



Security Council

Seventy-ninth year

Provisional

9760th meeting

Thursday, 24 October 2024, 10 a.m.

New York

<i>President:</i>	Mrs. Amherd	(Switzerland)
<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	Mr. Camilleri
	Mozambique	Mr. Afonso
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Hwang
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sierra Leone	Mr. Sowa
	Slovenia	Ms. Gabrič
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Lord Hermer
	United States of America	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield

Agenda

Women and peace and security

Women building peace in a changing environment

Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2024/671)

Letter dated 1 October 2024 from the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2024/709)

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

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Women and peace and security

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Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2024/671)

Letter dated 1 October 2024 from the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2024/709)

The President (*spoke in French*): I would like to warmly welcome the Deputy Secretary-General, ministers and other high-level representatives. Their presence today underscores the importance of the subject matter under discussion.

Before each member is a list of speakers who have requested to participate in accordance with rules 37 and 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, as well as the previous practice of the Council in this regard. We propose that they be invited to participate in this meeting.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

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/2024/671, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security, and document S/2024/709, which contains the text of a letter dated 1 October 2024 from the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.

I now give the floor to the Deputy Secretary-General, Her Excellency Ms. Amina Mohammed.

The Deputy Secretary-General: Allow me to begin by wishing everyone here today a happy United Nations Day.

Every year in this Chamber, the global community reaffirms its commitment to ensuring women's full, equal and meaningful participation in conflict prevention, resolution and recovery, and to upholding

their rights during times of war. Yet progress remains dishearteningly slow, peace and security decision-making is overwhelmingly dominated by men and ending impunity for atrocities against women and girls is still but a distant goal. And the past year has been especially difficult.

In Gaza, tens of thousands of Palestinian women and girls have been killed and injured amid continued war and a terrible humanitarian crisis. Meanwhile, the plight of Israeli women still held hostage demands urgent action to ensure their safety and immediate release. In Lebanon, an escalation of destruction and displacement threatens women's and girls' safety and livelihoods. In the Sudan, women are enduring extreme suffering, facing not only the loss of loved ones but also the dire lack of access to essential services and medical care.

I reiterate the Secretary-General's calls. Civilians must be protected, civilian infrastructure must not be targeted, and international law must be upheld. The United Nations remains steadfast. We will not look away or lose hope. The women and peace and security agenda will always guide our work and show a path forward. Despite attacks on our offices and the detention and killings of our staff in unprecedented numbers, allow me to honour the work of my colleagues and share examples of what they do.

In peacekeeping missions, the women and peace and security agenda is a key political and strategic imperative. Our teams work tirelessly to help protect and assist women, from relocating human rights defenders to aiding women after their release from abduction by armed groups, from ensuring women's representation in local dialogues to helping to bring justice to women in places where sexual violence has long been met with impunity. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, 57 per cent of cases supported by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo prosecution support cells in 2023 involved conflict-related sexual violence, contributing to the conviction of dozens of members of armed groups and State security forces. In Abyei earlier this year, one third of participants in a post-migration conference were women, and this was a first. In the Central African Republic, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic is helping to mobilize women for local elections, which have not been held in 38 years.

Deploying more diverse teams to peacekeeping operations has helped us to deliver better on our mandates. The representation of women in most categories of uniformed personnel has doubled in the past five years, and initiatives have been put in place to foster gender-responsive work environments for all peacekeepers. Yet much more remains to be done to improve the gender balance of our deployments and reap the benefits of inclusion and of diversity. Success and peacekeeping hinges on political support from Member States, especially those with the great honour of sitting in this Chamber to protect international peace and security.

I commend the efforts of the United Arab Emirates to empower women in peace and security. This initiative has provided training and capacity-building opportunities for more than 600 women from the Middle East, Africa and Asia in military and peacekeeping. The United Nations is a proud partner in these efforts that advance women and peace and security.

Throughout the world, the United Nations reaches millions of displaced women and girls and survivors of violence with food, medical support, legal aid, shelter, access to safe spaces, psychosocial support, education and jobs, and livelihood opportunities. Yesterday survivors of conflict-related sexual violence from many war-torn corners of the globe gathered together for a survivors' hearing to mark the fifteenth anniversary of resolution 1888 (2009).

Effective protection from sexual violence is fundamental to women's effective participation in peacebuilding, conflict recovery and sustainable development that leaves no one behind. None of that would happen without women's organizations on the front lines of crises, and we are trying to find ways of channelling more resources to them. The Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund has supported more than 1,300 local women's civil society organizations since 2016 — nearly half of them accessing United Nations funds for the first time — as well as 582 women's rights defenders, including their families.

