict situations and situate women not only as victims but also as key actors in the development of gender-responsive peace and security policies and programming.

Namibia's commitment to the women and peace and security agenda is anchored in our full appreciation that the agenda is applicable in all situations — non-conflict, conflict and post-conflict — as it promotes the equal participation of women and men in peace processes and development efforts at all levels, and further calls for the provision of equal opportunity and the enjoyment of economic and social justice by all.

Namibia condemns the ongoing suffering, violence and abuse of women and children in all the conflicts raging across the world. In that connection, we express the need for an end to hostilities in all conflicts and to put stronger emphasis on and further support to peace processes through dialogue and diplomacy. In such processes, women should not be discussed simply as victims but indeed as direct stakeholders. Their contribution to finding solutions for peace and security is essential and must be encouraged. As a practical tool to support that, in the run-up to the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), my country launched the Namibia International Women's Peace Centre, taking on the challenge of further conceptualizing and operationalizing the concept of women's influence in peace processes.

For the full implementation of the women and peace and security agenda to occur, the full and meaningful participation of women in the political, economic and social aspects of States and societies also needs to occur. The inclusion of women in traditional security institutions alone will not help to ameliorate the gaps of implementation. The persistent pushback against women's rights poses a significant obstacle to achieving gender equality worldwide. Discrimination, cultural norms, and systemic biases continue to limit women's access to education, economic opportunities and political participation. That resistance to women's empowerment impedes progress in gender equality, perpetuating inequalities.

As we look towards the future, and as we prepare for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) in 2025, we appreciate the broad mainstreaming of resolution 1325 (2000) and the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. I urge us all to translate rhetoric into tangible benefits by developing and implementing comprehensive national action plans, investing in capacity-building and gender-responsive budgeting, enacting legal and policy reforms that include the use of quotas, targets and incentives to increase women's participation, promoting supportive environments and collecting sex-disaggregated data to track progress. Those measures collectively empower women's active participation in peace and security processes while safeguarding their well-being, fostering gender equality and advancing the goals of the women and peace and security initiatives.

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

Ms. Zacarias (Portugal): Let me start by thanking Brazil for convening this important open debate. I also want to thank the briefers for their very precious inputs and views this morning.

Portugal aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the European Union and the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

It is imperative to examine resolution 1325 (2000) and to take stock of the evolution in the several dimensions it covers: the promotion of women's access to decision-making positions, gender equality, the protection of women and girls from violence during and after conflict and the adoption of a gender perspective to prevent and mitigate the impact of conflicts on women and girls. There are remarkable initiatives that have fostered the achievement of some of those aims, such as the shared commitment on women and peace and security, signed thus far by 16 Member States that have served on the Security Council, the uniformed gender parity strategy for women in peacekeeping and the Global Alliance of Regional Women Mediator Networks.

However, huge gaps persist, as women's underrepresentation in peace and security has not significantly changed. Despite the efforts of the Secretary-General to achieve gender-balanced representation, women's inclusion in informal peace talks is still incipient or entirely lacking. The percentage of women in United Nations-led peace talks has decreased for the

past two years. The percentage of peace agreements that include provisions on gender equality or women's rights is still meagre. We therefore need to redouble our efforts to achieve women's full, equal and meaningful participation as peace negotiators, mediators and signatories of peace agreements.

Secondly, in a world shattered by more and more conflicts and crises around the world, it is essential to ensure that women and peace and security initiatives translate into concrete changes for local female populations and that their safety is guaranteed, including for those more exposed to violence as human rights defenders and journalists. The protection of human rights in conflict situations is fundamental, and we need to mainstream a gender perspective in responding effectively to increasing security threats.

In Portugal, we are now preparing our fourth national action plan for women and peace and security. We have been introducing the dimensions of resolution 1325 (2000) in all areas of political activity, resulting in several national strategies on gender equality and the prevention and elimination of gender-based violence, with impact on our foreign policy in bilateral and multilateral relations and in our development cooperation. We believe that the empowerment of women and girls demands a special focus on education that must be complemented by awareness campaigns that also include men and boys in order to dismantle gender stereotypes and biases. We have committed to increasing the number of trainings on women and peace and security, in particular for the national detachment forces or personnel participating in international peacekeeping missions, together with the dissemination of codes of conduct.

In conclusion, let me underline that ensuring the meaningful participation of women in public life and decision-making is not only a moral obligation, but also an essential driver of peace.

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

Ms. Rizk (Egypt): At the outset, I would like to express our appreciation to Brazil for holding this annual open debate, which is becoming more and more relevant against the backdrop of the proliferation of conflicts that are having disproportionate impacts on women and girls across the world. My delegation also thanks the briefers for their input this morning, and we take note of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2023/725) and the updates contained therein.

We are deeply concerned and alarmed by the exponential increase by almost 50 per cent in the number of women and girls living in what the report describes as "conflict-affected countries", as compared to 2017. That percentage may be significantly higher if we take into consideration the number of women and girls living in situations of armed conflict. As the opening briefing indicated and as we have heard over the past few days in the Chamber, 2023 has witnessed an eruption of further conflicts and wars disproportionately affecting women and girls, notably the armed confrontations in the Sudan and as a result of the current aggression by Israel, the occupying Power, on the civilian population in Gaza, killing thousands of innocent civilians, mostly women and children. The number is increasing daily as the bombing of Gaza by the Israeli forces continues, in violation of international law, international humanitarian law and international human rights law, all perpetrated with impunity.

The theme of this year's open debate is "Women's participation in international peace and security: from theory to practice". As a supporter of the women and peace and security agenda, Egypt adheres the tenet of the agenda as elaborated in resolution 1325 (2000) on the equal participation of women and their full involvement in maintaining and promoting peace and security and the need to increase their role in decision-making on conflict prevention and resolution. We hereby reiterate what the resolution stipulates on the need to fully implement in a comprehensive manner international humanitarian and human rights law protecting the rights of women and girls in conflict and in post-conflict situations, including in post-conflict peacebuilding efforts and processes.

In that connection and for practical purposes, and to move from theory to practice, Egypt emphasizes the centrality of ensuring the required balance in the implementation of the four pillars of the women and peace and security agenda, namely prevention, protection, participation and relief and recovery, while ensuring national ownership and priorities, and taking into consideration the cultural and societal specificities of different countries in armed conflict and in post-conflict situations along the peace continuum and in transitioning towards development.

Within the United Nations context, Egypt has championed, since the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, the resolutions on United Nations action on sexual exploitation and abuse with a view to

promoting a system-wide approach to implementing the zero-tolerance policy for and elimination of such unlawful, heinous acts. That reflects the political will at the highest level to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations operations, as Egypt's President was one of the earliest leaders to join the Circle of Leadership initiative in that regard.

At the regional level, Egypt is very committed to integrating the women and peace and security agenda into the African context, while taking its specificity into consideration. We are working to do that through the Cairo Centre for Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa, providing training programme and policy guidance to various African countries and championing the role of the African Union in advancing this agenda.

If we are to move from theory to practice, it is incumbent on the international community to consolidate its efforts to further invest in the women and peace and security agenda and the empowerment of women and girls, and in building their capacities, resilience and leadership to enable them to act as agents of change in conflict and post-conflict settings. More important, we need to deliver on the prevention and protection pillars, where it is evident that we are collectively failing.

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

Ms. Lõuk (Estonia): Estonia welcomes the Security Council's open debate on women and peace and security and affirms its dedication to advancing that agenda.

Estonia aligns itself with the statement made earlier today on behalf of the European Union.

Nearly a quarter of a century has passed since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. Despite that, it appears that globally we are far from achieving gender equality. In fact, as the report of the Secretary-General indicates (S/2023/725), we are moving backwards. Implementing the women and peace and security agenda requires comprehensive, all-inclusive efforts. But those efforts are made up of small steps that we have to take every day and everywhere. We are all responsible for achieving gender equality and for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), each of us in our own way.

Estonia is currently in the process of putting together a midterm review of its third national action plan for implementing the resolution on women and peace and

security. It includes references to women's involvement in peacekeeping and peace negotiations through planned activities increasing women's representation in political life, as well as their participation in military service. The annual International Conference on Women, Peace and Security was recently held in Tallinn and this year focused on Ukraine. Despite the horrors that Russian armed forces and affiliated mercenaries have committed against women and girls in Ukraine, we want to commend the incredible leadership that Ukrainian women have shown by taking assertive roles in the political, military and humanitarian arenas in resisting Russia's heinous war. Russia must immediately and unconditionally withdraw all its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. Estonia stands tirelessly in solidarity with Ukraine and reiterates that women are a driving force of change.

