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Seventy-ninth year

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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Ms. Dlhovo	(Mozambique)
<i>Members:</i>	Algeria	Mr. Bendjama
	China	Mr. Fu Cong
	Ecuador	Mr. De La Gasca
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Guyana	Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett
	Japan	Mr. Yamazaki
	Malta	Ms. Gatt
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Sangjin Kim
	Russian Federation	Ms. Zabolotskaya
	Sierra Leone	Mr. Sowa
	Slovenia	Mrs. Blokar Drobič
	Switzerland	Mrs. Baeriswyl
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
	United States of America	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

The role of women and young people

Letter dated 22 April 2024 from the Permanent Representative of Mozambique to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2024/328/Rev.1)

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

Adoption of the agenda.

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

The role of women and young people

Letter dated 22 April 2024 from the Permanent Representative of Mozambique to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2024/328/Rev.1)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Brazil, Denmark, Finland and Luxembourg to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; Ms. Sima Bahous, Executive Director of UN-Women; Mr. Julio Felipe Paullier Olivera, Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs; and Ms. Simone Mbode Diouf, African Union Youth Ambassador for Peace for West Africa.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I also invite the following to participate in this meeting: Her Excellency Mrs. Hedda Samson, Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations; Her Excellency Ms. Ifigeneia Kontoleontos, Permanent Observer for the International Organisation of la Francophonie to the United Nations; and His Excellency Mr. Daniel del Valle Blanco, Permanent Observer of the International Youth Organization for Ibero-America to the United Nations.

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

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2024/328/Rev.1, which contains the text of a letter dated 22 April 2024 from the Permanent Representative of Mozambique to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept note on the item under consideration.

I now give the floor to Ms. DiCarlo.

Ms. DiCarlo: I thank you, Madam President, for hosting today's open debate.

We know that women bear the brunt of the global rollback of human rights. And we know that violence against women in its cruellest forms is a feature of virtually all wars.

I recently travelled to Afghanistan, where the plight of women is a crying example of the ground lost in human rights. Afghan women and girls are systematically denied their rights and dignity in many areas of life, including education. Women I met in Kabul told me of their aspirations and dreams: the same education afforded to men, equal employment opportunities and the freedom to choose their futures. They look to the global community to support them in realizing their rights, so that they can contribute to their country's future.

Of course, Afghanistan is not the only place where women face barriers to participating as equals in politics, peacemaking, public life and employment. Commitments on gender equality are being ignored, if not reversed, in many regions.

In A New Agenda for Peace, the Secretary-General called for addressing the structural inequalities standing in the way of the full realization of women's indivisible human rights. He called for dismantling patriarchal power structures. That means many things — it means equal access to representation, legal protections, physical autonomy, safety, economic opportunity, education and health care. Ultimately, it comes down to a simple vision of overcoming obstacles that deny the full contribution of women.

Armed conflict exacerbates structural obstacles to women's full equality. Institutional failure or collapse, impunity and insecurity expose women to aggravated risks. More than half of the recorded incidents of political violence against women worldwide take place in conflict-affected countries.

Doing away with structural gender inequalities is a matter of equity and right. But it is also a powerful means to improve the chances of success of peace and political processes. Our special political missions have strived to promote women's rights and their meaningful participation in such processes.

In Yemen, for example, community mediation efforts undertaken by Yemeni women, often with the aim of releasing prisoners or achieving local ceasefires,

have bolstered the Organization's ongoing work to relaunch high-level, formal negotiations and put an end to almost 10 years of conflict.

The women and peace and security agenda can be successfully realized only through national action. Over 100 countries from all regions have developed national plans to implement resolution 1325 (2000). That is commendable. But more countries must join that call. Member States can make a difference by committing to specific and targeted measures to advance women's leadership, including as mediators.

In United Nations-led peace processes, we ensure that women are robustly represented. Thirty per cent of the Syrian Constitutional Committee, for example, is female, and women make up 43 per cent of our own mediation teams. In peace processes led by others and to which the United Nations provides some support, the percentage is often not so high. In such cases, we encourage increased representation of women.

Young people deserve the opportunity to shape their future. They are not adults in the making. They are human beings with hopes, aspirations, ideas and energy to contribute — right now.

The Secretary-General's third report on youth, peace and security (S/2024/207) puts forward recommendations to foster urgently needed progress on youth inclusion. It stresses that youth must be allowed to safely participate in peace processes and electoral activities. But the report also compels us not to ignore young people's growing mistrust in governance institutions and electoral processes.

According to the United Nations Development Programme, 82 per cent of young people across 65 countries state that electoral violence hinders their participation. One can understand why, but it is still a distressing statistic.

And as stated in the Secretary-General's report, the engagement of youth in peace processes continues to be minimal. That is a missed opportunity. By practically encouraging youth to engage in politics and peacemaking, Governments can increase solidarity between different generations and rebuild trust in institutions. National action plans for youth, peace and security are instrumental in institutionalizing the meaningful participation of youth and involving youth in decision-making about their futures, but they require dedicated resources and capacities.

This year, in line with our youth, peace and security strategy, we are allocating resources from the Peacebuilding Fund to support the national action plans initiated by several countries. Regional efforts have the potential to catalyse national actions.

The African Union was the first regional organization to establish a framework for youth, peace and security and to appoint Youth Ambassadors, in addition to its Youth Envoy. The United Nations recently supported the Arab regional youth, peace and security strategy, launched by the League of Arab States. With the help of artificial intelligence, young peacebuilders from 14 Arab countries were able to develop an action plan for their region.

Our special political missions are also doing their part to enhance youth civic engagement. In Libya, for example, our mission engages with youth representatives in order to ensure that they play a role in building consensus on the legal framework for national elections.

Environmental peacebuilding is another area in which young people are demanding a role. Young women are often at the front lines of coping with scarce resources and defending the environment. That is linked to gendered social roles around caregiving and sourcing water and food. Young women's and men's roles as environmental defenders, community leaders, activists, mobilizers and peacebuilders must be recognized and advanced.

In conclusion, there are no quick fixes to entrenched power politics, patriarchal attitudes or unequal social structures. Transformative changes rely on national action involving all segments of society. In many places, they also rely on international support.

Through its meetings and decisions, the Council can reinforce that women, along with men, are responsible for building peace and prosperity in their societies; that without women leaders, peace cannot be sustained; that gender equality and realizing the aspirations of young people are essential for sustainable peace and security around the world. The Council can also help promote recognition of young people as important agents of change. I welcome the Council's efforts to more regularly invite women, civil society and youth to brief the Council.

The women and peace and security and youth, peace and security agendas offer us not just a vision,

but a road map. We all need to do more to make the transformative vision of those agendas a reality.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Bahous.

Ms. Bahous: I thank Mozambique for convening us around the crucial agenda of women, youth, peace and security.

On 1 November, UN-Women published a story about a 34-year-old psychotherapist in Rafah. She specialized in helping patients process the trauma of living in conflict. Her name was Amani. A few short weeks ago, on 7 May, Amani was killed, alongside her four children. Amani is one of more than 10,000 women killed in the last seven months.

Just yesterday, scores of women and children were horrifically killed in Rafah, in a safe zone, while they were asleep in tents in a camp for the displaced. It is for Amani and for them, and for all women and girls caught in this conflict, that we demand a permanent ceasefire, unhindered humanitarian access, the release of all hostages, the determined pursuit of peace and a two-State solution. This war must stop because women and girls are bearing the brunt of it. Last year, nearly 300 human rights defenders were killed, 49 of whom were women. These are just the known cases; there are likely many more.

In January 2023, Mursal, a young woman and former member of Parliament in Afghanistan, was shot and killed in her home near Kabul. She stayed behind when the Taliban took over, still clinging to hope that her contribution to the development of her country would be valued.

In October last year, Halima, a 30-year-old journalist, was killed while covering the war in her native Sudan.

Amani, Mursal, Halima and the lives of women whose names we will never know, were a demonstration of the power of women's contribution in crisis. We see it in the way they carried their families and nations on their shoulders and in the way they bore the brunt of it all. The imperative of their knowledge of their communities, their voices and their leadership in decision-making was also a testament to the power of their contribution. Their death is another painful reminder of the realities of war for women and girls and that the disproportionate harm inflicted on women

during wars and conflicts is not of their making. To echo the Secretary-General, to silence the guns, we must raise the voices for peace.

While here we rightly embrace resolution 1325 (2000) as a crucial global norm, for women and girls it remains a distant dream — not only in Gaza but also in Haiti, Myanmar, the Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Yemen, Afghanistan and in too many countries to count the world over. I salute the Council's efforts to increase the voices of women, including young women, as briefers. I commend that, and urge Council members to continue to do so, to listen, to engage and to act on their appeals. Young women and girls face a double discrimination, which is intensified during conflict — discrimination on the basis of their sex and on the basis of their age. I applaud the examples of progress made to address that in the Secretary-General's report on youth, peace and security, which Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo shared with us (S/2024/207).

Allow me to share a few more examples, highlighting what can be done.

As UN-Women, we have conducted capacity-building initiatives for youth organizations to participate in peace processes in Georgia and transitional justice initiatives in Lebanon. Last year, UN-Women and the United Nations Population Fund supported 79 peacebuilding processes that were inclusive of young women, across 17 different countries. And since 2016, the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, for which we serve as secretariat, has supported organizations focused on youth or led by young women from 18 different countries. The funding window for women human rights defenders, set up in 2022, has already supported young women from 21 conflict-affected countries.

And in Afghanistan, UN-Women, the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan have been conducting quarterly surveys to hear from Afghan women, including a special emphasis on young women. We also continue to help break down barriers to inclusion, by finding ways to engage women and young women. For example, we know that intergenerational dialogues in conflict-affected countries can have a powerful impact in communities searching for a way out of violence and division. We must create more such spaces and ensure representation of women and young women across decision-making bodies.

Those examples show us what can be done and that there are solutions we can take to scale. The reality is that we are not doing so. That is despite the clear experience that engaging young women in development, in ensuring that they have equal opportunities, including equal access to the job market, helps sow social cohesion and stability and grows economies.

What we must do is ensure that we are breaking down power structures and harmful norms that hinder the full and meaningful participation of young women and girls and that diminish their voices and their crucial contributions as leaders in their own right. And, crucially, we must protect women and girls' education, their autonomy and their freedom to decide on all their choices in life.

In Afghanistan, it has been three years since the ban on the right to education left 1.1 million Afghan girls out of school. In West and Central Africa, more than 13,000 schools have closed in recent years because of conflict and insecurity, affecting millions of girls. In Gaza, girls and boys have been out of school since 7 October. In Haiti, hundreds of schools have been closed, teachers have been attacked and thousands of children are out of school. In the Sudan, 19 million school-age children are out of the classroom. And in Ukraine, around 40 per cent of children cannot access continuous education owing to a lack of facilities. There is no second chance at childhood. How can our ambitions to rise to the responsibilities we have to afford young women and girls the best we can offer ever be realized when they have been denied their most basic of rights?

I will conclude with three priority areas that require our collective attention, efforts and commitment.

First, we must bring young women to the heart of actual decision-making. When we speak of women's meaningful participation, including young women, lip service is to be condemned. Real commitment is quotas, temporary special measures or other concrete, genuine efforts to not only talk about it, but to do it.

Secondly, we must combat division, hate and disinformation. Our battleground is increasingly online, and we are losing. I have no doubt not only that we can ultimately win, but also that we will win. But for us to win, it will be key, as we find our approaches to the challenges of social media, artificial intelligence and even to new technologies not yet imagined, that the role of young women in their use, understanding

and regulation will be crucial. No technology is inherently good or bad until we humans decide how it is to be employed and how its benefits and harms are to be leveraged.

Thirdly, young women must be far better represented at the peace table and in parliaments. Globally less than 1 per cent of parliamentarians are young women. Even where opportunities for their civic engagement have been closed, one will find them in the streets, joining and leading social movements and protests. Their voices are powerful.

We have seen young women fight and sacrifice for peace, democracy and gender equality in many conflict-affected countries, from Gaza, to the Sudan, to Haiti, to Myanmar, to Afghanistan and many more. They are heroes; they are unrelenting; and they will persist and endure. Of that we should be in no doubt. The question for us is whether we will stand by their side or instead, as too often is the case, we will lack the courage.

Most of all, we must listen and commit not to awaiting a future fit for them, but rather to hastening that future in everything we do. For the Security Council, it must begin with every peacebuilding process supported by the United Nations in any capacity.