Last year, the Secretary-General invited all partners to contribute to the goal of raising \$300 million for women's organizations in conflict-affected countries. We still have a long way to go to reach that. Some 40 per cent of all the funding of the \$25 million grant focused on gender-based violence by the Central Emergency Response Fund to UN-Women and the

United Nations Population Fund was subgranted to local women's organizations and delivered remarkable results — a powerful demonstration that localization is both feasible and effective.

The Peacebuilding Fund has now exceeded its internal target allocation of 30 per cent to gender equality for seven years in a row. We know that the inclusion of women and gender-related provisions in peace processes not only advances gender equality but also results in more durable peace agreements. From Guatemala to Northern Ireland and from Colombia to Liberia, research has shown how women in formal processes worked with diverse women's groups to not only reach an agreement but also strengthen the substance of peace agreements and the opportunities for implementation.

Yet women remain starkly underrepresented in peace negotiations and conflict resolution efforts, including in some of the most intractable conflicts over the past year. Historical data underscores that challenge. Between 1992 and 2019, women constituted only 13 per cent of negotiators and 6 per cent of mediators in major peace processes. More recent data from UN-Women shows that on average in 2023, women made up less than 10 per cent of peace negotiators and 13.5 per cent of mediators.

The processes in Libya and Yemen, where conflict parties have not included women, highlight a continued resistance to progress. In Afghanistan, the regression of women's rights highlights the severe impact of excluding women from governance and society altogether. It is imperative that we reinforce our resolve to support women in Afghanistan and elsewhere, while advocating for their rights, agency and inclusion at every opportunity.

Collective action and solidarity are crucial. In today's broader global mediation landscape, the United Nations is not always present. In fact, a diverse set of regional, State and other mediation actors initiate and lead mediation processes. Many contexts feature joint or overlapping peace initiatives. That means that no single mediator can affect global and meaningful change in women's participation.

That is why today, on behalf of the Secretary-General, I am pleased to launch the common pledge on women's participation in peace processes — an initiative that brings together a broad array of mediation actors. By endorsing the common pledge, Member

States, regional organizations and other mediation actors commit to joining the United Nations in taking concrete steps on women's participation in all the peace processes in which they are involved.

Those commitments include appointing women as lead mediators and ensuring that women are an integral part of mediation teams; ensuring that mediators advocate with conflict parties for concrete targets and measures that promote women's direct and meaningful participation in peace processes, including as members of their delegations; consulting with a broad range of women leaders and women-led civil society organizations at all stages of peace processes; and embedding gender expertise in mediation teams to foster gender-responsive peace processes and agreements.

The pledge targets mediating entities and it is intended to be an operational initiative, and not another general statement of principle. It focuses on measures and decisions that are under the control of mediators and their organizations. The Secretary-General invites Member States, regional organizations and other key actors that are actively engaged in mediation to join the initiative and report on their progress at the open debate on women and peace and security that will be held next year to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000).

We have no illusions about the challenges posed by today's geopolitical landscape and the complexity of achieving diplomatic outcomes. As long as gendered power inequalities, patriarchal social structures, systematic biases, violence and discrimination continue to hold back half of our societies, peace will remain elusive.

Yet our collective experience has shown that progress is possible. Together, we can have an impact that is greater than the sum of our individual efforts. By leveraging our respective political capital and roles, let us dismantle the patriarchal power structures and advance gender equality, ensuring women's full, equal and meaning participation in political and public life.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Bahous.

Ms. Bahous: I offer my congratulations to Switzerland on its October presidency of the Security Council and thank you, Madam President, for convening us and for the opportunity to brief the Council as we

mark the twenty-fourth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000).

Today, as we commemorate United Nations Day, we are reminded of the noble mission of the United Nations to promote peace, human rights and development for all. We are reminded of the continued need for diplomacy, dialogue and negotiation to prevent and resolve conflicts and to ensure dignity, equality and justice for all women and men. I am honoured to join the Council on United Nations Day at the annual open debate on women and peace and security.

During the high-level week of the General Assembly at its seventy-ninth session, a Nigerian poet speaking at an event on dismantling patriarchy, asked:

“What is peace if not a world where power is shared, where voices rise without fear?”

The idea of voices rising without fear crystalizes both our goal and our challenge.

We recall the fear of millions of Afghan women and girls robbed of an education, a future and a voice and how they suffocate in silence as prisoners in their own homes.

We recall the fear of women in Gaza, displaced many times over and waiting for death, whether by bombs, fire, disease or starvation. They know neither what or how to feed their children, nor what to tell them of their futures after a year of relentless destruction with no end in sight. We recall the hostages in Gaza and their anxious families, including their mothers, who are still waiting for their release. We recall the fear of women and their families in Lebanon during the recent bombardment of their towns.

We recall the fear of women in the Sudan, displaced and once again victims of sexual violence perpetrated by men with guns. They are seeing history repeat itself with no place to turn for food, water or safety.