Women's full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership are the only way to achieve sustainable and lasting peace. That said, our main focus should be on conflict prevention rather than on dealing with the aftermath. In that regard, change cannot happen without the engagement of men and boys as crucial contributors.

We are deeply worried about the impact of the increasing numbers of military conflicts on the situation of women and girls around the world. We are following the developments in Israel and Gaza with great concern. We condemn the terrorist organization Hamas's brutal attacks on Israel. Solving this crisis must be fully in line with international humanitarian law, and the protection of civilians should be imperative.

Estonia admires the bravery and resilience of women and girls worldwide in our common pursuit to build societies that are safe, resilient, inclusive and peaceful, and will continue to support UN-Women, UNICEF and the Offices of the Secretary-General's Special Representatives on Sexual Violence in Conflict and for Children and Armed Conflict in their activities.

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

Mr. Sakowicz (Poland): Poland aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the European Union (EU) and the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

We thank Brazil for hosting today's debate and are hopeful that it will serve as a catalyst for significant advances in the promotion of women's inclusion across

all facets of the women and peace and security agenda, as we draw closer to the twenty-fifth anniversary of landmark resolution 1325 (2000).

Women's leadership still needs recognition. All of the Security Council's resolutions on women and peace and security acknowledge women's unique experiences, which should bring them into policymaking rather than leaving them seen only as victims of armed conflict. Actions that hinder their political engagement and curb their public activity have a negative impact on crisis prevention and post-conflict recovery. We must harness the untapped resource of strong women as agents of change. Political and financial measures are key to protecting the rights of women and promoting their role, including in United Nations peacekeeping and political missions, and adequate and effective protection mechanisms are essential to ensuring their full, equal and meaningful participation in peace and security processes.

As an immediate neighbour of Ukraine, we have witnessed how the Russian aggression against it has highlighted the crucial role played by women human rights defenders. Ukrainian women have been at the forefront of humanitarian efforts and have tirelessly advocated for the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, standing strong against Russia's efforts to undermine them. It is essential to ensure their continued involvement in all processes that affect their lives, security, freedoms and rights, while at the same time providing them with the necessary protection, including from conflict-related sexual violence. As the country hosting the largest population of Ukrainian refugees, Poland reiterates its steadfast commitment to this cause.

Poland is nearing the end of its first national action plan on women and peace and security, which is focused on increasing women's presence in the security sector and in peacekeeping missions. Our goals also include building the capacity of women to participate in conflict prevention, peace negotiations and mediation, as well as addressing the potential barriers that they face in the processes of recruitment, participation and scope of engagement in peace operations. As a result of the action we have taken, the participation of women in foreign missions, including United Nations peacekeeping missions and EU missions, is gradually increasing. We have conducted extensive promotion and information campaigns that have resulted in the incorporation of women and peace and security obligations into many

of our strategic documents and plans in the area of security and defence. Further empowering women in uniformed services and ensuring their greater inclusion in security and defence policymaking are the priorities of Poland's forthcoming second national action plan.

To conclude, Poland is ready and willing to continue promoting the women and peace and security agenda generally, as well as within the UN-Women Executive Board, including as a prospective bureau member in 2024. We stand committed to the women and peace and security agenda and look forward to playing a more significant role in advancing this crucial cause.

The President: I would like to inform speakers and Council members that our intention is to continue this meeting until 9 p.m., at which point it will be suspended and resumed tomorrow afternoon.

I now give the floor to the representative of Slovakia.

Mr. Grünwald (Slovakia): My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union, and I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

If we want peaceful and prosperous societies for all, we cannot afford to ignore half of the population. It is therefore crucial to ensure women's safety and their right to act. We must also all be on the same page about what our aim is here. Because it has never been only about protecting women as victims. It is equally important to recognize that it has always been and will always be about empowering women as decision-makers. Marginalizing women does not keep them safe — empowering women keeps them safe. Almost 25 years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), progress has not been sufficient. The road to safety and equality for women has been slow and filled with too many detours and setbacks. We have seen some inspiring breakthroughs, which we applaud, but also too much backsliding, which we regret.

Slovakia faces challenges of its own but spares no effort in implementing the women and peace and security agenda when it comes to empowering women at home and helping them abroad. The Slovak Government implemented its first women and peace and security national action plan for the period from 2021 to 2025. We feel encouraged by the recent increase in the representation of women in the military, which reached 22 per cent among new conscripts. The representation of women serving in the armed forces

is now at about 15 per cent. We believe that trend will continue and will translate into an increase in the number of women actively serving in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

On the subject of peacekeeping operations and the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), where Slovakia has its largest presence, we would also like to proudly announce that, for the first time, we have a Slovak female in the position of Force Commander of the contingency, making her the second woman to hold that position in the entire history of UNFICYP. In that regard, I take this opportunity to inform everyone that yesterday the President of Slovakia, Ms. Zuzana Čaputová, promoted Colonel Beáta Hanušniaková to the rank of Brigadier General, thereby making her the first woman ever to hold the rank of General in Slovakia.

Slovakia also supports women abroad, as the feminist perspective is now an inseparable part of all our endeavours in development assistance projects and Slovakia places women and girls at their centre. Our aim is clear and simple: societies in which women's safety and rights are fully ensured are simply more peaceful and prosperous. It is a win-win for all. Slovakia will spare no effort to ensure that goal becomes a reality.

It is unfortunate that women continue to be disproportionately impacted by conflict situations despite their substantive contribution to conflict prevention and resolution. We strongly condemn the continued use of sexual violence against women and girls as a war tactic, including by the Russian Federation in its aggression against Ukraine. We welcome all effective measures that have been adopted to combat sexual and gender-based violence. We strongly support women human rights defenders who are at the front lines of the fight for women's rights in conflict-affected countries.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

Mr. Pary Rodríguez (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to thank you and your country, Sir, for convening this annual debate on women and peace and security in the current context of the multidimensional crisis and geopolitical interests that are putting international peace and security in jeopardy. We also underscore the importance of the briefings by Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, the Executive Director of UN-Women and the other briefers.

I would like to pay tribute to the women and girls who suffer the consequences of wars and conflicts, which disproportionately affect them. At this time, how could we forget the Palestinian women and girls in Gaza, who are suffering one of the worst tragedies and their people's genocide as a result of their dehumanization by the occupying Power, Israel?

Some 23 years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the data provided in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2023/725) indicates that only 16 per cent of negotiators in United Nations-led peace processes are women. The briefing provided by the Executive Director of UN-Women also underscored that women and children make up 67 per cent of the casualties in wars and armed conflicts, including in the latest aggression against Gaza.

We must acknowledge that resolution 1325 (2000) marked a historic milestone in recognizing the intersection between gender and security and underscored the importance of women's full and effective participation in all phases of conflict prevention and resolution, as well as peacebuilding. However, the statistics that I just mentioned demonstrate that progress to date remains insufficient. We therefore urgently need to take action to ensure that women play an active role in promoting peace and security throughout the world.

Women cannot continue to be excluded from decisions that affect their lives and their communities. Therefore, the inclusion of women in decision-making is critical, as they bring unique and valuable perspectives to conflict resolution, and their voices must be heard and respected. When women actively participate in peace processes, the chances of achieving sustainable and lasting solutions are significantly increased. We also believe that the protection of women in conflict situations is imperative. Wars and armed conflicts have a greater impact on women, who often face forced displacement and sexual and gender-based violence. And they are even less likely to flee, given that as mothers or heads of households their children's lives depend on them.

Women's contribution to finding solutions in armed conflicts has often been underestimated or minimized, but their influence and participation are undeniable and deserve to be acknowledged. In that regard, with regard to conflict prevention, empowering women and girls in conflict situations is crucial, including through access

to education, health care and equal opportunities. When women have access to resources and opportunities, they are powerful agents of change in building peace and security.

Although Bolivia is free of having to deal with situations involving armed conflict, I would like to highlight the important advances made in terms of the participation of women, in particular Indigenous women, in the country's political decision-making, while taking into account that women's increased role in leadership positions prevents conflicts and strengthens our countries' development. The 2009 Political Constitution and its regulatory implementation guarantee parity between men and women, thereby making Bolivia the only country in Latin America that has effectively achieved 51 per cent representation of women in its Plurinational Legislative Assembly, 45 per cent in departmental legislative bodies and 51 per cent in local Governments.