This year brings unique opportunities to place young women at the core of gender equality action. That includes the Summit of the Future. Next year, the Beijing Platform for Action marks 30 years and resolution 1325 (2000) marks 25 years. It will also be 10 years since the adoption of resolution 2250 (2015), which recognized for the first time the important role and leadership of young people in building and sustaining peace. If Council members recall, the adoption took place during Jordan's term on the Security Council, during which time the Crown Prince of Jordan — the youngest person ever to preside over the Council — assumed the presidency of the Security Council (see S/PV.7432). We must seize those opportunities, rise beyond the challenges that hold us back in the United Nations and elsewhere, recommit and push forward boldly. Young women are the leaders of tomorrow and the change-makers of today. We must engage with them as such, with the commitment and urgency they deserve. And, in the complex landscape of conflicts, crises and challenges, we must recognize their aspirations everywhere as universal. They have a right to a world free of violence and fear, a world where their dreams can flourish, where they can ascend to

their full potential. And protecting and promoting their rights is our duty.

Let us hold dear the vision of a future where every girl becomes all she can be, where her hopes for a peaceful and vibrant future are our North Star and where we finally act upon our shared responsibility with determination and sincerity. And in that way, let us build together the world that our children and their children deserve, the world they imagine and that we need for all young people everywhere always.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Paullier Olivera.

Mr. Paullier Olivera (*spoke in Spanish*): Today our world is at a critical juncture, witnessing the highest number of armed conflicts since the Second World War. From Gaza and Ukraine to the Sudan, the number of conflict-related deaths since 2022 has reached its highest level in 28 years. One in four young people around the world live in conflict-affected countries and face direct impacts on their lives and livelihoods. At the same time, trust between youth and institutions is deteriorating, leading to increasing inequality and instability. My recent official missions to countries such as Benin, Ethiopia and the Philippines have underlined that reality. The message from young people is loud and clear — the multilateral system must intensify its efforts and implement concrete mechanisms to engage them meaningfully and safely in policy- and decision-making spaces.

The youth, peace and security agenda, outlined in the three key resolutions adopted by the Security Council, is a vehicle to catalyse the necessary transformation. It is clear that this agenda has reshaped the narrative around young people, moving them away from the image of being violent or easily radicalized and empowering them as positive agents of change and promoters of peace.

While progress has been made, much remains to be done. In order to comprehensively assess the progress of the youth, peace and security agenda and its five key pillars, it is my pleasure to brief the Council on the third report of the Secretary-General on youth, peace and security (S/2024/207), a report that was co-authored by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the United Nations Youth Office as the lead authors.

(*spoke in English*):

Young people are calling and mobilizing for peace. They continue to create their own movements, demonstrating their growing agency and leadership across the globe. They are rekindling hope in Syria, mobilizing for peace in the Sudan and supporting community engagement in refugee camps in Chad. In Somalia, young people's participation in district council elections also increased after UNFPA and the Folke Bernadotte Academy hosted intergenerational political forums.

But despite growing political momentum for the youth, peace and security agenda, that commitment has not resulted in greater investment to sustain youth-led peacebuilding and meaningful youth participation. To fully support their engagement in decision-making processes, additional resources and age-disaggregated data are essential.

Advancements have been made in the institutionalization of young people's meaningful engagement here at the United Nations, notably by the establishment of the United Nations Youth Office, which I have the responsibility to lead. However, more needs to be done to translate policies into tangible action, ensuring no one and no young person is left behind.

As the violence of exclusion persists alongside discriminatory laws and a rapidly shrinking civic space, young people are facing a range of threats. Fuelled by social media, digital threats are on the rise. Those threats have increased the spread of hate speech, misinformation and sexual harassment. Young women and girls, especially those with disabilities and from marginalized communities, are at a heightened risk of violence.

Initial steps have been taken by the United Nations and civil society organizations to address those protection concerns through country-specific measures. For example, United Nations peacekeeping operations have focused on establishing community alert networks with youth leaders in countries such as the Central African Republic. Those efforts enhance early-warning capacities and community-based protection mechanisms.

Although progress has been made to institutionalize the youth, peace and security agenda, the momentum on youth, peace and security within the Security Council slowed in 2022 and 2023. According to the

Secretary-General, the references to young people in Security Council resolutions decreased during that time, with only 34 per cent of Council resolutions mentioning young people. While I am pleased to see that Ms. Simone Mbode Diouf has been invited to this debate, it is concerning to see a decline in the number of young people briefing both the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission between 2022 and 2023, compared to previous years. Moreover, only 6 out of 11 peacekeeping operations and 13 out of 24 special political missions have references related to youth, peace and security or related to youth engagement in their mandates. Advancing the integration of youth, peace and security elements into peacekeeping operations requires dedicated funding, capacities and strategic partnerships.

As we approach the 10-year anniversary of the youth, peace and security agenda and resolution 2250 (2015), allow me to highlight three key recommendations outlined in the report. Those recommendations, which are also supported by young peacebuilders in my consultations with the civil society working group of the Global Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security, are vital for advancing our agenda.

First, it is crucial to hold an annual Security Council open debate on youth, peace and security to ensure sustained engagement and momentum for the youth, peace and security agenda. That includes restoring trust among youth, governments and the United Nations, with accountability being key.

Secondly, we must increase opportunities for young people to participate in Security Council deliberations and country visits. In practice, that means reviewing the Council's working methods to strengthen youth engagement and ensure protection protocols for the safe and meaningful participation of young briefers, recognizing the unique risks they face.

Thirdly, the Security Council must continue strengthening concrete youth, peace and security elements as part of mandate renewals of peacekeeping operations and special political missions.

As the negotiations for the Pact for the Future continue to unfold, I would like to urge the Council membership to ensure the inclusion of strong and specific commitments and actions on youth, peace and security in chapter 2 of the Pact. That will solidify the commitment to youth-inclusive peacebuilding and ensure the agenda's sustainability and impact.

(spoke in Spanish)

In conclusion, achieving a future defined by human rights, justice, sustainability and peace depends, among other things, on the implementation of those recommendations. Only through collaborative partnerships and by integrating diverse stakeholders can we build the future we want.

The President: I thank Mr. Paullier Olivera for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Diouf.

Ms. Diouf *(spoke in French)*: First, allow me to express my gratitude to the Republic of Mozambique for not only placing this important issue on the agenda of the Security Council, but also for inviting me to showcase the leadership of young women peacebuilders who are actively involved in sustainable peace initiatives, thereby demonstrating the transformative impact of their collaboration.

As the African Union Youth Ambassador for Peace representing the West Africa region, I am living proof that international and regional institutions can choose to put their trust in the expertise and leadership of young women by placing them at the forefront of the world stage. In that regard, I would like to express my gratitude in particular to the African Union for its unwavering commitment to mainstream and strengthen the meaningful participation of young people in all aspects of peace and security in accordance with article 17 of the African Youth Charter.

In order to shed light on the incredible work in which young women peacebuilders are engaged every day on the African continent, allow me to share the inspiring story of four young Congolese women with whom I have had the privilege of collaborating in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. These young women have been instrumental in implementing and adapting the youth, peace and security resolutions in their country, embodying the resilience and innovation characteristic of youth in that space.

First are Nora and Marie Rose. These two young women led the Resolution 2250 (2015) National Technical Secretariat, created by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to promote leadership on and the implementation of that resolution. Thanks to the women's leadership and coordination, the Democratic Republic of the Congo created its first national action plan on youth, peace and security

in August 2022. Next are Esther and Emilie, the coordinators of the young women leaders for peace networks in North and South Kivu. Despite a challenging security context, given the war, these women brought the youth, peace and security agenda national action plan to their communities by leading the localization process. From collecting data to drafting strategic documents and to advocating at the provincial level, Esther and Emilie ensured that the plan considered the gender-specific needs of young people.

The leadership and backgrounds of those four young women are highlighted in a thematic paper that they prepared, which was published by the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders and UN-Women upon the release of the third report of the Secretary-General on the youth, peace and security agenda (S/2024/207). The document emphasizes the leadership of young Congolese women in implementing the youth, peace and security and women and peace and security agendas in synergy, drawing on the lessons learned from their contributions to peace processes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Marie Rose, Nora, Esther and Emilie are not alone. Like them, many young women across Africa are dedicated to addressing the challenges that affect their future, such as climate change, the resurgence of conflicts, violent extremism, political marginalization, sexual violence and the lack of economic opportunities. Those young women are key to upholding peace and human security in their countries. The youth, peace and security agenda explicitly recognizes the role of young women as equal partners in peace processes, mainly through resolution 2535 (2020). That resolution acknowledges the unique and intersectional needs of different groups of young people — especially young women — in conflict, peacebuilding and humanitarian responses. It thereby calls on Member States and other peace actors to promote synergies between the youth, peace and security and the women and peace and security agendas.

The African Union's continental framework on the youth, peace and security agenda encourages Member States to avoid stereotypical assumptions about the roles and experiences of young men and women, and it invites them to develop strategies to address the needs of young women. I believe that it is essential to highlight some success stories that should serve as points of reference and examples of best practices to continue the work in favour of young women.

First is the African Union's Youth Ambassadors for Peace programme, which appoints five young people to advocate for the involvement of young Africans in peace and security processes. Currently, three young African women, including myself, are using their expertise to serve and support young people in their region. The FemWise-Africa initiative seeks to strengthen the role of women and young women in conflict prevention and mediation efforts. The youth caucuses on the African Women Leaders Networks chapters were established by the African Union to promote female leadership in all areas, including peace and security. Lastly, the young women's mentoring initiative, in which I was fortunate enough to participate, is a pilot programme launched by the Permanent Mission of the African Union to the United Nations to promote intergenerational mentoring and bridge the gender and generation gap that hinders young African women's leadership, particularly in multilateral organizations. Those are commendable and necessary initiatives that should be supported.

Allow me also to touch on the story of Kristine from Kenya, who is currently conducting local youth, peace and security agenda consultations in every county in Kenya to develop the national action plan for resolution 2250 (2015), as well as that of Nanette, the national coordinator of the youth, peace and security agenda coalition in Chad. Through their daily work, both young women embody the perfect intersection between the youth, peace and security agenda and the women and peace and security agenda, which are two distinct yet complementary frameworks that form the foundation for developing comprehensive and inclusive peace and security policies. Both frameworks acknowledge that conflict, war and violence have a different impact on young people and women and that their contributions to peace, conflict prevention and humanitarian responses are often overlooked.

The commitment of young women across the African continent is undeniable, but political leaders must play their part. Young women must be economically and socially empowered in order to have the necessary resources, capabilities and confidence to be agents of change. My experience working with young people, especially young women, for several years has taught me one thing: when we invest in young women, they give back to the community, starting a virtuous circle. Economic empowerment is necessary but on its own not sufficient. It is also essential to recognize the potential of young women as political actors, as seen

in the example of Sibila, the youngest candidate in Burkina Faso's most recent legislative elections.

Recognizing the importance of empowering young women goes beyond words — it involves gaining their trust, allowing them to participate in high-level forums and reinstating their confidence in multilateralism. The youth, peace and security and women and peace and security agendas serve as frameworks to illustrate how young women's involvement can be effectively enhanced. However, little progress can be made without genuine political determination. During the Summit of the Future, to be held in September, all Member States will have the chance to showcase their dedication to young people by incorporating robust commitments and concrete actions supporting the youth, peace and security agenda in the Pact for the Future. That is particularly urgent as, in the most recent version of the Pact, all references to the youth, peace and security and women and peace and security agendas have been removed. I urgently call on Member States to reverse that change. The youth, peace and security agenda must remain a priority for the Security Council under the guidance of the United Nations Youth Office, the United Nations Population Fund and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, whose leadership and coordination, in particular in addressing inclusion and protection issues, I commend.

That leads me to my final point: protecting young women peacebuilders. Even if some young women bravely speak out despite threats, fear silences many others. Combating hate speech and gender-based violence facilitated by technology is essential to create safe civic, offline and online spaces.

Allow me to conclude with a call to action. I urge all Member States and stakeholders to consider doing the following: first, implement, fund and institutionalize the youth, peace and security and women and peace and security agendas, as called for by 400 young people in the Cotonou Youth Action Agenda in the context of the thirtieth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development; secondly, ensure that the specific needs of young women are considered when developing women and peace and security national action plan; thirdly, include promotion of the youth, peace and security and women and peace and security agendas in the Pact for the Future; fourthly, highlight best practices and lessons learned from young women; and lastly, encourage the collaboration and dialogue

between young women and other stakeholders to bridge generational and gender gaps.