Lastly, women's empowerment is a question of not only rights but also historical justice. It is therefore vital that additional resources be allocated for development and peace, not for war. The struggle for equality is not just a women's issue — it requires a joint effort by society as a whole. Only when men and women have the same opportunities and rights can we build a more just and equitable society for all. It is the responsibility of all States to work urgently and coherently to ensure a world in which women are active agents of change and contribute effectively to a more peaceful and equitable future.

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

Mr. Peñaranda (Philippines): The Philippines greatly appreciates the leadership of Brazil in convening today's open debate. The women and peace and security agenda is one of the main priorities of the Philippines and highlights the important link between gender equality and the maintenance of peace and security.

The Philippines was the first country in Asia to launch a national action plan on women and peace and security as far back as 2010. The plan integrated the women and peace and security pillars of prevention, participation and protection, with elements on the proliferation of small arms. We are also the first country in which a woman served as the chief negotiator of a major peace agreement that ended many decades of conflict. We are now in the process of finalizing the fourth generation of our national women and peace and security action plan,

which covers the 10-year planning and implementation horizon of 2023 to 2033. Its latest iteration was built on the lessons learned from previous national action plans and underscores the country's recognition of the dynamic and complex role that women play before, during and after conflict, as agents of peace, leaders, survivors and part of the vulnerable sector. The national steering committee on women and peace and security conducted three comprehensive national consultations, engaging networks of civil society organizations, sectoral and community-based organizations, non-governmental organizations and academic institutions to identify good practices and gaps in the implementation of the previous plan. The new national action plan builds upon the findings of complementary and collaborative multi-stakeholder evaluations at the national level of the 2017–2022 national action plan. It upholds the principles outlined in our Magna Carta of Women, which emphasizes the promotion and protection of women's rights, particularly in conflict situations. Some of the key lessons learned include the importance of anchoring the action plan on human rights and women's agency. There is also a need to strategically integrate women and peace and security into the gender and development plans and budgets of local and national government agencies, as well as to expand space for the participation of civil society organizations.

Another issue that came out of the consultation process was the importance of looking at the women and peace and security issue through an intersectional lens and beyond the binary. Indeed, the effective implementation of the women and peace and security agenda requires a multifaceted approach to gender equality and women's rights. That process includes strategic engagements at the global, regional and national levels. It also requires commitment by various stakeholders to work together and share resources, expertise and experiences in implementing women and peace and security commitments.

The Philippine Development Plan 2023–2028 recognizes that ensuring peace and security as essential foundations of sustainable development requires a whole-of-government approach, with gender mainstreaming as one of its cross-cutting strategies. That is further reinforced by the five-point peace reconciliation and unity agenda, which follows the principle of conflict sensitivity and peace promotion, a whole-of-society approach and empowerment towards meaningful participation.

At the subnational level, we are pleased to note that the Bangsamoro Women Commission recently launched a regional action plan for women and peace and security. That initiative, which is slated to be implemented until 2028, will enhance the meaningful participation and leadership of women and girls in the Bangsamoro region in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and governance, thereby contributing to the broader peace and development agenda.

At the international level, the Philippines has deployed women peacekeepers and military observers for United Nations missions and is working to increase women's participation in those missions. We recognize the importance of women's leadership in building fair and peaceful communities and in all aspects of conflict prevention, peace and reconstruction.

We are deeply concerned about the serious impact on women of the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza, particularly in terms of health, safety and access to essential services. Any escalation of violence not only perpetuates instability, but also exacerbates the vulnerabilities of and inequalities faced by women. We strongly urge all parties to cease hostilities and to prioritize the protection and empowerment of women in their response and recovery efforts.

As we approach the twenty-fifth anniversary of the agenda, the Philippines renews its commitment to gender equality and the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace and security matters. We are open to cooperating with Member States, the United Nations and the international community by sharing best practices and lessons learned in order to accelerate the successful implementation of the resolution 1325 (2000) agenda across the world.

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

Ms. Squeff (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we wish to thank Brazil for convening this important open debate.

Through resolution 1325 (2000), the Security Council recognized for the first time the central role that women must play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. Since then, the world has become more aware of the positive contribution of women in conflict situations and why their meaningful participation in prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding processes is necessary.

In that sense, I want to highlight the priority afforded by our Government and Argentine society to achieving gender equality and equity at both the national and international levels.

The implementation of Security Council resolutions related to women and peace and security is a primary axis of Argentine foreign policy and in line with our position regarding respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, as well as our long-standing participation in peace missions and the provision of humanitarian assistance through the White Helmets Commission. My delegation supports a comprehensive vision of peace in which international commitments related to gender mainstreaming and the defence of women's rights must be guaranteed at the national level in order to then be adequately reflected in the actions that the country undertakes in the international arena through its foreign policy, especially in relation to peace and security and humanitarian assistance.

We are committed to continuing to support all gender policies that seek to achieve peace and equality and to pursuing such policies in our country through the implementation of our second national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions. The action plan, adopted in 2022, is aimed at deepening gender policies in relation to women's meaningful participation in decision-making settings; protecting their human rights, particularly with respect to zero tolerance for sexual violence in conflicts; and the fight against trafficking in persons, in a cross-cutting and intersectional manner within various national organizations. Likewise, specific measures are being introduced on preventive diplomacy and mediation, cybersecurity and climate change.

However, beyond the progress recorded in international regulations on the subject and the national plans, already in their third and fourth iterations in some countries, important gaps remain, and little progress has been recorded in their full implementation. Unfortunately, the achievements made are not reflected on the ground. The reality of current events shows us that there is a growing number of armed groups for whom gender inequality is a strategic objective, with misogyny a part of their central ideology.

On the other hand, the exclusion of women from participation in peace processes remains a constant. Such exclusion necessarily gives rise to agreements

that, on the one hand, do not take into account women's rights and needs and, on the other, undermine the sustainability of peace processes. Given the impact of conflict on women's lives, it is essential that those who have the power to influence the composition of the negotiating table ensure that women have a seat and the opportunity to participate in an equitable and substantive manner.

But women's participation cannot be meaningful when their physical protection is not guaranteed. It is a regrettable fact that women negotiators, activists, politicians and human rights defenders continue to be attacked for their involvement in peace processes, including through sexual violence.

In that connection, I wish to highlight the importance that Argentina bestows upon the meaningful participation of women in mediation processes. Upon Argentina's request, the Regional Network of Women Mediators of the Southern Cone was launched in 2021, which was an important regional achievement brought about by joint efforts by the Southern Common Market partners and Chile. It was created in line with the relevance assigned by the United Nations Secretary-General to the role of preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention and mediation in the current international context. Likewise, it represents a contribution from the countries of the Southern Cone to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 16, which is linked to the creation of more just, inclusive and peaceful societies. It also reaffirms Argentina's commitment to the women and peace and security agenda, in addition to constituting a pioneer project in Latin America and the Caribbean, on which we have been working together with Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay. For Argentina, the creation of the Network was a regional achievement and an achievement of our foreign policy. And we will continue to work together to ensure it continues to grow.

Another fundamental component for the advancement of the women and peace and security agenda is funding. The 2015 global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) highlighted a persistent failure to adequately finance the women and peace and security agenda. The study recommended that States, regional organizations and agencies within the United Nations system earmark a minimum of 15 per cent of all funding relating to peace and security for programmes whose principal objective is to address women's specific needs and advance gender equality. In that regard, regional organizations play a critical role in

advancing the agenda. For that reason, in the regional context, Argentina has promoted the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in various forums.

Within the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Argentina has also promoted that agenda in the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean through regional consensus, which is a commitment among the Governments of Latin America and the Caribbean to ensure the physical, economic and decision-making autonomy of women. In particular, I would like to highlight the Santiago Commitment, adopted in 2020, whereby the parties agreed to promote measures to ensure the full and effective participation of women at all levels and at all stages of peace processes and mediation, conflict prevention and resolution initiatives; peacekeeping, peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery; and the Buenos Aires Commitment of 2022, whereby States call for the promotion of multilateral cooperation to implement the provisions of international humanitarian law and maintain international peace and security, in compliance with resolution 1325 (2000).

Another regional achievement were the adoptions, in the framework of the Meeting of Ministers and High-level Authorities on the Women of MERCOSUR, at the request of Argentina, of the recommendations on the participation of women in peacekeeping operations and humanitarian assistance in 2008 and the strengthening of the Regional Network of Women Mediators of the Southern Cone in 2023.