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

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mozambique.

(spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation.)

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Mozambique, I am pleased to welcome all members of the Security Council and all participants in this ministerial debate on the role of women and youth in maintaining peace and security, which constitutes an opportunity for Member States to analyse the contribution and achievements of women and youth in decision-making processes on matters of peace and security in Africa and the world in general. We are grateful to all the briefers who have contributed their valuable knowledge and perspectives on the topic of our debate. The exchange of ideas and information is fundamental to deepen our knowledge and mutual understanding. Our appreciation goes out to the members of the Peacebuilding Commission for the written advice addressed, by consensus, to the Security Council on the topic under discussion. We hope that members of the Security Council will take note of the points raised by the Peacebuilding Commission.

This debate is an important opportunity for us to identify best practices, gaps, challenges and the way forward to improve the participation of women and young people in efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts and promote regional and international peace and security.

The choice of the theme for this event is a worthy recognition of the importance of women and young people as a positive force in preventing and resolving conflicts and building sustainable peace, which has gained momentum since the adoption of the following legal instruments — the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, and resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018), on youth, peace and security.

The Republic of Mozambique understands that the impact and efficiency of peace and security policies and strategies can only be ensured through a deep understanding of the experiences of violence, injustice and exclusion, both in situations of violent conflict and

in the contexts of inequality, insecurity or uncertainty outside the contexts of conflict experienced by women and young people. The knowledge and experiences that women and young people bring to the table and their potential contributions to solving the complex problems facing the African security sectors should guide discussions on how to adopt a new, more inclusive approach for women and youth to issues aimed at preserving, achieving or consolidating peace and security.

In that context, the Government of the Republic of Mozambique has been making efforts to ensure the promotion of gender equality and placing women and young people at the centre of decision-making processes, as illustrated, among others, by the gender parity in the country's Government and the progressive increase in the number of women and young people in the legislative and judicial branches, which allows for their increasingly active participation in the country's political, economic, social and cultural spheres.

In that context, the Republic of Mozambique has approved normative instruments to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, with an emphasis on gender policy and the strategy for its implementation. As part of promoting women's participation in peace and security processes and conflict resolution, Mozambique approved its first national plan on women and peace and security, for the period 2018–2022. That multisectoral instrument highlights the importance of considering the specific needs of women and girls in the context of armed conflicts and post-conflict situations; the political and legal sphere; gender equality and equity in defence and security institutions; women's participation in peace and security structures and processes; preventing sexual and gender-based violence in conflict and peace situations; and the gender perspective in emergency relief and recovery efforts.

Regarding the implementation of the national plan on women and peace and security, allow me to highlight the following results achieved: the training of 728 government and civil society employees, 313 men and 415 women, to provide assistance to survivors and victims of gender-based violence; the establishment of 17 reference centres for women and girls at risk or victims of violence; raising community awareness about gender equality in order to ensure the effective participation of women and girls in peace and security processes in Mozambique; socioeconomic integration of 17,471 women and girls affected by conflicts and

cyclones in the provinces of Cabo Delgado in northern Mozambique, and Manica and Sofala in the central region; the training of more than 300 representatives of grassroots organizations and civil society on the women and peace and security agenda to defend and promote peace and security processes in Mozambique; and the training of 3,000 members of the police and the armed forces of Mozambique in matters pertaining to the promotion of gender equality and the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

In Mozambique, the assessment of the first national plan on women and peace and security is under way, with a view to providing guidelines for the second edition of the national plan on women and peace and security.

The inclusion of young people in the peace and security agenda and in society more broadly is fundamental to building sustainable peace and security in our countries, because young people are the present and future of our nations. Therefore, in national agendas and policies, Member States must define the active participation of young people in the construction of peace and security as one of their priorities. As we are all aware, young people are the main driving force and the face of conflicts around the world, because they are on the front line in the fight against terrorism, extremism and other forms of violence against communities and States, and there is a need to involve them in the search for peace.

The promoters of war and terrorism, often with hidden agendas, as is the case in Mozambique, have manipulated young people to make them adhere to their destabilization agendas, taking advantage of their social, economic and educational vulnerabilities. In recognition of the nexus between peace and development, the Government of Mozambique has adopted a holistic approach in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism, which includes actions of an economic and social nature, with an emphasis on training young people to bring them into the job market and provide a living for themselves and their families and to make young people a vehicle for the promotion of development.

In that context, allow me to highlight some initiatives carried out by the Government of Mozambique, such as the programmes known as My Kit My Job, Acredita Emprega, and Siyakha, which is an initiative to empower girls. We would like to thank

the bilateral and multilateral cooperation partners in implementing those initiatives that have facilitated the participation of young people in promoting employment and development in Mozambique. It is important to highlight the creation of the National Youth Council, a national multiparty platform enabling young people to interact with each other and a vehicle for presenting their concerns, aspirations and proposals for solutions, including in the field of peace and security.

We also highlight the actions of young men and women who are national artists and have led independent initiatives to promote peace and security through music, theatre, song and dance, sculpture and other initiatives that draw society's attention to the importance of peace and which have received the support and encouragement of the Government of Mozambique.

I conclude my intervention by reinforcing the call for greater awareness among political leaders in Member States in order to prioritize the agenda on women and youth, in their different actions related to peace and security, and the importance of greater involvement of civil society organizations, women's groups, youth, traditional and religious leaders and the use of social and community media, including community radio, to facilitate the understanding and participation of civil society at the grassroots level in the process of drafting and implementing national action plans on women and youth, in the context of peace and security, and the political, economic and social life of our countries.

Member States must, in our opinion, prioritize the allocation of resources from national budgets and partners, including through budgeting from a gender perspective, and increase the participation and capabilities of all stakeholders in efforts to implement the women and youth agendas in matters pertaining to peace and security. The regional economic communities, the African Union Commission and UN-Women must continue their political advocacy of the agenda at the Member State level and, to that end, promote national and regional consultations to assess the progress made. There is also a need to prioritize data collection and the establishment of clear performance indicators to measure progress, in collaboration with the regional economic communities, the African Union Commission and other stakeholders.

Experience has shown that efforts must be intensified to ensure that post-conflict reconstruction and development issues are addressed holistically,

including those related to the abuse, trauma and other psychosocial needs of victims of violent conflicts. There is a strong imperative to invest the necessary resources to deal with the indirect effects of conflict. In the same way, there is a need to realign the African Union's ongoing stabilization efforts with the post-conflict reconstruction and development policy to ensure holistic and appropriate approaches to the objectives of our action. Those efforts must be guided by appropriate policies that avoid overlaps in our strategic action.

Lastly, allow me to reaffirm our deep gratitude for everyone's presence at this high-level debate under Mozambique's second presidency of the Security Council. We are hopeful that, together, with everyone doing their part, we will be able to attain peace, which we all need in order to build a better world for all.

(spoke in English)

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Sowa (Sierra Leone): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this debate. We also thank the briefers — Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo, Assistant Secretary-General Felipe Paullier Olivera, Director Sima Bahous and African Union Youth Ambassador Simone Mbode Diouf — for their insightful presentations.

The prosperity of a nation cannot be divorced from the prosperity of its women and young people. Sierra Leone reiterates its firm commitment to enhancing and advancing the role of women and youth in peacebuilding processes at the national, regional and international levels. We believe that, when women and youth lead and participate in peacebuilding processes, there is sustainable peace, and socioeconomic development is more meaningful. With so many conflicts raging around the world, correlating to an increase in flagrant violations of the human rights of women, youth and children, Sierra Leone firmly believes that upholding the human rights of every individual helps to prevent conflict and contributes to sustainable peace.

We note the expansion and improvement over the years of the global normative frameworks for sustainable, comprehensive and inclusive peace to explicitly promote the valuable contributions of women and youth. The women and peace and security agenda, set forth in resolution 1325 (2000) and seven subsequent

women and peace and security resolutions, the youth, peace and security agenda, set forth in resolution 2250 (2015), and the evolving concept of sustaining peace outlined in parallel resolutions, Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) and General Assembly resolution 70/262, all call for inclusive planning, programme design, policy development and decision-making processes for conflict prevention, resolution and recovery. Resolution 2250 (2015) urges Member States to increase the inclusive representation of youth in decision-making at all levels in local, national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflict.

The women and peace and security agenda has also long championed a pathway for designing and implementing policies that ensure the direct participation of women in political, economic and social decision-making. Similarly, in recognition of the critical constituencies of women and youth on the continent and across the globe, the African Union strategy on gender equality and women's empowerment and its Continental Framework For Youth, Peace and Security and related subsequent declarations and communiqués seek both to strengthen women's and youth's agency in Africa and respectively call for the participation of women and youth in nation-building and peacebuilding through targeted programming, capacity-building and mainstreaming. Furthermore, the African Union has since established FemWise-Africa, which is a network of African women in conflict prevention and mediation that provides a platform for strategic advocacy, capacity-building and networking, aimed at enhancing the implementation of the commitments for women's inclusion in peacemaking in Africa.

It is unfortunate that women generally continue to face significant structural barriers to their active participation in peace and political processes and in expanding their socioeconomic power. Recent reports by the Secretary-General note that the representation of women in negotiating United Nations-led peace processes and the implementation of peace agreements across several countries generally remain at low levels. There has also been a marked increase in the number of women and girls at risk of gender-based violence in conflict situations, including about 3,522 United Nations-verified cases of conflict-related sexual violence targeting women and girls in 2023. Young people also continue to face significant physical, psychological, sociocultural, financial, legal and digital

threats, which are further exacerbated in conflict situations. Youth unemployment is still 3.5 times as high as adult unemployment, with about 298 million young men and women not engaged in employment, education or training. More than 600 million African young people live in conflict-affected regions, with their experiences strongly determined by gender and generational power dynamics. Faced with staggering youth unemployment and widespread dissatisfaction with entrenched governance structures, young Africans are demonstrating a restlessness that is being manifested in increasing tensions between them and political actors. Additionally, that has led to a brain drain on the continent, with many young people — especially in West Africa and the Sahel — opting to take the dangerous journey through the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea to seek greener pastures in Europe.

Sierra Leone recognizes the establishment of an inclusive and participatory national peace infrastructure as part of an essential condition for realizing the right to peace. In 2021, the Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion for Sierra Leone was established to promote peace, reconciliation and unity in Sierra Leone, as well as to build peace cultures, enhance tolerance and support the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Since its establishment, the Commission has supported national reconciliation efforts, particularly after the 2024 presidential elections.

Drawing on our approach to ensuring the involvement of women and youth in governance, Sierra Leone has taken deliberate measures in legal and institutional law, reforming beyond simply removing barriers that impede their involvement to inclusive, safe and active participation. The passing of the 2022 gender equality and women's empowerment act and the 2022 public elections act ensured a minimum 30 per cent representation of women in political and public decision-making bodies. Currently, women comprise 30 per cent of elected ordinary members of Parliament; 34.5 per cent of ministers and 33 per cent deputy ministers; 41 per cent of elected mayors or chairpersons; and 34 per cent of elected councillors on local councils. Representation in the security sector has also increased, to 23 per cent for the police and 13 per cent for the armed forces. As a marked demonstration of commitment to inclusive and safe participation of women and youth in peacebuilding and development, the 14-member tripartite platform set up for the Government and the opposition to engage on critical

national electoral reforms for enhancing democracy, national cohesion and peace includes four women and four youth representatives.

Sierra Leone continues to deepen partnerships with local, regional and international actors to advance the legal, administrative and operational systems for women and peace and security and youth, peace and security resolutions and gender-responsive humanitarian actions. The Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs, in collaboration with civil society groups such as the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders and the Campaign for Good Governance, has also integrated partnerships with youth peacebuilders in conflict resolution, peacebuilding and conflict prevention initiatives. In 2009, Sierra Leone became the fourth country in West Africa, and the seventh in Africa, to develop a national action plan for the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). We recently completed the implementation of the second-generation national action plan and are in the process of finalizing the development of the third-generation national action plan, in collaboration with women's civil society groups, youth organizations and other stakeholders.

The Government has also prioritized investment in the capacity, agency and leadership of young political leaders to strengthen their ability to collaboratively lead peace efforts and use their skills to tackle other concerns that affect their lives, particularly in these challenging times. Both the Youth in Politics and Peacebuilding and the Youth at Risk projects aim to enhance social cohesion and dialogue for able-bodied and physically and mentally challenged youth. That is to enhance their involvement in civic engagement at national and community levels through training, change communication, advocacy and awareness-raising, as well as increasing access to skills training and prevention and protection services related to gender-based violence and other harmful practices.