Finally, bearing in mind that it has been 23 years since resolution 1325 (2000) was adopted and that work has been undertaken within the United Nations to strengthen the women and peace and security agenda and given the tenor of the most recent international conflicts, I would like to call on all of us to assume to our collective responsibility to protect and guarantee compliance with and observance of all Security Council resolutions on women and peace and security, to not to give up in the face of the harrowing evidence of the power of extreme violence and to continue to bet on multilateral diplomacy to ensure the operational effect of the international norms agreed in the framework of the United Nations so that they do not become empty words.

The women and peace and security agenda must be one of the priorities not only of the Security Council but also of the United Nations as a whole. Women are agents of change and pillars of the community.

Argentina remains committed to that vision and understands that the women and peace and security agenda is a key element in efforts to strengthen international peace and security.

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

Mr. Kulháněk (Czechia): First of all, allow me to thank Brazil for organizing today's open debate and all the briefers for their valuable insights.

Czechia aligns itself with the statements delivered by the European Union and by the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security. I would like to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

Since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) in 2000, we have been committed to promoting women's full, equal, meaningful participation in all decision-making on peace and security.

Unfortunately, the progress of the women and peace and security agenda is stagnating. The global security context has continued to deteriorate in 2023, sexual and gender-based violence remains on the rise, and we are witnessing the rollback of women's and girls' human rights across the world. We thank the Secretary-General for the update on the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda over the past year, which also confirms the negative trends.

As the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) approaches, it is essential that the Council and the international community recommit to improving the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda in response to the challenges of today's world. We need to accelerate action to protect and uphold the full spectrum of human rights of women and girls and ensure their full, equal and meaningful participation in all spheres of public life and decision-making. Any intimidation, attacks against women human rights defenders, peacebuilders, women journalists and civil society must be condemned, and perpetrators must be held accountable.

We call on all parties to armed conflicts to fully comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law, including the prohibition on all forms of sexual violence and thorough investigation of any instance reported.

We are appalled by the horrible attacks on women and girls in Israel by Hamas; the use of sexual violence

as a tactic of war in Ukraine, the Sudan and in places of other ongoing conflicts; and we recall resolution 1820 (2008). It is necessary to promote solutions to end the suffering of women and girls in conflict-affected situations and strengthen the global response to those crimes.

We must do everything in our power to bridge the gap between verbal commitment and the tangible implementation of the goals of the women and peace and security agenda. Czechia remains committed to making progress on those fronts, including through its second national action plan which aims to strengthen women's participation and leadership in its defence, foreign and security policy. We will continue to advocate for the rights of all women and girls as a current member of the Human Rights Council and the Commission on the Status of Women and on other multilateral platforms.

Women's participation and leadership in peace and security issues must become a norm in order to bring about the change and results we want to achieve.

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

Mr. García Toma (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): In addressing the Security Council, I would like to emphatically reaffirm Peru's commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, especially the maintenance of international peace and security for the benefit of our peoples. I would also like to highlight and congratulate the proactive work of Brazil through the presidency of this important organ.

It is clear that building peace requires a multidimensional effort without exclusion. It is therefore imperative that the United Nations place greater emphasis on the political and social empowerment of women and encourage their full participation in the various decision-making bodies and processes in all spheres of political and civil society.

Resolution 1325 (2000) of October 2000 is a fundamental milestone in the recognition of women as relevant participants in achieving the purposes and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations and constitutes a sound basis for unequivocally strengthening women's right to fully exercise, without exclusion, the set of freedoms and rights that derive from human dignity.

Women's abilities with regard to their engagement with vulnerable populations and their influence on the behaviour of uniformed personnel have proven to be highly effective in the fulfilment of mandates in peace operations.

The Government of Peru fully supports the actions being carried out by the United Nations Department of Peace Operations, in line with the Action for Peace Plus initiative and the women and peace and security agenda, for the implementation of the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy 2018-2028.

We also appreciate that the Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations for 2023 (A/77/19), adopted at the eighty-fifth plenary meeting of the General Assembly, stressed the importance of gender mainstreaming in peace operations as a cross-cutting issue in all stages of analysis, planning, implementation and reporting.

Peru's female personnel now makes up 18 per cent of its peace operations—constituting 44 per cent of mission experts and 13.18 per cent of military contingents. It is worth noting that, as of October, 45 of a total of 256 Peruvian military personnel are women. They are deployed in peace operations in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, Abyei and Lebanon. By 2024, Peru aims to reach 20 per cent, for which we are in close coordination with UN-Women and the Elsie Initiative Fund.

Finally, I wish to reaffirm Peru's unswerving political will to continue to promote the most active participation of our women citizens in political and civic decision-making, to vigorously combat all forms of gender-based violence and to strengthen women's contribution to the promotion of peace and international security. The beautiful, sacrificing and strenuous task in favour of fraternity among all peoples requires the commitment of men and women on an equal footing, with shared rights.

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

Mr. Marschik (Austria): Austria aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the European Union and the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

We thank Brazil for organizing this annual open debate on women and peace and security, and commend the Secretary-General, UN-Women Executive Director

Sima Bahous and International Committee of the Red Cross President Mirjana Spoljaric Egger for their briefings and deep commitment to the women and peace and security agenda. Let me also thank the civil society briefers for sharing their insights.

This year's report (S/2023/725) shows that the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda faces more challenges than ever. As the Secretary-General said this morning, in 2022, the number of women and girls living in conflict-affected countries reached 614 million—a 50 per cent increase, compared to 2017. That is paired with an immense backlash against the rights of women and girls. To give another example, at least seven of the women who briefed the Council in 2022 were targets of subsequent reprisals. Clearly, despite a robust framework of applicable international norms since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), we are still far from achieving the goals we set ourselves in the women and peace and security agenda.

Austria deplores all conflict-related sexual violence, which primarily targets women and girls. We condemn, in the strongest terms, the brutal and indiscriminate terrorist attacks by Hamas on Israeli civilians and the use of sexual violence by Hamas against women and children. All hostages must be released immediately and without preconditions. Israelis and Palestinians alike deserve respect for their human rights and have the right to live in peace and security. All sides must uphold international humanitarian law, human rights law and international law.

While there can be no one-size-fits-all solution to the multitude of conflicts our world faces, local, community-level responses are usually the most immediate to provide relief. Women need to be at the centre of such local solutions in order to successfully rebuild crisis-affected societies.

In Ukraine, where the unprovoked and unjustified Russian aggression disproportionately affects women and children, local women's organizations are playing an enormous role in providing support. We confirm our support for UN-Women and such organizations in Ukraine.

Austria also remains deeply alarmed by the situation in Afghanistan, where systematic discrimination against women and girls may amount to gender persecution. We commend the strong Afghan women that continue to persevere in standing up to

extreme aggression and voice our continued support to the Women Advisory Group to the Humanitarian Country Team in Afghanistan, which involves Afghan women in humanitarian coordination processes and strategic discussions.

We applaud the important achievements of civil society, local women peacebuilders and women human rights defenders, such as the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders and its partners, who continue to work on the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda on a daily basis, despite the tremendous risks involved.

Austria pledged commitments of over €11 million in the context of the Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action Compact. We increased our multi-year funding to the Compact from €5 million to €9.7 million until 2025.

We also remain committed to increasing the number of women among our military personnel, including military staff sent on peacekeeping missions, and renew our call for the Security Council's systematic inclusion of the women and peace and security agenda in all mandates of United Nations peacekeeping and political missions.

The implementation of the women and peace and security agenda requires joint action. We must all work together to amplify the voices of women leaders and ensure their full, equal and meaningful participation at all levels of peace and transition processes. That is the only way to ensure inclusive and sustainable peace.

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

Mr. Papakostas (Greece): I would like to begin by thanking Brazil for convening today's annual debate on women, peace and security, dedicated to women's participation in international peace and security, as well as our speakers for their thorough interventions.

Greece fully aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the European Union and the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security. I would now like to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

It is a truth commonly acknowledged that even though armed conflict disproportionately affects women and girls, they are still underrepresented or, in many cases, absent in peace processes. Nonetheless,

women's participation makes peace talks more inclusive since it allows diverse voices to be heard, more issues to be discussed and, therefore, renders peace agreements more gender responsive and sustainable.

In that regard, meaningful gender-equal participation, representation and leadership, one of the fundamental pillars of the Security Council women and peace and security agenda, should also be regarded as a cross-cutting issue to be taken into account when designing action to reinforce the pillars of prevention, protection and relief and recovery. At the same time, participation is gender equal when it includes all women in all their diversity — peacebuilders and mediators, women from civil society organizations, grass-roots activists and human rights defenders, as well as local and Indigenous women — so that no one is left behind. Moreover, women's meaningful participation requires that their security, dignity, as well as human rights, including their right to have control over their own body and their sexual and reproductive health and rights, are equally respected, promoted and protected.

Greece is committed to accelerating the realization of substantive gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in all their diversity, both at home and abroad, as the only way to achieve sustainable peace, security and development. In that regard, my country has implemented a coherent legal and institutional framework that provides for gender mainstreaming across the whole range of our public policies, foreign and domestic. Having said that, Greece also includes women, peace and security among the priorities of its candidacy for non-permanent membership of the Security Council, and if elected, we intend to keep the issue high on the Council's agenda.

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

Ms. Cano Franco (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): I welcome the convening of this debate on the challenges and achievements in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), with a view of advancing the role of women in international peace and security from a theoretical to a practical one. This comes as we approach the twenty-fifth anniversary of a resolution that made it possible to shed light on the effects of armed conflicts on women and girls and highlight the fundamental role they play in preventing and resolving such conflicts, as well as in peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations and in humanitarian action at the international level.

Conflicts and violence are increasing globally, and gender-based violence remains a widespread practice that has a disproportionate impact on women and girls. Rape and sexual abuse are frequently used as weapons and strategies of aggression and represent one of the commonest forms of abuse of women's human rights, with grave consequences. Such violence against women creates a chain of repercussions that outlast the conflict and fuel the harrowing phenomenon of broken families and homes — intergenerational traumas that leave children and adolescents abandoned and defenceless in very serious legal and social situations that violate their own fundamental rights. Despite the widely documented fact that women's participation in peace negotiations increases the success and sustainability of the agreements, the roles that have been imposed on them in society have caused them to be seen as passive subjects, often not only rendering them invisible but denying them their potential to be key actors in peace processes.

Promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women has become a fundamental pillar of Panama's foreign policy. The Government recognizes that equality, development and peace can be achieved if women participate in all areas of society and has therefore adopted significant measures to promote women's access to leadership positions in all sectors. Currently, six of the nine members of our Supreme Court are women. In view of the fact that violence and discrimination are frequently present prior to the escalation of a conflict, Panama is seeking to strengthen Panamanian women's efforts as peacemakers from a security perspective, ensuring that their actions are effective in maintaining peaceful coexistence as a key element in our development. In that regard, we want to emphasize that all three branches of our national security forces are working on specific gender programmes and thereby laying the foundations for making progress in that direction.

Even though the international community has an increasingly robust normative framework on women and peace and security, there continues to be an enormous gap between what we have agreed on and what is achieved in practice. Acts of violence against women create a traumatic experience, both on an individual level and in terms of the social fabric, that is then perpetuated by silence and impunity. That is why documentation and follow-up on aggressions towards and rapes of women and girls, together with accountability, are key

elements in all peace efforts, and it is why those acts and crimes cannot go unpunished. We must not limit our commemoration of resolution 1325 (2000) to an annual reminder. Women around the world who find themselves in situations of conflict cannot wait for our call to action every year. It is a commitment that we need to make systematically on a daily basis. We are raising our voices here for those who cannot speak, and we invite women to mobilize their efforts in order to put an end to the serious aggressions that women and girls are suffering today, and will suffer tomorrow, in contexts of conflict. They are human beings with rights and with potential, and they represent a vital pillar in the development of our societies.

Given the serious deterioration of the situation in the Middle East, where women and girls are also suffering the consequences and becoming victims, Panama calls for peace and for respect for international humanitarian law so as to facilitate a safe humanitarian corridor, making it possible to provide assistance to the population. We also call for the release of hostages and for respect for human rights.

If we are elected as a non-permanent member of the Council for the 2025–2026 term, we are committed to being firm allies of women and girls in this forum and to continuing to support the implementation of initiatives geared to the women and peace and security agenda, as we strongly believe in their transformative potential to grant our women, girls and young people a voice and a leading role in peacebuilding and sustainable development.

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

Mr. Muhith (Bangladesh): I thank the Brazilian presidency for organizing this important debate. I also thank the Secretary-General and the other briefers for their remarks.

Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

At the outset, I would like to express my delegation's full commitment to this important agenda. Born out of a devastating war in which 200,000 women endured conflict-related sexual violence, Bangladesh prioritized women's equal participation in all of its post-conflict recovery efforts. As a non-permanent member of the Security Council at the time, we were

also inspired by our painful legacy to play a key role in the Council's adoption of its founding resolution 1325 (2000). Over the years, successive Council resolutions have expanded the scope and dimensions of the agenda. Unfortunately, its transformation of from theory to practice has been slow and inadequate. Allow me to highlight a few points.

First, in order to advance the full realization of the women and peace and security agenda, it is critical to develop and apply an effective compliance mechanism at the country level. In that regard, we welcome the initiative of UN-Women to develop a tracker that monitors trends across a set of indicators by following women's participation in peace processes globally and the gender responsiveness of the peace agreements.

Secondly, we believe the Council itself has a responsibility to lead by example. The engagement of a greater number of women in Council proceedings is crucial in that regard. We are encouraged to see that there have been some improvements. The number of women briefers invited to speak to the Council has increased to 46 per cent, compared to an average of 19 per cent between 2013 and 2017. Going forward, the Council must make sure that the views and recommendations of women briefers are duly incorporated into relevant resolutions and decisions.

Thirdly, we commend the contribution of peacekeeping operations to advancing gender equality and women's participation in host countries and to integrating gender perspectives across all areas of mandate delivery. We must do more to increase the number of women peacekeepers in military contingents and formed police units. We also want to highlight the positive developments in the Peacebuilding Commission in that regard. During the chairmanship of Bangladesh in 2022, 58 per cent of meetings of the Commission were informed by briefings from women peacebuilders, representing an increase from 52 per cent in 2021. We hope that trend will continue and that the Commission will amplify the messages received from women briefers in its advice to other United Nations organs and bodies, including the Security Council.

Fourthly, creating a safe and conducive environment for women is imperative for fully materializing the women and peace and security agenda. In that regard, we emphasize the importance of addressing sexual violence in conflict, ensuring accountability for crimes and harassment perpetrated against women and

strengthening security and judicial sector institutions. We also highlight the importance of ensuring a safe space for women in the context of the current digital transformation.

Finally, we need to ensure adequate, predictable and sustained financing for the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. In that regard, we recall the recommendations of the Secretary-General on ensuring the availability of predictable resources for gender equality and women and peace and security programming and expertise during peacekeeping mission drawdowns and transitions, contributing to United Nations efforts to raise \$300 million in new funding pledges for women's organizations and allocating a minimum of 15 per cent of official development assistance to gender equality. We also note the recommendations of the Secretary-General in his New Agenda for Peace and his call for increased investment in livelihoods and the social protection sector in order to advance the women and peace and security agenda on the ground.

As we approach the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) in 2025, let me conclude by echoing the words of the Secretary-General that "women's full, equal and meaningful participation in building peace should be the norm, not an aspiration or an afterthought." (S/2023/725, *para.1*)

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

Mr. Al-Saadi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Mr. President, for holding this important meeting on the participation of women in peace and security. This is not a matter of social justice alone; it is a strategic and humanitarian necessity. Women's participation in peace and stability at the national, regional and international levels provides a unique viewpoint and added value to conflict prevention and resolution, achieving peacebuilding, the maintenance of peace and the post-conflict humanitarian response and rebuilding.

The genuine participation of women in international peace and security begins at the national and regional levels, which opens the way for women to playing a greater role and making them essential partners internationally. In that context, Yemeni women have been the subject of much attention for decades. Many opportunities have been opened to them in public life as well as in economic, social and political life and

in making history in Yemen. The political presence of women reached a turning point in the election of women deputies to the Parliament and employment in the civil service. Many ministerial positions have been taken by women in Yemen, and we now have women ambassadors in many countries of the world. Yemeni women work as lawyers and judges and have taken up important positions, including court presidents and members of the Judicial Council. Recently, eight female judges were appointed to the Supreme Court. Women participated in the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference, which ended in January 2014 and was an important national event and an outstanding model that reflected the political will to give women the role they deserve, as they represented 30 per cent of conference members. Women also participated in the constitutional drafting committee: four of the 17 committee members were women. An independent national committee with a high level of participation by women was also created to investigate human rights violations, including all violations against women throughout the country, and to refer such violations to the judiciary in order to hold the perpetrators accountable.

One of the first decisions taken by the Presidential Leadership Council was aimed at promoting Yemeni women's meaningful participation by appointing eight women to the committees that support the Council and provide their expertise and technical support while creating the conditions conducive to achieving comprehensive and sustainable peace. The Presidential Leadership Council will take additional measures for promoting the presence of Yemeni women in various institutions and fields.