Sierra Leone calls on Member States and the international community to respond in a more determined and comprehensive manner to harness the untapped potential of young people and women, including through improvements in education and training, especially in practical technical and vocational and digital skills; increasing their economic participation through flexible financing schemes and entrepreneurship initiatives; participation in policy formulation and decision-making through intentional appointments to leadership positions; and extensive

consultations on relevant issues. We call for the full implementation of all Security Council resolutions on women and peace and security and youth, peace and security.

In conclusion, the world today is home to 1.8 billion young people — the largest generation in history, and to 4.04 billion females. The voices and actions of women and youth as peacebuilders, decision makers, human rights defenders and agents of change are fundamental to the durability of peace.

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett (Guyana): Guyana thanks Mozambique for convening today's open debate on this important subject. We also thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo, Executive Director Bahous and Assistant Secretary-General Paullier Olivera and Youth Ambassador for Peace of the African Union, Ms. Diouf, for sharing their perspectives and, indeed, for all their efforts.

As we meet today, we acknowledge that women are among those facing the brunt of the impacts of conflict. To highlight just one example, in Gaza they continue to be killed with impunity, and those who have survived are left to care for their surviving children and relatives, sometimes injured in the most inhumane conditions. At the same time, we see young people the world over being at the full forefront of jolting the world's conscience to stop war. In many other places, they are taking action to protect democracy. This meeting is therefore timely.

While women and peace and security and the youth, peace and security are seen as distinct agendas and are often addressed in silos, there are important overlaps that should be recognized. Indeed, I venture to say that the ultimate goal of peace and security will not be achieved without understanding and capitalizing on those synergies. As we consider the role of young people, we see that most peace and security interventions targeting youth prioritize young men, with minimal or no attention given to young women. Young women are instead categorized within the broader women and peace and security agenda, where there is often a misconception that women are a homogenous group. We are also aware that much more needs to be done to ensure that women are integrally involved in decision-making in peace processes.

In that context, I offer some reflections.

First, gender stereotypes in the wider world context are amplified in situations of armed conflict.

Young men are regarded as prone to turning to violence and vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups and extremists, while young women are often portrayed as passive victims in need of protection, with little acknowledgment that they too can and are being recruited, or that they can contribute to conflict resolution and peace processes. While the adoption of resolution 2250 (2015) was an important shift in the perspective of the role of young people, from victim or perpetrator of violence to positive agents of change, and capable of contributing to conflict prevention and resolution, we must ensure that no category of youth is left out. Young women must be part of that positive vision.

That leads me to my second point, which is the importance of the meaningful inclusion of women and young people. Targeted action should be taken to ensure the full participation of women and young people, including young women, in all aspects of preventing and recovering from conflict and building peace. Their participation should not be limited to civil society but should also be mainstreamed into Government and political structures. The Council has seen many powerful examples of young women who are leading efforts within their communities to achieve sustainable peace. They have risked reprisals and come to share their assessments of the situations in their countries and communities. Indeed, the Security Council can lead by example by increasing opportunities for young persons from different regions to brief the Council, as suggested by the Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs.

Thirdly, critical to the Council's prevention agenda must be addressing root causes and risk factors of conflict. Poverty, unemployment, internal displacement, a lack of economic opportunities and desperation have driven millions of young people and children into the arms of extremist groups. Those conditions are often exacerbated for women and girls who are also plagued by sexual and gender-based violence, trafficking and forced marriages. As we address root causes, I wish to underscore the centrality of quality education, which, among other things, will build their capacity to be part of solutions. That is, however, a challenge when access to education is disrupted on account of conflict and attacks on schools. Increasing failure by parties to conflicts to adhere to international humanitarian law protections for schools and other critical civilian infrastructure is risking creating a generation of young people in conflict-affected areas being left behind.

Fourthly, in this digital age, attention must be paid to social media spaces and how they impact young people. Youth-dominated social media spaces are driving both positive and negative outcomes. Young people are facing new and increased challenges related to online hate speech, misinformation, racism, violence, bullying and unwanted sexual advances, as well as being recruited by extremist groups. It is essential that there be education on responsible online behaviour, as well as robust frameworks to monitor misuse of digital spaces and pursue accountability by perpetrators.

The Council must continue to strengthen the youth, peace and security and the women and peace and security agendas and integrate them into the mandate renewals of peacekeeping operations and special political missions. Women and young people must be at negotiating tables and integrally involved in implementing peace agreements. Adequate resourcing for their empowerment and participation should be built into mandates, with strong monitoring mechanisms to measure implementation and efficiency.

In conclusion, it must be emphasized that the meaningful participation of women and youth in peace processes, including at decision-making levels, can build trust and break cycles of violence, yielding sustainable outcomes. The Council must continue to promote their meaningful participation.

Ms. Zabolotskaya (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank Mozambique for convening today's debate. We also thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; Ms. Sima Bahous, Executive Director of UN-Women; Mr. Felipe Paullier Olivera, Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs; and Ms. Simone Diouf, African Union Youth Ambassador, for their briefings and their contributions to our discussion.

We live in an increasingly complex geopolitical environment, with a growing number of conflicts and constantly emerging new challenges and threats, which serve to underscore the need for all segments of society to come together to achieve lasting and sustainable peace and security. Women are an integral part of conflict resolution and building sustainable peace, and they contribute to more harmonious and durable solutions in reconciliation and mediation processes. Young people, in turn, with their innovative ideas,

energy and desire for change, can complement those efforts to create more effective solutions.

However, we must not forget that women and young people are also the first victims of conflict and instability and that they must be protected. A clear example is the situation in the Gaza Strip, where tens of thousands of women and children have lost their lives and where children and women are forced to live without a roof over their heads, facing severe shortages of food and even water. We continue to hear about the importance of developing regional and national strategies and plans or establishing national mechanisms to implement resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2250 (2015), which established the topics of women and peace and security and youth, peace and security on the Security Council's agenda. Nonetheless, a question arises: what strategies and mechanisms for women and youth are involved in resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict? What role do such strategies play in that specific conflict situation? We believe that that issue requires some clarity. Does it not seem that, in that area, the United Nations is engaged in building up bureaucratic structures and formally preparing and updating plans that do not play a real role in ending or resolving conflicts?

We are pleased to see the steady increase in the participation of women and young people in peacekeeping processes, including in negotiation and peacekeeping aspects, as well as their contribution to resolving security issues. Russia is contributing to the training of United Nations police peacekeepers from more than 50 countries, mainly African countries. Among those peacekeepers are many women. Such involvement makes it possible to establish more stable and trusting relations with the local population. It also facilitates follow-up measures to rehabilitate and reintegrate victims of violence and other violations.

At the same time, such engagement should be a natural process of social evolution — a conscious choice rather than a formal, externally imposed objective. Russia shares the view that women and young people can — and do — make an even greater contribution to conflict prevention and resolution. However, attributes such as age and gender cannot be the determining — and much less the only — criteria for involving certain individuals in decision-making processes, especially on such sensitive issues as the maintenance of peace and security. What matters in that regard are the actual requirements of the situation and professional skills.

We must point out the trend whereby the involvement of women and young people becomes an ideological stance. In such cases, wealthy donor countries make the provision of aid for poor and conflict-affected countries conditional on the level of women's and youth participation. Such neocolonial practices are unacceptable. No one has the right to tell sovereign Governments how they should build their States, or prevent conflict or what percentage of women or young people should participate in their political institutions. That is especially true given that donor countries themselves often fail to meet the demands that they impose on others. It is also important to bear in mind that the concept of youth also includes persons under 18 years of age, namely, according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, children. Children's participation in political activity cannot be justified given their physical and mental immaturity. In that regard, efforts are needed to counter the political use of young people and attempts to present the interests of certain political groups as the vision of the younger generation.

Achieving the goals of the women and peace and security and the youth, peace and security agendas is impossible without addressing issues of women's and young people's development: overcoming poverty and ensuring access to education, particularly in countries in situations of armed conflict. Education is key to shaping a generation that is prepared to work for the benefit of society and peace. In that regard, Russia makes cooperating with developing countries in the field of education a high priority. No less important is strengthening cooperation on women's and young people's access to resources, technology and the banking sector. We firmly believe that those measures will contribute to the sustainable post-conflict recovery of States. Protecting the institutions of the family, motherhood and traditional family values is also crucial, as they are the moral pillars of any society and a guarantee of successful development, now and in the future.

The negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the inclusion of women and young people in peacekeeping cannot be overlooked. Such measures have a devastating impact on the situation and well-being of those categories, making them more vulnerable. They deprive women and young people of prospects for the future, job opportunities, education, social protection and other benefits, which clearly affects their inclusion in public life.

In conclusion, I would like to note that creating safe conditions for the participation of women and young people in the peace process is possible if all participants in that process enjoy shared security. Genuine, durable and lasting peace with due consideration for the interests of all stakeholders can only be built upon a solid society.

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I welcome you back to this Chamber, Madam President.

“We still believe in the promise of a better world for everyone. Do others?” That is the question posed by young people in an open letter to world leaders, shared by the United Nations Youth Office just one month ago. Yet almost 25 years ago, five years after the impetus provided by the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Security Council adopted resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, promising to open up peace processes to women and to better protect them. Nearly 10 years ago, with resolution 2250 (2015), on youth, peace and security, it promised the same to young people. Today’s debate gives us an opportunity to review the implementation of all those promises, and I thank Mozambique for inviting us here today. I would also like to thank the speakers for the expertise that they have shared with us, and I welcome the Peacebuilding Commission’s contribution.

In recent decades, we have broadened our vision of peace and recognized the diversity of the people who have built it. We can be proud of those achievements and of the recognition of women’s essential role in peace and security and young people’s action in conflict resolution.

But let us turn to the present. Where are we today, according to the most recent reports of the Secretary-General? For women, the doors to peacebuilding are at best ajar and even seem to be closing. Women as mediators, negotiators and signatories are still the exception rather than the norm in peace processes. We heard today from United Nations representatives that, if we look at the numbers in terms of protection, they are far from encouraging.

As for young people in peace processes, the record is equally mixed, as we also heard. While there are commendable initiatives, for example in Colombia, Yemen and the Central African Republic, young people generally suffer more violence, are rarely involved in peace negotiations and often lose confidence in public institutions. Moreover, the upcoming double

anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) and resolution 2250 (2015) reminds me of the double hurdle that young women have to overcome in peacebuilding.

One promising way to overcome those obstacles is through networking.

First, there must be networking between women and young people committed to peace. Networks such as FemWise Africa demonstrate the success of that instrument in terms of visibility, mutual learning, knowledge transfer and protection. It is all about creating networks where they do not exist, linking women’s and youth networks where they do and actively extending them to more young women. Digital technologies are a powerful catalyst in that respect, including at the multilateral level.

Secondly, policymakers must integrate and use those networks and establish genuine partnerships with them. National action plans for women and peace and security and for youth, peace and security can contribute to that.

Finally, there must be networking at the multilateral level to implement the women and peace and security agenda and the youth, peace and security agenda. In that respect, we welcome the essential role of the advice of the Peacebuilding Commission in the Security Council.

The experience of many peace processes show that the more peace is rooted in each individual, the more solid it is and the more it can grow. It is the actions of society as a whole that sustain peace. Building peace is too big of a challenge without the expertise and experience of women and young people alike.

As Member States, we will once again have the opportunity to keep the promises we made almost 25 years ago with firm and strong messages in the Pact for the Future and in the 2025 review of the peacebuilding architecture.

Switzerland will continue to call for respect for human rights and international humanitarian law. Without protection, women and young people cannot participate fully. Switzerland will also continue to work to ensure that the voices of women and young people are fully heard in the Council, and that it acts with them. Following your example, Madam President, we will be paying particular attention to that issue during our presidency of the Council in October, when we will hold our annual debate on women and peace and security. We have listened closely and will try to

incorporate all the recommendations made today with determination and sincerity so that young people can, with growing agency, as was said, continue to believe in the promise of a better world, where, in the words of Ms. Diouf, they can be agents of change.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): I want to thank Mozambique for organizing this very important and timely debate. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for the most recent report on youth, peace and security (S/2024/207). I very much appreciate all the briefers providing their thoughtful insights.