As we approach the twenty-fifth anniversary of the historic resolution 1325 (2000), we must highlight the steadfastness of Palestinian women against the continuing violations by Israel, the occupying Power. They are defending their rights and their dignity. They are defending the aspirations of the Palestinian people to achieve their inalienable right to establish an independent State along the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in line with resolutions of international legitimacy and the Arab Peace Initiative. We stress the importance of supporting their steadfastness and the role played by Palestinian women on the front lines of the humanitarian response, along with their meaningful participation in all fields. That will contribute to achieving security, stability and peace in addition to defending their just cause. The Palestinian people, especially in the Gaza Strip, have been subjected to Israeli aggression

leading to the martyrdom and injury of thousands of civilians, mostly women and children, the destruction of infrastructure and residential buildings while occupied by their residents, the killing of entire families and the prevention of the entry of water, food and medicines to Gaza, which are paramount to a war crime and a crime against humanity.

In that context, we call on the Security Council and the international community to shoulder their responsibilities and to work towards an immediate ceasefire in order to avoid further bloodshed. Humanitarian assistance must urgently reach the Gaza Strip. We reject the attempts to displace the Palestinian people, which is a violation of international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

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

Mr. Vorshilov (Mongolia): I thank the Brazilian presidency for convening this open debate on the women and peace and security agenda, with a focus on the theme "Women's participation in international peace and security: from theory to practice". I also wish to thank the Secretary-General and other presenters for their valuable remarks and statements.

It has been more than two decades since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. During that time, women's participation has substantially increased in security and peacebuilding matters. However, we are living in a turbulent time of heightened geopolitical tensions and armed conflicts, which requires us to exert more efforts to engage every Member State and all members of society, including women, in peace and security actions.

Mongolia believes that women must be empowered not only politically and legally but also economically, if they are to play a role in political settlements. Therefore, the Government of Mongolia attaches great importance to women's participation in decision-making, political leadership and economic empowerment, and implements national policies and programmes in line with Sustainable Development Goal 5, on gender equality and women's empowerment. Although women make up half of the total population, gender equality has not been achieved in decision-making positions. Therefore, in line with Mongolia's recent constitutional reform to overhaul its electoral system, the law on elections has been amended to set a minimum quota of 30 per cent women candidates among all party candidates.

Mongolia supports the women and peace and security agenda and women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace and security. Moreover, we see peacekeeping operations as part of the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative and the New Agenda for Peace. Furthermore, Mongolia ranks among the top 30 United Nations troop-contributing countries with the highest number of women peacekeepers and is firmly committed to meeting the call by the Department of Peace Operations to increase the number of women serving in peacekeeping operations to 15 per cent by 2027.

In June, Mongolia successfully organized the Female Foreign Ministers Meeting, at which the Foreign Ministers of France, Germany, Indonesia, Liechtenstein, Mongolia and South Africa held constructive discussions on global peace and security, climate change and food security issues and adopted the Ulaanbaatar declaration as an outcome document. To further advance that achievement, during the general debate of the General Assembly at its current session, the President of Mongolia, Mr. Ukhnaa Khurelsukh, proposed to convene the World Women's Forum in Ulaanbaatar in August 2024. We call on Member States and United Nations agencies to cooperate in support of that initiative and to actively participate in that forum. We are confident that women can do groundbreaking work towards establishing justice and sustaining peace and security.

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

Mr. Al-Fatlawi (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Brazil for its exceptional efforts as President of the Security Council for the month of October and to congratulate it on its successful convening of this open debate on women and peace and security.

Best practices and real-life experiences have shown that the inclusion of women in peacemaking processes, whether at the decision-making or implementation levels, is a key factor for achieving sustainable peace. That reality has constituted a turning point internationally in how we view women as key actors in peacebuilding. In that connection, the international community adopted resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions with a view to ending violence against women during armed conflict. Resolution 1325 (2000) is the most important international resolution on the participation of women

in peace negotiations and post-conflict building and the first document that recognizes the central role that women play in international peace and security and their role in preventing crises.

In Iraq, women contribute together with men to many achievements in various areas, including the family, the economy, security and peace. They have been essential partners in all our victories against terrorism, and they continue to be partners in facing difficulties and challenges. To honour Iraqi women, and in accordance with the State's highest principles of reform, development and construction, Iraq launched the National Strategy for Iraqi Women 2023–2030, which was the culmination of a joint national effort aimed at empowering women and enhancing their participation in the public sector, in which women and girls enjoy equal opportunities and full human rights. Allow me to highlight the most important points of that strategy with regard to supporting women's role in peacebuilding.

First, we aim to implement policies and plans on protecting women in crises, including through our commitment to implementing resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security.

Secondly, we aim to strengthen the role of women and ensure their participation at all levels of decision-making in national and international institutions on issues related to the maintenance of peace and preventive diplomacy and in all stages of mediation and negotiations aimed at establishing stability and peace, including both the conflict and post-conflict stages.

Thirdly, we aim to build the capacities of women leaders to strengthen their role in peace mediation and as women peacemakers.

Fourthly, we aim to develop and establish policies and procedures for protecting women during crises.

Iraq is considered to be the first country in the Middle East and North Africa to have developed a national plan to implement resolution 1325 (2000). In December 2020, the Government of Iraq adopted its second national plan for the implementation of the resolution, which was built on three pillars, namely, participation, protection and prevention. That plan consists of the following goals.

First, it aims to increase the percentage of women in the security sector. The number of women in our police sector currently stands at more than 12,000.

Second, it aims to increase the number of women working in Iraq's humanitarian relief and reconstruction programmes.

Third, it aims to ensure accountability and justice so that perpetrators do not go unpunished. In that regard, we call on the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant to expedite the delivery of all evidence to the competent authorities in order to ensure the prosecution of the perpetrators, which will contribute to reparation for the victims and their families, in addition to giving them a sense of security and ensuring their rapid reintegration into society.

Fourth, it aims to protect women and girls who are affected by the sexual violence perpetrated by terrorist groups and to reintegrate them into society.

Fifth, it aims to increase the number of women benefiting from Government-led and community-led prevention programmes and services.

Sixth, it aims to strengthen the Government's legislative and executive amendments on the prevention and treatment of women in crisis situations. In that regard, more than 73 health and psychological centres have opened to receive cases and provide women with psychological support.

Seventh, it aims to increase women's and girls' awareness of the protection mechanisms available in crisis situations.

Eighth, it aims to raise society's awareness of the importance of protecting women and girls during and after crises.

I take this opportunity to express our full solidarity with Palestinian women, who are suffering from the violations committed by the Israeli occupation forces. We call on the international community to ensure that they receive justice and that they enjoy the rights afforded to them by international laws and resolutions.

In conclusion, Iraq emphasizes the importance of ensuring equality between men and women, empowering women in conflict-prevention and enabling them to make more significant efforts in the maintenance of international peace and security. Ensuring the effective

participation of women is at the core of implementing the women and peace and security agenda. Accordingly, Iraq believes that it is important to increase women's empowerment programmes in various fields in order to ensure their participation in building sustainable and effective institutions.

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

Ms. Baños Müller (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important annual debate on women and peace and security. We also thank the Secretary-General, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the civil society representatives for their briefings.

El Salvador fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the delegation of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

We emphasize that the commemoration of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) is an ideal opportunity for the States Members of the Organization to renew their commitment to promoting the role and recognizing the contributions of women in the field of international peace and security. The adoption of the resolution was a key milestone in promoting women's active participation in all stages of peace processes, underscoring their role as agents of change and their ability to transform situations; 23 years after the resolution's adoption, overwhelming evidence has continued to accumulate in support of the fact that peace agreements that actively include women at all stages are stronger and last longer.

Despite the progress achieved in implementing the agenda, women continue to face significant barriers to their involvement and equal participation in many peace processes. Impunity persists for atrocities committed against women and girls in situations of conflict, while gaps remain in funding to support the implementation of gender provisions in peace agreements. My country calls for those challenges to be urgently addressed.

With regard to the Security Council's efforts, my country encourages its members to continue promoting the women and peace and security agenda through open debates and informative discussions. We believe that it is also relevant to reverse the decreasing percentage of Security Council decisions that include references to women's participation or gender equality.

Translating commitments into tangible action remains a challenge of immense proportions. That is why I would like to take this opportunity to share some of El Salvador's efforts to implement this agenda.

Our country has an inter-institutional national committee to advance the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions, as a mechanism to ensure the fulfilment of commitments made on the basis of the resolution. Our second national action plan, which corresponds to the period 2022–2024, is the result of work by various government entities and civil society. This instrument represents the strategic vision of the Salvadoran Government to promote women's participation in conflict prevention and the promotion of a culture of peace.

Similarly, with a view to increasing the participation and influence of women in peacebuilding processes, El Salvador has promoted a series of initiatives with the support of the United Nations, such as the Women Guardians of Peace project, which is focused on building the leadership capacity of women and empowering them, recognizing the contribution of women in building a peaceful post-conflict society and remedying the cross-generational effects of violence.

Given that, we underscore the need for peacebuilding activities, including those undertaken under the Peacebuilding Fund, to have adequate, predictable and sustainable financing. The full implementation of General Assembly resolution 76/305 is key in these efforts. As we have said in various other forums, El Salvador recognizes the valuable role and contribution of women in United Nations peace operations. As a troop- and police-contributing country, we will continue to resolutely and proactively address the challenges that limit the meaningful participation of women in collective peacekeeping efforts.

El Salvador reiterates its call to face the challenges that persist and hinder the attainment of the goals of the women and peace and security agenda. In conclusion, we reiterate our commitment to advancing this agenda, as we firmly believe that lasting and sustainable peace will be achieved only with the full, meaningful and equal participation of women.

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

Mr. Greco (Italy): Italy aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the European Union

and the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security and would like to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

Italy thanks Brazil for convening the annual open debate on women and peace and security. As we approach the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), it is imperative to step up our resolve to accelerate its effective implementation, and we welcome the presidency's drive towards moving from theory to practice through tangible steps.

In the light of the proliferation of situations of armed conflict and the disproportionate suffering of women and girls in conflict-affected situations, we acknowledge that the deep causes of violence, in particular gender-based violence and sexual violence in conflict, are deeply rooted in gender inequality and structural patterns of discrimination. The path to deconstructing such barriers and institutionalizing women's full, equal and meaningful participation is a long and incremental one. In our view, this path actually starts when we are able to uphold the call for action, accountability and justice coming from the grassroots level, the women-led organizations of civil society and women's networks, and embed such calls and practices in our individual and collective action.

Italy, as a long-standing supporter of gender equality and women's empowerment, welcomes the emphasis put by the Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace on the role of regional frameworks and organizations as critical building blocks for networked multilateralism. In this spirit, we support the work of women peacebuilders and the networks of women mediators, which is a thriving and expanding reality. In 2017, we launched the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network as a component of our third action plan on women and peace and security, to foster women's inclusion in peace processes, mediation efforts and peacebuilding in the region.

Throughout the years, the Network has been offering training, capacity-building and networking opportunities to other regional networks and has led to the establishment of the Global Alliance of Regional Women Mediator Networks. Building on this approach, Italy is promoting two side events on the margins of today's annual debate. Yesterday, we inaugurated the project "Strengthening women's meaningful participation and leadership for peace and security", aimed at facilitating a cross-regional exchange of

expertise on the occasion of a joint side event organized with UN-Women, the Mission of Tonga and the Pacific Women Mediators Network. Tomorrow, we will promote a discussion on the situation of Afghan women and their absence in the Taliban-controlled political arena, with a wide range of cross-regional partners, UN-Women, civil society and academic organizations.

Italy will also continue to promote gender mainstreaming across the work of political and peacebuilding missions, encourage a constructive and cross-regional dialogue on the matter and ensure that adequate and sustainable resources are allocated to concrete solutions, such as those highlighted earlier.

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

Ms. Bryant (Australia): Australia thanks Brazil for convening today's open debate on women and peace and security and the briefers for their interventions. The debate is a needed reminder of why we established the women and peace and security agenda. In 2023, as we witness and respond to wars, violent conflicts, political instability, economic insecurity and climate-induced crises, we again encounter the question: why are women still excluded from peace processes and decision-making?

We know the theory that underpins the women and peace and security agenda. There is an extensive body of evidence on why women matter to making, keeping and building peace. In his annual report (S/2023/725), the Secretary-General has again reminded us of the devastating consequences of disregarding the women and peace and security agenda, which we are witnessing in Israel and Gaza.

Globally, there has been no substantial increase in the percentage of women in peace negotiations, and violence against women human rights defenders continues to rise. With regression on gender equality and the human rights of women and girls, there is erosion of democracy and a surge in instability. Australia, working in partnership, is resisting these threats to our international rules-based system, including by the conflicts that are destabilizing our world today.

Central to our efforts and to our national action plan on women and peace and security is strengthening women's meaningful participation in conflict prevention and peace processes. One way we do this is through regional women peace mediator networks. We proudly

support the Southeast Asia Women Peace Mediators and the Pacific Women Peace Mediators Network. Both networks are putting an end to women being sidelined from dialogues, negotiations and resolutions to conflicts in their regions. They are putting the theory into practice.

Australia is also prioritizing the participation and treatment of women in the Australian Defence Force and the security sector, globally. Addressing systemic barriers is not easy, but it is a strategic imperative. For Australia, it has required bold leadership to drive cultural and behavioural change over a decade, and this work continues.

Our own experience underpins our strong support for the Elsie Initiative Fund, which is driving the deployment of women to United Nations peace operations. The Secretary-General has called on us to elevate the voices of diverse women and girls, prevent gender-based violence, innovate in our programming, resource actions and support women human rights defenders. Individually and collectively heeding this call, we can deliver on our shared commitment to all four pillars of the women and peace and security agenda and in the conflicts that cost too many lives. We should embrace, not forgo, the transformative potential of the women and peace and security agenda.

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

Ms. Broderick (Ireland): I thank all participants who have sat around the table until this late hour to hear us.

We welcome the theme of this year's open debate, which recognizes the need to move beyond the rhetoric on the women and peace and security agenda and towards real, practical implementation. As we look ahead to the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), it remains clear that we are far from realizing the ambition of this agenda. We have the words on paper. We have the commitments from States. What we need now is the political will and recommitment to its implementation on the ground.

The women and peace and security agenda is clear. Peace processes and political dialogues must include the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of women. That is not a nice idea to tick a box, but rather an essential requirement if we want to achieve just and sustainable peace. It relies not only on promoting

women's participation but on removing the barriers that too often limit it. That includes combating sexual and gender-based violence, both on- and offline, and holding perpetrators to account. It involves taking a zero-tolerance approach to reprisals, harassment or attacks of any kind against women peacebuilders and women human rights defenders, including for those who engage with the United Nations. It involves embracing an intersectional approach in peacebuilding and conflict resolution to create the space for the participation of all, including LGBTQI+ persons. The United Nations must lead by example and insist as a prerequisite on the full, equal and meaningful participation of women at all levels of the peace processes and political dialogues held under its auspices. "Equal" means setting a target of 50 per cent.

Going beyond rhetoric and focusing on practical steps that can move the women and peace and security agenda forward was a key priority for Ireland during its recent membership of the Security Council. We were proud to initiate the women and peace and security trio presidency with Kenya and Mexico, which subsequently led to the statement of shared commitments to advance the women and peace and security agenda, which has so far been signed by 16 members and has been referenced several times today. However, while progress in New York is important, we cannot fool ourselves into thinking that it will automatically translate into better implementation on the ground. In fact, in some cases the opposite may be true. In many contexts around the world we are losing ground on gender equality.

It is that reality that has convinced us of the need to focus on implementation at the national and local levels as well. We must invest in women and women-led grassroots organizations and provide sustained and flexible funding for projects that prioritize gender equality and the women and peace and security agenda. That is why Ireland has committed to investing €42 million over a five-year period in feminist and women's rights organizations and in the work of women peacebuilders. National action plans on women and peace and security also have an important role to play in that regard, and we are proud to be implementing our third national action plan, which includes a dual focus on both international and domestic commitments. Ireland will continue to work with partners at the international, regional and national levels to empower women's organizations and enable the full, equal and meaningful participation of women at all levels.

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

Ms. Beretta Tassano (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Uruguay would like to thank your delegation, Mr. President, for convening this open debate and providing Member States with the opportunity to discuss best practices and lessons learned in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and to reflect further on ways of implementing it.

Our delegation also aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security and would like to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

We thank the briefers for their presentations, in particular Ambassador Glivânia Maria de Oliveira, who gave us a message of hope with the example of her participation in the Peace Dialogue Table between the Government of the Republic of Colombia and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional and informed us about Colombia's leadership as an example of the inclusion of women in peace negotiations. Yet the Secretary-General's report this year (S/2023/725) on women and peace and security highlights the lack of progress. No substantial progress has been made in increasing funding for women's organizations. The percentage of women participating in peace negotiations remains stagnant, and threats and violence against women human rights defenders are growing. We are at a critical juncture, where the lack of progress in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) represents an urgent call for us to reflect on how every country, regardless of its size or geopolitical position, can play a significant role in reversing the situation. The promotion of peace and security, with a special focus on the full participation of women, is a collective responsibility that requires joint and coordinated action.