The United States has long believed that the youth, peace and security agenda and the women and peace and security agenda are mutually reinforcing; that when we lift up young people, we lift up women; and when we lift up women, we lift up young people; and when we lift up both, we empower entire communities; and that empowering those groups in their communities creates a more secure and a more peaceful world for us all.

Unfortunately, we also know that right now young people, and especially young women, are disproportionately impacted by conflict. Violence disrupts their education and diminishes their job prospects, dashing their hopes for the future. It limits their access to civic spaces and squashes their economic potential.

I have met with those young people — the girl from the Sudan, who said the horrors she experienced caused her to lose her ambition, and the 10-year-old from Ukraine, who amid so much fighting, so much violence, just wanted to go back to school and see her friends. We know the children of Gaza are not able to pursue their education, through no fault of their own, in a conflict in which they have not been part of. And yet, we also see girls in Afghanistan denied access to education restricted by the Taliban. And children and women are being held hostage in horrible conditions in Gaza.

Against fierce headwinds, we have seen young people all over the world mobilize to respond to those challenges, and become the architects of their futures, such as the young woman Ms. Simone Mbode Diouf described from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We must do everything in our power to support and uplift those young women and other young people. And we acknowledge the recommendations that are in the youth, peace and security report for additional resources, and I note the recommendations made by our

very able Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs sitting next to me this morning. That is the driving ethos behind the United States Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability, which affirms its support for inclusive political processes to resolve ongoing violent conflicts, with an emphasis on the meaningful participation of women and youth. Incorporating diverse, intersectional and, critically, intergenerational perspectives in peace and security processes is not just the right thing to do, but also the only way to ensure that our solutions are inclusive, impactful and lasting. And those are not recommendations that are being forced on countries by outsiders, as Council members may have heard. Those are recommendations that are being requested and asked for by the youth of those countries.

That includes the work being done by United Nations peacekeeping missions and special political missions. Those missions operate in some of the most hard-to-reach places in the world, and peacekeepers have the potential to support youth across all five pillars of the agenda. But they can do that only if they are adequately mandated and sufficiently capacitated to apply a youth lens in their work.

In addition, we should be thinking about ways in which technology impacts that work and how it can be used to further the youth, peace and security agenda and the women and peace and security agenda. Every day, young people utilize technology and connect through digital platforms with enormous potential to do good. At the same time, we know the dangers posed by disinformation and misinformation, the spread of hate speech online, technology-facilitated gender-based violence, all of which disproportionately affect young women. As members of the Security Council, it is incumbent upon us to promote the safety of young women and girls in physical and digital spaces and to advance healthy information environments that support an engaged citizenry.

Ultimately, sustainable peace and stability are possible only through inclusive decision-making processes. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to work together to harness the limitless potential of women and young people, to work with them today and every day, through the ongoing Summit of the Future process and in all of our efforts as a Council. And I look forward to that discussion being led by the Swiss in October.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I welcome you, Madam President, to New York to preside over

this debate. And I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo, Assistant Secretary-General Paullier Olivera, Executive Director Bahous, and Youth Ambassador Diouf for their briefings.

The role of women and youth in the maintenance of international peace and security is crucial. In the current turbulent international context, the discussion of this topic must go beyond political correctness and loud slogans to concrete and pragmatic initiatives.

I would like to make four observations in that regard.

First, we must promote a ceasefire and cessation of violence in order to protect women and youth. The world today is far from being tranquil. From the Middle East to Africa, from Eurasia to Haiti in the Caribbean, wars and violent conflicts continue unabated, with women and youth as their first victims. In El Fasher, the Sudan, thousands of women and youth have been displaced and deprived of food and clothing as a result of the conflict. In Gaza, Israeli military operations have claimed the lives of 12,000 mothers and children, and hundreds of thousands of Palestinian women have been displaced and are living in fear, anger and despair. As recently as 26 May, Israel attacked a refugee camp in Rafah, resulting in the deaths of dozens of people, most of whom were women and children.

When the safety and very survival of people is under threat, nothing else is possible. The Security Council should assume its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and make unremitting efforts to promote a ceasefire and an end to the fighting. China calls on the parties to the conflict to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, to refrain from using women and youth as military targets, to effectively guarantee access to humanitarian supplies and to return, as soon as possible, to the political track of dispute resolution.

Secondly, we must leverage the role of women and youth in finding political solutions to hotspot issues. Currently, the degree of participation of women and youth in political and peace processes vary from country to country, and the potential talents and contributions of women and youth have yet to be fully recognized and utilized. China supports the full implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2250 (2015), which provide equal opportunities for women and youth to participate in peace processes by eliminating discrimination, prejudice and obstacles. It is essential to enhance the

motivation and sense of participation of women and youth and to encourage them to contribute their ideas to conflict prevention, political development and social governance. We must fully leverage their advantages of quick thinking, understanding and tolerance so that they can become an indispensable force in the maintenance and building of peace.

Thirdly, we must support the economic empowerment of women and youth in order to strengthen the foundations of peace. One of the major reasons that some young people and women have been hoodwinked into joining armed groups and terrorist organizations is their lack of access to education, employment and development. The international community should facilitate their access to education and employment opportunities so that they can become masters of their own destiny and a major force for social stability and development. That is the most effective means of conflict prevention and the peace project with the highest returns.

China has always been active in supporting the economic empowerment of women and youth. In Mali, the Senou vocational training centre, built with China's assistance, has helped more than 500 young people acquire professional knowledge in construction and electrical engineering, and many women have acquired new skills, bringing hope to their families. In Fiji, China has trained more than 2,400 people with Juncao technology since 2014, and the local people have planted more than 2,000 hectares of Juncao grass, which has raised the income and improved the lives of many women and young people. At the China International Import Expo in November, carpets, pine nuts and pomegranates from Afghanistan were the star products, the export of which has created a source of income for thousands of Afghan families and improved the lives of many Afghan women and youth.

Fourthly, we must deepen global partnerships in advancing the cause of women and youth. The United Nations and all countries are duty-bound to implement the women and peace and security and the youth, peace and security agendas. Organizations such as UN-Women, the United Nations Youth Office, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund should not only increase investment in addressing existing problems, such as the elimination of violence, the reduction of poverty and the promotion of education and gender equality, but also work to tackle new challenges, such as digital,

technology and intelligence divides, so that women and youth from underdeveloped countries and regions will not be left behind in the new round of the technological revolution. We call on developed countries to effectively fulfil their commitments to official development assistance and to make the promotion of women and youth in developing countries a key area of their investment. Multilateral financial institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund, should allocate more funding to improve the livelihoods of women and youth and other groups in developing countries. We support deepening South-South cooperation and learning from each other's experience in advancing the cause of women and youth, with a view to achieving shared development.

Women can hold up half the sky, and the youth represent the future and hope. China stands ready to work with the international community to build a better world so that women and youth from all countries can live in the sunshine of peace and development.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Ms. DiCarlo, Ms. Bahous, Ms. Diouf and Mr. Paullier Olivera for their briefings.

France thanks Mozambique for organizing this debate. It is an opportunity to examine peacebuilding from a perspective that considers both the women and peace and security agenda and the youth, peace and security agenda. Their synergy can help us to prevent and resolve conflicts, promote effective gender equality and build more inclusive societies.

Women and young people play a key role in restoring peace and peacebuilding. Their full participation in decision-making processes increases the chances of achieving lasting peace. That can be seen in Colombia, where women from civil society play a vital role in the peace process, and where young people are represented on the National Participation Committee.

It is crucial to promote the contribution of women and young people to the objectives of United Nations missions and operations. France supports that objective through its feminist diplomacy and its ongoing support for the implementation of the women and peace and security and youth, peace and security agendas. We support enhancing the protection of women and girls against sexual violence during conflicts and the fight against impunity for said violence. We also support promoting women's participation in peacekeeping operations. We are carrying out concrete actions, such

as training female officers and advisers on gender issues, the first French-speaking version of which took place in Paris in January.

France has also been working to implement the youth, peace and security agenda for almost 10 years. For example, it supports the creation, by the United Nations Population Fund, of a training initiative on United Nations youth, peace and security programmes in the Western Balkans and Central Asia. This year, France also renewed its support for the Peacebuilding Fund and its Gender and Youth Promotion by contributing €2 million. We welcome the Organization's approval of \$50 million in mandatory annual contributions as of 1 January 2025 to finance the Fund. Supporting the protection needs of women and young people must not be a variable to be adjusted in our programmes, but a full-fledged part of our action.

Despite the significant progress achieved, thanks to the agendas of women and peace and security and youth, peace and security, women and young people remain targets of violence and are often marginalized in decision-making processes. In that respect, we condemn any measure restricting the participation of women in peace processes or in humanitarian action, as is still the case in Afghanistan.

We call on all States to support the draft general recommendation on women's participation in decision-making processes of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Women and girls also disproportionately face gender-based violence, including sexual violence in times of conflict. That violence must not go unpunished.

Finally, France supports initiatives aimed at fully integrating women and girl victims of such violence into the process of restoring peace.

Mr. Yamazaki (Japan): I welcome Your Excellency, Madam President, back in this Chamber and thank you and Mozambique for convening this important meeting. I also thank Ms. DiCarlo, Ms. Bahous, Mr. Paullier Olivera and Ms. Diouf for their comprehensive briefings.

To empower youth and women as agents of peace and ensure their meaningful participation in peace processes, we must adopt a holistic approach and invest in human capital tailored to their needs. Japan echoed that point in the Security Council open debate on promoting conflict prevention (see S/PV.9574), focusing on empowering all actors, including women

and youth, during its presidency in March. Through the debate, which involved the participation of 82 Member States and groups, Japan reaffirmed that holistic approaches to conflict prevention involving women and youth led to strengthened social resilience and national ownership of sustainable peace.

In that regard, the report of the Secretary-General on youth, peace and security (S/2024/207) emphasizes the need to foster inclusive economic and employment opportunities as a key to youth empowerment in post-conflict settings. Japan fully supports that view and has provided assistance in that area. For example, following Somalia's civil war in 2012, limited job opportunities were among the factors that led youth to engage in piracy and join armed rebels. In response, the Japan International Cooperation Agency held a workshop in Uganda in 2019 and supported Somali officials and private organizations through 2022 aimed at supporting local entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises to help young people in Somalia to build sustainable businesses and become a driving force for social change. We hope that such post-conflict empowerment initiatives will enable young people to become agents of peace.

Integrating women and youth into security frameworks requires long-term national and international efforts. The international community can draw lessons from the women and peace and security agenda, which has a longer history and has had much success, in supporting Member States with the youth, peace and security agenda. Successful elements from women and peace and security frameworks, such as national action plans, implementation monitoring, advocacy and networks, can be adapted for the youth, peace and security agenda. Japan also trusts that the United Nations Youth Office can play a crucial role in that endeavour. At the same time, while there are synergies between the youth, peace and security agenda and the women and peace and security agenda, the international community should also address their unique challenges and opportunities in various places and contexts.

The Security Council must continue to strengthen and mainstream youth, peace and security elements in its resolutions, including in United Nations field mission mandates, as it has done with women and peace and security perspectives. It should also consider incorporating youth perspectives into its meetings,

including through the invitation of briefers, as the Peacebuilding Commission advised for this meeting.

Japan remains committed to enabling the meaningful participation of youth and women in peace processes within and outside the Security Council.

Mr. De La Gasca (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I want to thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo, UN-Women Executive Director Sima Bahous, Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs Felipe Paullier Olivera and African Union Youth Ambassador for Peace for West Africa Simone Diouf. In addition, I welcome the written advice to the Security Council on the role of women and young people in peacebuilding from the Peacebuilding Commission for this debate.

Ecuador takes note of the content of the report of the Secretary-General on youth, peace and security (S/2024/207) of March of this year, on the progress achieved in the inclusion and participation of young people and the pending challenges in the implementation of that agenda. In that regard, the Pact for the Future presents an opportunity to address the challenges faced by young people, including gaining access to new information, communication and artificial intelligence technologies and addressing the dangers outlined in the New Agenda for Peace. Women and young people are often the most exposed to those risk factors owing to greater exposure to online dissemination of hate messages, intimidation, political violence and the lack of knowledge with regard to how to deal with those attacks.

Furthermore, the escalation of violence associated with conflict affects the normal functioning of societies, puts the lives and integrity of young people at risk and curtails their enjoyment of their educational and labour rights. Young women are disproportionately affected by the effects of the conflict, such as forced displacement, sexual and gender-based violence and trafficking for sexual exploitation. In that context, I reiterate the importance of ensuring, in accordance with resolution 1325 (2000) and related resolutions, that victims of those atrocities have access to full, equal and meaningful participation in political and peacebuilding processes. In addition, resolution 2250 (2015) recognizes the important role of youth as peacebuilding agents and the central role of young victims and survivors of armed violence.