Since July 2022 Uruguay has been in the process of implementing its first national action plan on women and peace and security, thereby committing to meeting the highest standards for gender equality in the area of international peace and security. In putting that commitment into practice — and in keeping with the theme of today's debate — Uruguay's armed forces, with the support of the Elsie Initiative Fund, are implementing a programme that incorporates innovative practices. They are aimed at overcoming obstacles related to deployment criteria, family constraints affecting women's capacity for deployment,

the negative perception of others' past experiences in peacekeeping operations and gender roles, including the underrepresentation of women in operational roles.

Given the limited time we have, I will mention only one such innovative practice, whereby we ensure access to full-time education and transportation to and from school for children under 12 whose mothers are deployed, with fathers as their sole caregiver. The extended school hours and guaranteed transportation alleviate the additional burden associated with child care for mothers who want to deploy and fathers in sole charge of households. That and other initiatives can be found in the full text of this statement and demonstrate Uruguay's commitment to the effective implementation of concrete measures for advancing gender equality and the active participation of women in all aspects related to the women and peace and security agenda.

Lastly, we join the President in paying tribute to Bertha Lutz, whose participation at the San Francisco Conference paved the way for action for the participation of women in all United Nations activities, including those related to peace and security.

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

Mr. Leucă (Republic of Moldova): The Republic of Moldova welcomes today's open debate on women and peace and security, as we recognize women's vital role in conflict prevention, conflict management and peacebuilding.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union and the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

Promoting a gender perspective in the area of peace and security is intrinsic to larger efforts aimed at advancing women's empowerment and gender equality, which are indispensable components in achieving sustainable development and lasting peace. While the Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace highlights the ways that gender plays a major role across international peace and security issues, his Agenda for Disarmament also recognizes that a gender perspective makes arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament more effective. In fully acknowledging the role of women in peace processes and peacekeeping, the Republic of Moldova reiterates its resolve to contribute to the women and peace and security agenda. Through our appointments in peacekeeping missions, we strive

to meet the 20 per cent target of women deployed in United Nations peace operations. We also support the integration of a gender perspective in the work of the First Committee and across the disarmament machinery.

At the national level, the Republic of Moldova has made important progress in advancing gender equality in recent years. Women have gradually but steadily increased their representation in leadership and decision-making processes at all levels and in many areas. To ensure a comprehensive, effective and inclusive approach to gender equality and equity between women and men as actors with a positive, active role in strengthening participation, prevention, protection and rehabilitation in the security and defence sector, in March the Moldovan Government adopted a programme for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) for the period from 2023 to 2027 and an action plan for its implementation. The programme and the related action plan are aimed at achieving cohesion between the actors involved in the security and defence sectors in order to reduce stereotypes and barriers in the field; support the greater representation of women in all sectoral areas of security and defence; enhance the effectiveness of mechanisms for the prevention, reporting and investigation of cases of violence; increase the share of women in international peacekeeping missions; and facilitate the equal participation of women and men at all stages of conflict resolution.

Although much progress has been achieved so far, gender inequalities still persist and gender norms, and stereotypes still prevail in many countries around the globe. Ensuring women's meaningful participation in all decision-making processes, eradicating all forms of violence against women, both online and offline, and upholding women's rights remain desirable goals that have yet to be achieved.

The protection of women against conflict-related violence is another key component of the women and peace and security agenda that requires due attention. More than half of the population fleeing the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine and seeking refuge in the Republic of Moldova are women and children. My country remains committed to providing all the necessary support, be it in the form of shelter, psychological aid or social inclusion assistance for those who choose to stay in the Republic of Moldova.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm my country's commitment to further contributing to advancing the women and peace and security agenda.

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

Mr. Kadiri (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, my delegation would like to thank you, Mr. President, and your friendly delegation for organizing, under Brazil's presidency, this open debate on the issue of women and peace and security.

Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) constitutes the international reference framework for respecting and protecting the rights of women in situations of conflict and peacebuilding. The women and peace and security agenda represents international recognition of the role of women as agents of change and essential actors in the restoration, maintenance and consolidation of peace. However, moving from theory to practice in order to achieve that objective remains a task that requires additional collective effort at all levels.

The women and peace and security agenda is visionary. It highlights the unique perspectives and skills that women bring to conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Women are just as capable as men of mediating, bringing together conflicting parties and building lasting peace, and there are more than enough examples to show that.

However, the women and peace and security agenda continues to face various obstacles in several regions of the world. Cultural, political and social barriers often hinder the full realization of women's potential in matters of international peace and security. Similarly, women continue to face discrimination and violence in several contexts, which impedes their participation in the decision-making processes related to economic recovery and public governance in the post-conflict phase. In order to progress towards the effective realization of the women and peace and security agenda and move from theory to practice, the international community would benefit from following a holistic approach that focuses on the prevention of conflicts, addressing their root causes and creating a safe and encouraging environment for the participation of women in mediation and conflict resolution efforts. In that context, allow me to highlight the following points.

First, we need to see increased representation of women. Women's participation at all levels and their

representation in decision-making positions in matters of peace and security must be encouraged. That requires an effective commitment to gender parity as part of a joint effort between the representatives of Governments and civil society.

Secondly, women's protection and empowerment are crucial. Women in conflict zones must be protected from violence and provided with the necessary resources and skills, including by preventing and combating sexual violence and promoting women's access to health services, education and economic opportunities.

Thirdly, we must step up efforts in the fight against impunity by enshrining a zero-tolerance policy and ensuring access to justice for victims. At the same time, the stigma surrounding the victims of sexual violence and the children born from such violence must be rectified, as it constitutes a fresh victimization.

Fourthly, effective peace and security solutions require the collaboration of all stakeholders, including women. It is important to bridge the gap between theory and practice by working with representatives of women's organizations and ensuring that they have a place at the negotiating table.

Fifthly, the integration of a gender-responsive approach in post-conflict contexts is necessary from the beginning of the reconstruction process in order to ensure sustainable and equitable development in which women and men share resources, opportunities and decision-making authority. Those elements are crucial for building egalitarian and peaceful societies that promote the participation of women in practice, not just in theory.

Morocco remains firmly committed to working together with the United Nations and partners to advance the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. Morocco's national action plan reflects the intention of His Majesty King Mohammed VI to promote gender equality as the foundation of a just, democratic and egalitarian society. Morocco considers its national action plan not as an exercise in formalism but, on the contrary, as a concrete manifestation of Morocco's will and commitment towards gender equality, as well as its conviction that the women and peace and security agenda is an essential component of maintaining international peace and security.

In his statement, the Algerian Minister of Foreign Affairs saw fit to mention the question of the Moroccan Sahara in misleading terms, demonstrating the sheer

hatred harboured by that country against its neighbour Morocco. The Algerian Minister of Foreign Affairs was the only person, out of all the representatives of nearly 100 Member States, civil society and the Secretariat present at today's meeting, who alluded to the Moroccan Sahara, demonstrating once again — if it still needed to be demonstrated — that Algeria is a principal party to the regional dispute that it created and perpetuates concerning the Moroccan Sahara.

I wish to emphasize here that Moroccan women in the Moroccan Sahara fully enjoy their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. They take pride in their Moroccan identity on a daily basis by participating in elections, including as elected candidates; managing local affairs in the Moroccan Sahara; and engaging as equals in the political emancipation, social, economic and cultural development of the southern provinces of the Kingdom of Morocco.

Unfortunately, that is not the case for Algerian women, who suffer the worst kinds of violations of all their rights. They are prohibited from demonstrating and protesting those violations and they are reduced to

silence, if they are not forced into departing the country or even exiled. It is not the case for the courageous Hirak women, who were arbitrarily arrested and have suffered and continue to suffer the worst violations for the sole reason that they demand a better present and future for themselves and their children. Finally, it is not the case for the courageous Kabyle women, who are imprisoned simply for claiming their inalienable right to self-determination. They are repressed and prevented from wearing their traditional clothing, which has represented their culture and their Kabyle ethnicity for centuries.

The President: There are still a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting. Given the lateness of the hour, I intend, with the concurrence of the members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until tomorrow afternoon, following the meeting of the Security Council with troop- and police-contributing countries to the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei to be held at 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 9.10 p.m.