Promoting the institutionalization of youth movements; facilitating conditions for the participation

of young women in peacebuilding processes; establishing normative frameworks that allow them to vote and be elected in safety; and providing budgets for units dedicated to the implementation of the youth, peace and security agenda in regional and subregional bodies are initiatives that have proven effective in different regions.

The international community should encourage the recovery of civic space and support States in eradicating practices that promote repression, intolerance and discrimination against youth and should continue to stress the urgency of reversing systems that seek to eliminate the participation of young women in public life. The Security Council must continue to integrate elements of the youth, peace and security and women and peace and security agendas in its products. It is also essential to strengthen the work of States, regional organizations and United Nations agencies to promote the participation of youth and young women.

Finally, the Government of Ecuador is committed to including young people at all political and socioeconomic levels, with a view to confronting as a society the scourge of transnational organized crime and narco-terrorism, institutionalizing an approach oriented towards participation, conflict prevention and building a culture of peace that is free of violence, sustainable development and addressing social issues.

Ms. Gatt (Malta): I begin by thanking Mozambique for organizing this debate. I also thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo, UN-Women Executive Director Bahous, Assistant Secretary-General Paullier Olivera and Ms. Diouf for their briefings and insights.

As we navigate the complexities of maintaining international peace and security, it is important to identify synergies between the youth, peace and security and women and peace and security agendas, as well as to maintain their distinctiveness.

In conflicts, the transition to adulthood is shaped by different expectations regarding the rights, roles, responsibilities and capabilities of young persons. Resolution 2250 (2015) initiated an important process of normative development and institutionalization of the youth, peace and security agenda. However, the gap between the normative standards and their practical implementation remains wide and problematic.

Young persons are under-represented and marginalized in peace processes. Their participation,

safety and security are under threat due to shrinking civic spaces and ongoing conflicts.

As a Council, we believe that we should focus on four points.

First, we need better data to understand the lived experiences of young persons in conflict-affected countries. Reporting from peacekeeping operations and special political missions should include age, sex and gender-responsive analysis and disaggregated data.

Secondly, we need to expand gender-responsive investments in youth-centred peacebuilding efforts, including by increasing investments in young women's empowerment, their access to resources and opportunities and their agency over their own lives. That cannot be achieved without engaging men and boys, whose identities are also informed by social and gender norms and power relations.

Thirdly, we need to promote and enable youth participation and inclusion in all phases of peace processes. Their full, diverse and meaningful participation in decision-making at all levels, including in peacebuilding, is imperative for making societies more inclusive and peaceful. We must also protect young human rights defenders and peacebuilders from threats and reprisals.

Fourthly, the Security Council needs to create opportunities for young persons to safely participate in its meetings and to discuss youth, peace and security more systematically. We also encourage greater engagement between the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission and welcome the Commission's active support for the youth, peace and security agenda, including through the publication of the Strategic Action Plan on Youth and Peacebuilding.

Gender and age-based inequalities tend to worsen during and after conflicts, with fewer opportunities for girls to return to school or engage in public life. Adolescent girls are more susceptible to sexual and gender-based violence and exploitation, including early and forced marriage and pregnancy. The risks are heightened for marginalized voices within that group, including young women with disabilities; young lesbian, bisexual and transgender women; and those from minority backgrounds.

We therefore agree that bringing a gender perspective into youth, peace and security interventions can help prevent a new generation from replicating the

patriarchal power structures that limit gender equality, but benefit young men. Similarly, the women and peace and security agenda must also consider young women's age-specific needs and experiences and proactively address their priorities and concerns.

Malta reaffirms its commitment to advancing both the youth, peace and security and women and peace and security agendas. By recognizing their distinctiveness and addressing the specific needs of women and youth in conflict settings, we can foster more sustainable peace and security.

As we look towards the Summit of the Future, we must continue to promote the youth, peace and security agenda by strengthening our commitments. Malta will certainly do its part.

In conclusion, I end with an excerpt from the intervention by Ms. Sarra Messaoudi, a young peacebuilder who briefed the Chamber last month:

“We all have different roles to play, whether as diplomats not to only wear the diplomat hat, or for us as civil society not only to wear the hats of implementers. We need weavers, mobilizers, conveners, storytellers. All of these roles are important in the work on youth, peace and security, and all of them are complementary” (*S/PV.9606, p. 6*).

Mr. Bendjama (Algeria): I would like to begin by thanking the presidency of Mozambique for its excellent choice of today's discussion topic — the role of women and youth in maintaining international peace and security. I would like to add that we are delighted to see the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mozambique chairing our meeting. I would also like to thank the briefers for their valuable remarks.

Women and youth serve as a shield against the eruption of conflicts and play a crucial role in managing and resolving them. In the meantime, they face significant challenges and transnational threats, including armed conflicts, terrorism, violent extremism and trafficking in drugs and weapons. Those challenges create immense obstacles to the effective inclusion of women and youth, thereby obstructing the achievement of peace, security and sustainable development for all. The effects of those challenges are dire for women and youth. They are often the most affected by these issues, including those resulting from threats to peace and security and the lack of development.

These complex dilemmas cannot be tackled by Member States alone. We emphasize the necessity of strengthening international partnerships and encouraging cooperation among Member States, civil society and international institutions, as well as sharing best practices. Ensuring financial and technical support is also essential for effectively integrating women and youth into peace and security frameworks. Regional platforms, such as the African Union, play a crucial role in promoting those initiatives.

In that regard, I would like to highlight several points.

First, I highlight the necessity of effectively implementing resolution 1325 (2000), which will significantly enhance the recruitment of women in the security and military sectors and their active participation in maintaining security and stability. To reinforce that approach and build on Algeria's achievements in integrating women in all aspects of life, especially in the security sector, my country adopted a national action plan in July. That plan aims to contribute to the objectives of the resolution, which seeks to enhance the role of women in achieving peace everywhere, at all times and under all circumstances.

Secondly, we reaffirm the importance of adopting a comprehensive and sustainable development approach in order to protect youth from falling into the cycle of threats to peace and security and to channel their energies and skills towards economic growth and maintaining peace and security. Only sustainable development can engage youth in building their communities and the economies of their countries. In that context, we highlight the importance of using the technological and digital skills of youth to enhance the synergy between the youth, peace and security and women and peace and security agendas.

We cannot discuss the role of women and youth in maintaining international peace and security without addressing the plight of women and youth in the occupied Palestinian territories, where they are being exterminated in the most heinous ways and deprived of their most basic rights, including the right to life.

Talking about achieving peace is meaningless without the immediate cessation of all forms of killing, persecution, marginalization and injustice and without enabling Palestinian youth to enjoy their rights, within their own independent State, and above all, their right to life.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): Let me thank Mozambique for convening this meeting. I am also grateful to all the briefers for their remarks today. As they have set out, it is crucial that we move from commitments to concrete actions on women and peace and security and youth, peace and security.

I will set out three broad priorities.

First, with regard to participation, we know that women's full, equal, meaningful and safe participation — as leaders, negotiators and peacebuilders — greatly enhances the chances of long-lasting peace. We are working to make that a reality. Through the Peacebuilding Fund, the United Kingdom is supporting women and youth initiatives, including in Liberia, Somalia, Sierra Leone and Burkina Faso. We have recently launched a programme of over \$900,000 supporting women peacebuilders, including in South Sudan and elsewhere. We fund Women Mediators across the Commonwealth, a group of 50 conflict mediators who are engaged in conflict prevention — for example, Commonwealth members from West Africa are working with women and communities in the Niger, leading innovative solutions to prevent conflict before it starts. We want to see that expertise being used at scale, with networks of women mediators and grassroots women's organizations actively engaged across all relevant issues on the Council's agenda.

Secondly, with regard to empowerment, by amplifying the voices of those most affected by conflict, we can better address and mitigate its impacts. During the United Kingdom's presidency last year, we supported the first child civil society representative to address the Security Council in person (see S/PV.9366). Last week, my Minister convened a round table in London of girls from South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ukraine and the West Bank to hear their thoughts on the most pressing needs of children in conflict settings. Our Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative prioritizes the voices of survivors and puts them at the heart of decision-making, including through a survivor advisory group.

Thirdly, with regard to protection, women and young people disproportionately bear the brunt of conflict. For children who grow up in war, the scars of conflict, including conflict-related sexual violence, remain into their youth and well beyond. The United Kingdom's Platform for action promoting the rights and well-being of children born of conflict-related

sexual violence is dedicated to addressing the urgent challenges faced by that vulnerable group. It includes commitments to action from the United Kingdom, Canada and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Summit of the Future and the New Agenda for Peace provide opportunities to advance our collective efforts to prevent conflict. Let us commit to moving from words to action to empower women and youth and take decisive steps for a more just and equitable future.

Mr. Sangjin Kim (Republic of Korea): I would also like to extend my appreciation to Mozambique for hosting today's debate and also to our briefers for their valuable insights on the important subject of the inclusion of women and young people in promoting peace and security.

We welcome today's debate which provides us with an opportunity to collect thoughts on addressing the women and peace and security agenda and the youth, peace and security agenda holistically in peace and security efforts. As a signatory to the statement of shared commitments on women and peace and security and as a member of the Champions of Youth group, Korea attaches great importance to fully implementing the two agendas. Although women and young people are undeniably major stakeholders in conflict settings, they have traditionally been excluded from political and peace processes. By aligning those agendas, we can amplify their voices and ensure that peace processes are more comprehensive and durable. We are also pleased to see the complementarities of the two agendas reflected in the Secretary-General's third report on youth, peace and security (S/2024/207).

Allow me to underscore the following three points.

First, the role of women and young people should be central in political decision-making and peace processes. To that end, we fully support the ongoing efforts of the United Nations missions in conflict areas to facilitate inclusive dialogues and provide capacity-building programmes for women and young people. Also, we strongly encourage all mandates of peacekeeping operations and special political missions to include explicit references to supporting the participation and engagement of women and young people at all levels of decision-making in peace processes. Additionally, as a long-standing contributor of the Peacebuilding Fund, Korea welcomes the priority given to promoting the participation of women and young people by supporting projects selected through the Gender and

Youth Promotion Initiatives. We also welcome the fact that the recently adopted presidential statements on peace and security in Africa (S/PRST/2024/2) and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (S/PRST/2024/3) reaffirm the importance of the participation of women and the inclusion of young people in all stages of conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes.

Secondly, the economic empowerment of women and young people is critical to building peace and stability. We come across only too often stories of women in which poverty and economic vulnerability drive them to situations of sexual exploitation merely for survival and stories of the many young people deprived of education and job opportunities, drawn into the allure of gangs or armed groups. Those are not just stories of hardship, but also a tragic reminder of situations in which economic need becomes a bargaining chip for dignity for those who bear the disproportionate impacts of conflicts.

We are currently implementing official development assistance projects to support women's rights, which are particularly vulnerable during conflicts, including projects in the Comoros with UNICEF and in Yemen with the United Nations Development Programme. Also, Korean peacekeepers in South Sudan, notably the Hanbit Unit deployed to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, are providing various vocational training courses, which we believe can lay the groundwork for young people to make positive contributions to their communities. Korea is firmly committed to empowering women and young people to address the root causes of conflicts and breaking the cycle of violence and insecurity.

Lastly, the intersection of the women and peace and security and youth, peace and security agendas is particularly significant when we consider young women, as we heard just now from Ms. Simone Diouf. Young women face the dual marginalization of both age- and gender-related inequalities, but also have a dual potential.

Empowering young women allows us to leverage their unique position to address both gender and generational challenges in peacebuilding efforts. Applying a gender lens to youth, peace and security can help prevent a new generation from replicating the same patriarchal power structures. Similarly, the women

and peace and security agenda should address the age-specific needs and experiences of young women.

The fifth International Conference on Action with Women and Peace, which Korea hosted last year, also featured a separate youth session in order to learn about the perspective of youth, the future drivers of the women and peace and security agenda.

The Council attaches the utmost importance to our shared mission of fostering global peace and security. Its role should not be merely repeating moral imperatives time and again. The Security Council should fully embrace its mandate and the moral responsibility to champion the inclusion of women and young people in peacebuilding efforts. Let us use this opportunity to commit to making the voices of women and young people integral to our efforts to maintaining peace and security.

Mrs. Blokar Drobič (Slovenia): I wish to join others in welcoming you, Madame President, to preside over the Council today. I also wish to thank Mozambique for organizing this meeting, as well as all the briefers for their insightful briefings.

Conflicts, no matter where they occur, affect all civilians, and youth are no exception. Quite the opposite, they are one of the most vulnerable groups. Conflict disrupts the stability and support systems that young people need on their path to becoming responsible adults. In particular, conflicts deprive them of family ties and education and limit their access to health care, gainful employment and social services. Those challenges leave a lasting impact on their development and future prospects and profoundly influence their life course.

The experiences of youth in conflict are often influenced by their gender. Age and gender inequalities tend to worsen in such situations, making them particularly challenging and extremely dangerous for young women. While they are often primarily perceived as survivors of various forms of violence, young women are much more than that. They play various roles in conflict and post-conflict situations, even as their formal role in many societies remains limited and marginalized.

That understanding must be taken into account in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, and I would like to underline a couple of points in that regard.

First, it is crucial to ensure the effective and meaningful participation of young persons, in all their diversity, across all processes and at all levels. We should never forget that young people are the ones who will live in the world shaped by decisions we take today. We therefore bear immense responsibility towards young people. Their active and meaningful involvement is essential for strengthening conflict prevention and building the long-term resilience of entire societies.

Young women, in particular, can play an important role when they actively engage in conflict prevention and resolution. We call for more opportunities to be given to them. That can be enhanced by supporting their full, equal, meaningful and safe participation, including by leveraging more access to funding. Partnerships with international and regional financial institutions, as well as their inclusion in conflict resolution, peacebuilding and sustainable development, should be strengthened.

Secondly, young people continue undergoing rapid physical and psychosocial changes, which are further complicated by the harsh realities of fragile conflict-affected contexts. That too is especially challenging for young women, who are at higher risk of sexual and gender-based violence, including rape and forced marriage. We call for a survivor-centred response to such violence, including by ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health services, which must include access to emergency contraception, timely abortion care and psychosocial support.

Thirdly, conflict not only impacts young people's economic, social and cultural life, but also deprives entire generations of access to education, vocational training and professional development. Too often, societies again victimize young women after a conflict by excluding them from social, economic and political life. As such, they are much more likely not to continue pursuing educational opportunities after a conflict ends due to discrimination rooted in harmful practices and patriarchal norms. That is not only a personal loss, but a societal loss, with a resulting decrease in economic growth, health and social capital.

Prioritizing educational and vocational opportunities with a gender perspective is essential, as these enable young people to rebuild their lives and reclaim their roles in post-conflict societies. It is high time that we granted them opportunities to actively engage in their professional areas of interest and to

pursue the life they want for themselves, their families and their communities.

Young people are fantastic in mobilizing for various causes around the world. Young women are often at the forefront of community efforts to prevent violent conflict, build peace and raise awareness of global challenges and causes of particular importance to them.

For example, in Yemen, young women face oppressive restrictions on movement and are being increasingly exposed to sexual and gender-based violence, early marriage and displacement. Yet, young Yemeni women have shown remarkable courage and resilience in grass-roots peacebuilding. They have mediated local initiatives to restore water access, secured prisoner exchanges and facilitated humanitarian access for international aid efforts. It is high time that their contributions at the local level were translated into seats at the negotiation table.

Slovenia will remain committed to the implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000), 2250 (2015) and all subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security and on youth, peace and security, including through relevant national programmes and action plans. Peace can be sustainable only if it is inclusive. Ensuring the meaningful participation of young persons, in all their diversity, should be a priority in all our peace and development efforts.

The President: I now give the floor to Mrs. Samson.

Mrs. Samson: I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Türkiye, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia, as well as Andorra and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

To have a good chance of achieving sustainable peace, negotiating tables must include all those affected by the outcomes of their deliberations. That is why the EU has long been committed to the full implementation of the youth, peace and security and the women and peace and security agendas. We know that the active participation of women and young persons in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, peace processes and post-conflict processes is a critical ingredient for their success.

Participation is a cross-cutting issue that impacts the three other pillars of women and peace and security:

protection, prevention and relief and recovery. None of the objectives of the women and peace and security agenda can be realized without women's full, equal and meaningful engagement in all matters of peace and security. Of course, the precise measures to be taken will vary in each conflict-affected context, but they should always be informed by the work already undertaken by women in their communities.

We place equal importance on young persons as key agents of positive change. In that regard, we welcome the publication of the third report of the Secretary-General on youth, peace and security (S/2024/207) and would like to comment on some key conclusions and recommendations.

First, it is encouraging that political commitment to the youth, peace and security agenda has grown over the past two years. We now have to sustain that momentum through concrete actions. The EU is at the forefront in that regard, notably through our Youth Action Plan, which contributes to the implementation of Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) by promoting youth leadership and participation, including in conflict situations around the world. One of our member States, Finland, was also the first country globally to adopt a national action plan on youth, peace and security. We also have to ensure that youth engagement is integrated more systematically into the United Nations system. The establishment of the United Nations Youth Office was an important step in that regard, and we look forward to seeing the Office fully staffed and operational as soon as possible. We are providing financial support of €1 million to support the Office in its important mandate. We hope to see a strong reference to the youth, peace and security agenda in the Pact for the Future, to ensure that youth, peace and security remains firmly on the agenda of this Council, and we reiterate our call to make the biennial report of the Secretary-General the subject of a regular open debate.

Secondly, the report stresses that political declarations have yet to be translated into increased funding for the youth, peace and security agenda. Investing in the role, voice and agency of young persons not only matters for inclusivity, but provides a significant benefit for the community, including youth, the government and the private sector.

Thirdly, we underline the need to adopt an intersectional lens on peace and security. Both the youth, peace and security agenda and the women and peace

and security agenda are incredibly important in their own right, but neither operates in a vacuum. Inclusive decision-making and peacebuilding processes mean having young women — who are often excluded and marginalized — at the table of discussions, listening to them and ensuring their protection from reprisals. Their experiences and vision can bring unique perspectives on conflict prevention, post-conflict reconstruction, the promotion of gender equality and the building of more inclusive and resilient societies.

Finally, let me stress that youth participation in decision-making processes should never become a mere box-ticking exercise. In the context of the increasing number of conflicts worldwide and a shrinking civic space for young persons both offline and online, it is critical to protect the achievements made thus far and further accelerate our efforts. We look forward to cooperating with all Member States and international partners on that.

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

Mr. França Danese (Brazil): I deliver this statement on behalf of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), formed by Angola, Cabo Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, Sao Tome and Principe, Timor-Leste and Brazil.

On behalf of the CPLP, it is my honour to convey our sincere gratitude to Mozambique for organizing this meeting on such a relevant topic. I commend the briefers for sharing their experience and invaluable insights.

The maintenance of international peace and security stands as one of the fundamental pillars of the United Nations, and the CPLP remains steadfast in its commitment to promoting that paramount objective.

A core value within the CPLP is the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all matters related to peace and security. Women are crucial in conflict prevention and resolution, as well as in post-conflict institutional and political strengthening. Women offer a unique perspective on the whole of the peace continuum — from prevention strategies and mediation to post-conflict and transition processes. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by wars, and particularly by sexual violence in armed conflict. Even then, they are deeply committed to finding a way to peace. Be it as leaders in their

communities, as mediators, security sector officials, or members of Parliament or the judiciary, or in many other roles, women's efforts to overcome violence must be leveraged for long-term peace.

Aware of that fact, CPLP member States have prioritized the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, both within the framework of their action plans for gender equality and women's empowerment and through the action plan of the CPLP defence component for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), adopted at the twentieth meeting of CPLP Ministers of Defence, held on 1 June 2021.

Similarly, the CPLP recognizes the pivotal role of youth in conflict prevention and sustaining peace. That is evidenced in the priority theme chosen by the current presidency of the CPLP for the period from 2023 to 2025 — "Youth and sustainability". Successful strategies recognize the specific challenges faced by young persons in conflict situations, in particular regarding education, social inclusion and economic opportunities.

It is also imperative to acknowledge and face the risks that conflict scenarios pose to the most vulnerable young individuals. They often become ensnared in the dynamic of confrontation. They are drafted for combat and violent actions, and they may inadvertently normalize violence as part of their way of facing their lives and the social and political processes in their communities and in their entire countries.

We applaud Mozambique for highlighting the importance of engaging young men in that debate. This is a crucial element in order to avoid replicating patriarchal power structures that limit gender equality and hinder durable solutions to security issues. That is also crucial for preventing young persons from becoming tools in the hands of leaders who choose violence over the democratic and peaceful treatment of disputes and problems.

The Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries stands prepared to collaborate with all relevant partners, including the Peacebuilding Commission, regional organizations and civil society, to strengthen existing mechanisms and pioneer new initiatives aimed at promoting the participation of women and youth in international peace and security, both for peacebuilding and for conflict prevention. We thank the members of the Commission for the valuable advice submitted to the Council on the occasion of today's debate.

We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to peace, justice and equality. Together, let us endeavour to build a safer, more peaceful world for both present and future generations.

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

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

We thank the presidency of Mozambique for convening this meeting and the briefers for sharing their valuable insights, and we commend Mozambique for prioritizing the role of women and young people in maintaining peace and security and for putting it on the agenda of the Security Council.

Allow me to highlight three main points.

First, young people play an important role when addressing challenges and fostering peace in their communities. At the same time, young people, in particular young women, are disproportionately affected by violent conflict. Inclusivity is key to sustaining peace. It is crucial to ensure the full, effective, meaningful and safe participation of youth in their diversity at all levels of decision-making and peacebuilding processes. Yet too often, the experience, expertise, priorities and needs of young people are being overlooked.

Secondly, while progress has been made on both the women and peace and security and the youth, peace and security agendas, much remains to be done. It is critical not to treat women and youth as having the same needs and agency. The women and peace and security and the youth, peace and security agendas are different and yet complementary. To accelerate implementation of the two agendas, the Nordics recommend the following points. First, providing accessible and flexible funding for local peacebuilding networks, including through youth-led and women-led initiatives and by leveraging mechanisms like the Peacebuilding Fund and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund. We also recommend promoting young women's participation in mediation, conflict prevention, peacebuilding and peacekeeping, while also addressing the particular threats to their safety in times of conflict. We further recommend engaging young men in discussions on women and peace and security and challenging existing

gender stereotypes and structures. We recommend supporting the development and implementation of national and regional frameworks, including national action plans on the youth, peace and security and the women and peace and security agendas. Finally, we also recommend reflecting both agendas in the peace and security chapter of the upcoming Pact for the Future. In addition, we applaud the African Union for its significant efforts in implementing both agendas on the continent.

Thirdly and finally, we welcome the recent report of the Secretary-General on youth, peace and security (S/2024/207) and support his call to action. The Secretary-General recommends integrating the youth, peace and security agenda into the mandates of peace operations and better protecting youth engaging with the United Nations. In addition, we strongly encourage the Security Council to consider regularly convening an open debate on the report of the Secretary-General on youth, peace and security and to increase opportunities for youth to participate in the Council's deliberations.

Let us reaffirm our commitment to supporting and promoting the role of women and young people. We can only expect peace to last when the whole of society can participate.

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

Mr. Maes (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Mozambique for organizing today's debate.

I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the Benelux countries — Belgium, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and my own country, Luxembourg. We align ourselves with the statement made on behalf of the European Union.

We thank the speakers for their valuable presentations and perspectives and for their outstanding work.

We welcome the focus of today's debate on the link between the youth, peace and security agenda and the women and peace and security agenda. While progress has been made since the adoption of landmark resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, and resolution 2250 (2015), on youth, peace and security, the imperative to integrate women and youth into decision-making processes and peace operations requires coherent and intensified efforts.

(*spoke in English*)

The Benelux countries remain firmly devoted to promoting the women and peace and security and the youth, peace and security agendas. Our countries have adopted national action plans on women and peace and security. Relevant international tools include the Napoli Plan of Action, which takes into account the gendered dimension of atrocity crimes and highlights the central role of women in preventing genocide and related atrocity crimes and in restoring social cohesion and communities after the crimes have been committed.

Following the recent publication of the third report of the Secretary-General on youth, peace and security (S/2024/207), we must ensure continued momentum in that area, especially regarding the distinct group of young women in peace and security. Instead of discussing the respective agendas in silos, we must integrate the women and peace and security and youth, peace and security agendas where possible and build on the synergies between them. By joining forces, we can strengthen efforts and enhance the full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership of all young women in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. In the run-up to the 2025 Second World Summit for Social Development, it is our duty to equip young women with the right tools and to allow them to develop to their fullest potential, notably by reinforcing relevant and effective social policies for conflict prevention and post-conflict situations. Concretely, that implies ensuring their access to equal opportunities for technical and vocational education and training, decent jobs and universal health care, including sexual and reproductive health, as well as establishing social protection floors, particularly for single mothers.

It is important to emphasize that women and youth are not homogeneous groups. Indeed, gender and age intersect with many other forms of identity and background. Young women and girls are disproportionately affected by the security challenges posed by climate change, armed conflict, digital threats and shrinking civic space. That is why it is important to explore how gender and age dynamics play out in peace and security, especially for young women. Increasing the meaningful participation of youth and young women in policy, programming and decision-making processes has catalytic potential for efforts to prevent, mitigate and recover from conflict.

The Security Council and its members have the responsibility to ensure that the distinct needs and perspectives of women and young persons, including young women, are coherently addressed in its actions. We reiterate the Secretary-General's recommendation to the Council and its members to integrate and strengthen youth, peace and security elements as part of mandate creations and renewals for peacekeeping operations and special political missions. While the percentage of women invited to speak at the Council has increased from 19 per cent between 2013 and 2017 to 46 per cent in 2022, the number of young briefers to the Council has actually decreased. As young people represent the most populous demographic in the world, their seat at the table must be guaranteed, including in the Council, by ensuring opportunities for young peacebuilders to brief the Council.

We believe in intergenerational dialogues as an essential means to build trust between young persons and Governments, and the United Nations should lead by example. The upcoming Summit of the Future presents a crucial opportunity to engage with young persons, including young women in all their diversity, as equal partners and to give them a meaningful say in the Pact for the Future process and its follow-up.

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

Ms. Kalkku (Finland): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of Jordan and my own country, Finland — the co-Chairs of the Group of Champions of youth, peace and security.

We wish to thank Mozambique for the opportunity to take stock of the progress made in implementing the youth, peace and security agenda, as we near the tenth anniversary of resolution 2250 (2015) next year. I would also like to thank all the briefers today.

The third report of the Secretary-General on youth, peace and security (S/2024/207) confirms that a growing number of Member States and international organizations are seeking ways to enable full, effective and meaningful youth participation in conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding and peace processes. At the same time, the report highlights the need for coherent and coordinated efforts in order to root the youth, peace and security agenda in peace and security practices and tackle the discriminatory practices that many young people still face. Jordan and Finland would like to underline that finding

constructive ways to enable youth participation is key to building more resilient, stable and prosperous societies. The participation of young people is needed to build a better and safer future.

Today we would like to highlight three areas of importance.

First, to sustain the youth, peace and security agenda at the heart of international peace and security, we strongly encourage the Security Council to redouble its efforts to listen to young people's voices and make the most of their knowledge. We urge the Council to give the youth, peace and security agenda the close political attention it deserves and to adopt the practice of holding annual open debates on resolution 2250 (2015), as recommended in the report of the Secretary-General. The role of the Peacebuilding Commission in supporting the role of young people and youth-led organizations could be further enhanced. We also encourage strengthened coordination of youth, peace and security issues across the United Nations. In that regard, we welcome the establishment of the United Nations Youth Office as the dedicated office for youth affairs.

Secondly, meaningful youth engagement and participation remains central in achieving the objectives of the youth, peace and security agenda at all levels. Safe and mutually respectful dialogue, including intergenerational dialogue, helps in creating trust between youth and decision makers. The responsibility for finding practices for meaningful youth participation lies within the Member States. The national action plan on the implementation of the youth, peace and security agenda of Finland, Jordan's national youth strategy for the years from 2019 to 2025, and the regional Arab youth, peace and security strategy, launched under the patronage of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, are concrete examples of that work. As co-Chairs of the Group of Champions of youth, peace and security, Jordan and Finland will also invite Member States to share experiences and good practices in New York. We have seen within the past years that the youth, peace and security agenda resonates strongly nationally, regionally and globally. Several national and regional action plans and strategies are on their way. The upcoming Pact for the Future must reflect that momentum.

Thirdly, investment in youth has huge financial potential. A study conducted in Kenya showed that for every dollar spent on youth, the overall social return was from 5 to 10 dollars. More innovative thinking is

needed on how to finance the youth, peace and security agenda. Multi-stakeholder partnerships could provide a sustainable financial basis for local actors and public-private partnerships could be further explored.

The role of decision-makers is not only to work for youth, but with them. They do not need our voices to speak on their behalf. They need to get on the stage to speak for themselves. That is all the more important as the Summit of the Future is approaching, and the Pact for the Future and the Declaration on Future Generations are being prepared.

The President: I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the International Organization of la Francophonie.

Mrs. Kontoleontos (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Secretary-General of the International Organization of la Francophonie (IOF), Her Excellency Ms. Louise Mushikiwabo, I would like to thank the Mozambican presidency of the Security Council for inviting the International Organization of la Francophonie to this ministerial-level debate on the subject of “Maintenance of international peace and security: the role of women and young people”. I would like to thank the briefers for their statements.

The IOF welcomes the values at the heart of the Mozambican presidency of the Security Council and the priority given, through this signature event, to the implementation of two agendas that are crucial to building lasting peace — the women and peace and security and the youth, peace and security agendas — and, in that context, the particular attention that must be paid to young women. I am pleased to be able to contribute the IOF vision and the solutions proposed by the IOF to this discussion, as a contribution to strengthening the work of the international community. We are fully aware of the responsibility we bear and the exemplary role we must play.

In its contribution to the consultations that preceded the Secretary-General’s publication of the New Agenda for Peace, the IOF called on stakeholders to, on the one hand, promote the full participation of women and young people in the prevention and management of crises and conflicts and to ensure that women and young people are genuinely involved, on an equal footing, in all aspects of conflict prevention, management and resolution mechanisms, at all levels, and are protected in that context — which involves building the capacities of women and young people

before, during and after conflicts. On the other hand, it called for stakeholders to ensure the full participation of women and young people in peacekeeping processes and mechanisms. The IOF, a crucible of cultural diversity, has also stressed the need to fully integrate multilingualism and cultural diversity into all phases of international work to promote peace. That is enshrined in the Bamako declaration, the IOF’s reference text on the practice of democracy, rights and freedoms.

In implementing the two agendas, the emphasis must be on local players. That is the reason for the cooperation at the local level in the French-speaking world. Over the years, the IOF has supported the establishment of diversified networks of expertise that enable it to act flexibly. Those institutional and professional networks focus on peace, democracy and human rights, and are complemented by the IOF’s international youth network and the Francophone Network for Gender Equality. The intersecting knowledge and experience of those players are what lends richness to the IOF’s modes of engagement.

Based on that experience, the IOF has developed an original approach to support the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, and I would like to focus briefly on that. In October 2023, the IOF and the Senghor University of Alexandria, which is sponsored by the IOF, launched an online training course dedicated to the operationalization of national action plans on the women and peace and security agenda, in particular in Africa. That unique training course is aimed at key stakeholders and gender focal points in French-speaking countries. It is designed to equip national stakeholders involved in implementing the provisions of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions, and to bring together a community of French-speaking practitioners specializing in the women and peace and security agenda. The training course will be repeated in the second half of 2024 and will be provided to as many member States as possible.

Given the very positive response to that project, that approach will be replicated for the implementation of the youth, peace and security agenda. A French-language training course will be launched shortly to complement the existing French-language skills-building programme.

The President: I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the International Youth Organization for Ibero-America.

Mr. Del Valle Blanco (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to express our congratulations to the Republic of Mozambique for its leadership as President of the Security Council during the month of May and to express our gratitude for convening this important debate. I extend warm greetings to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Mozambique, Your Excellency Ms. Verónica Nataniel Macamo Dlhovo, as you preside over this important ministerial-level meeting today. I would also like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo; the Executive Director of UN-Women, Ms. Sima Bahous; the Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs, Mr. Julio Felipe Paullier Olivera; and African Union Youth Ambassador for Peace, Ms. Simone Mbode Diouf, for their briefings.

Peace is fundamental to any society — without it, there is neither life nor future. It is therefore crucial to recognize the vital role that young people, especially women and girls, play in preserving and strengthening it. The International Youth Organization for Ibero-America, in its new youth agenda, has presented a series of objectives and strategies to create a platform for cooperating and focusing on youth issues at the global level. One of its main pillars is peace and security, and more specifically, their construction and consolidation in all spheres.

Preserving peace requires a comprehensive approach encompassing short-, medium- and long-term actions aimed at preventing, managing and resolving conflicts, not only sustainably but also in an inclusive and forward-looking manner. That goal can be achieved only through the meaningful participation of young people, who have long been excluded from peacebuilding processes. It is therefore imperative, particularly in the context of the work of the Security Council, to ensure that they are not seen merely as passive recipients of decisions or beneficiaries of policies but as partners in those peace processes. Resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, and resolution 2250 (2015), on youth, peace and security seek, respectively, to actively involve women and young people in conflict prevention and resolution. Although the agendas are complementary, we must recognize that there is some executive complexity. To make meaningful progress,

we must take an intersectional and comprehensive approach that considers the different contexts in which we live. It is important to understand that the concept of peace can vary depending on the circumstances, which highlights the need to address each situation individually to achieve lasting peace.

We must also highlight that young women face unique challenges and are usually in a more vulnerable position owing to their gender and age. They are affected by various forms of discrimination and violence, including a lack of access to education, employment and political participation. That is why their role tends to disappear when it comes to theories about youth and violence, because they are seen as being less threatening. As a result, reference made to young women at political tables is limited, with conversations focusing mainly on protecting them or addressing discrimination, neglecting the positive and transformative role that they can play in building sustainable peace. It is therefore essential to identify and promote specific measures that Member States can implement to enhance meaningful inclusion for both young people and women. Such measures must be aligned with the specific security realities and contexts of each country and the region as a whole. For example, in Latin America, where there are diverse challenges, from armed conflicts to complex internal security situations, totally differentiated approaches are required. A detailed analysis is essential to develop effective strategies that will allow resolution 2250 (2015) and resolution 1325 (2000) to be implemented in a tailored manner.

There is currently a real gap between how national plans are developed to fulfil both agendas, with slower action plans for the youth, peace and security agenda. That must be addressed urgently. We must align youth agendas in all territories, developing strategies that promote peaceful and equitable environments. By strengthening the institutionalization of the agenda, we ensure that youth policies are permanently integrated into governance structures, thereby promoting peace and security. In that context, it is important to refer to the principles discussed during the negotiations of the Pact for the Future, which recognizes the importance of establishing a strong intergenerational dialogue and considers future generations. We are in a new era, in which young people not only recognize our role in generating positive change, but we actively assume it. In the context of peace and security, it is essential

to adopt a youth-centred vision, as today's decisions will inevitably have a direct impact on the world that the coming generations will inherit. Young people should not be perceived as a threat but as the complete opposite — an opportunity.

Member States should be called on to engage with youth communities at the national and local levels, promoting safe spaces for dialogue. That commitment will not only strengthen trust between young people and those in leadership positions, but it will also facilitate effective intergenerational dialogue. Promoting those safe spaces for dialogue is intrinsic to the effective and tangible construction of peace and security. By including younger generations in decision-making, the risk of conflict is significantly reduced, and social cohesion is strengthened. The third report of the Secretary-General on youth, peace and security (S/2024/207) highlights the exclusion of young people from governance, focusing on limits to their participation in policy implementation and restricted access to certain positions based on their age. Such marginalization sends a negative message and underestimates young people's potential to contribute to peace and security.

To build a more equitable and sustainable society, we must promote the greater participation of young

leaders in politics, both nationally and internationally. By providing leadership opportunities to youth, not only is their primary role in dialogue, mediation and the promotion of peaceful coexistence recognized, but it also generates greater generational inclusion in decision-making processes. We must work on developing commitments around the collection of data and information on the youth issue. That can be achieved by consolidating youth observatories that provide information on the social, cultural, political and economic conditions of young people, particularly from their perspective. That initiative will enable national and local Governments to better understand young people and generate effective policies that promote cooperative and effective governance.

Achieving sustainable peace requires continued commitment and decisive action on the part of all stakeholders. By investing in us, young people, and by providing us with the right tools, we will be able to contribute significantly to the positive transformation of our societies, thereby ensuring not only a better future but also consolidating peace in the present, ensuring that no one is left behind.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.