We recall the fear of women in Haiti, who continue to endure senseless violence, displacement and insecurity.

We recall the fear of women in Myanmar, detained in their thousands for raising their voices against a coup. We recall how they wait with shrinking hope in refugee camps across the border and how, for some, that hope has been extinguished after seven long years of exile.

We recall the fear that sits on the shoulders and lives in the hearts of our sisters in the Democratic Republic

of the Congo, the Middle East, the Sahel, South Sudan, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen — the list continues.

We recall the fears of the 612 million women and girls now affected by war — 50 per cent more than a decade ago. They, like many others, wonder whether the world has already forgotten them and whether they have fallen off the agenda of an international community that is overwhelmed by crises of ever deeper frequency, severity and urgency. What greater responsibility do we collectively hold than to answer those fears with hope?

As members have read in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2024/671), in 2023, the proportion of women killed in armed conflicts doubled. The number of verified cases of conflict-related sexual violence increased by 50 per cent, and the number of girls affected by grave violations grew by 35 per cent. One in every two women and girls in conflict-affected settings face moderate to severe food insecurity. Some 61 per cent of all maternal mortality is concentrated in 35 conflict-affected countries. With maternity wards bombed, reproductive health-care services blocked and sexual violence increasing, those numbers will continue to rise.

The Secretary-General's report reminds us that all of that is taking place against a backdrop of inadequate attention to women and their leadership and voice in our efforts for peace. Women's participation in decision-making and politics in conflict-affected countries has stalled. The representation of women in peace negotiations has not increased over the past decade, standing at less than 10 per cent on average in all processes and less than 20 per cent in the processes led or supported by the United Nations. In 2023, fewer peace agreements and fewer Security Council resolutions included gender-related provisions. Meanwhile, military spending has increased dramatically, gender equality spending has dipped, funding for women's organizations in conflict-affected settings fell for the third year in a row and only 23 per cent of the total funding requirements for gender-based violence prevention and response in humanitarian responses were met.

The current pushback against the very idea of gender equality and women's empowerment is real and is seen in too many spaces. It plays out no less in conflict-affected countries — but there, the consequences are even more lethal. Women's rights to move, to be heard, to earn a livelihood, to denounce

abuse and to make choices for themselves and their bodies can represent the difference between life and death. The weaponization of misogyny for political gain is extracting a price we will pay for generations. That price will be more conflicts, longer conflicts and more devastating conflicts. We as the international community can — and must — work collectively to prevent that. That is why it is incumbent upon us to match the bravery, which is many cases unbelievable or even unreasonable, of the women I meet around the world. They do what sometimes seems beyond us. They broker agreements for humanitarian access. They end tribal conflicts. They disarm and deradicalize young men in their communities. And they do all that while being denied the funding and support that they deserve because we do not always afford it to them.

In Syria, we have documented stories of women who were homemakers but stepped up when called upon to play a decisive role in ending the siege in several districts, because their male relatives were at a higher risk of being arrested or killed. In Afghanistan, women have stepped up by opening schools in their homes. In Ukraine, women coordinate the delivery of humanitarian aid in areas where the basic infrastructure has collapsed, and they support the safe evacuation of civilians in need. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, thanks to the bravery of women witnesses and survivors, the crime of forced pregnancy was successfully tried by a national court, for the first time ever globally, resulting in a historic conviction and a sentence of life imprisonment for crimes against humanity for a former militia leader in 2023. Every victory we celebrate has at its root women on the ground stepping up —always.

Women are frustrated by the meetings they are invited to on the margins of actual decision-making, the many consultations often leading to no outcome and the strategies with no funding. They want to see the women and peace and security agenda implemented and resourced. They have called on us to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) next year with action, by pursuing accountability for gross violations of women's rights, removing discriminatory laws and making policy commitments with a target and a deadline, whether to support women in peace negotiations, funding for gender equality or women's organizations on the front lines of conflicts.

The Secretary-General's report is a rich source of those minimum targets and of important

recommendations. Earlier this month, as a direct result of advocacy and Member States joining forces, the European Court of Justice ruled that gender and nationality alone are sufficient for a country to grant asylum in the European Union to Afghan women based on the documented gender persecution in Afghanistan. Those are sparks of progress that we hope will ultimately become flames.

Next October will mark 25 years since Namibia submitted resolution 1325 (2000) in this very Chamber (see S/PV.4213), leading to its unanimous adoption. The past five years have not seen much progress, but rather regression on the agenda. Therefore, if our commemorations are to have any real value, they must be founded on a demonstrated commitment to doing things differently and better. We have a solid foundation on which to build. A total of 110 Member States to date have adopted national action plans on women and peace and security, up from 19 in 2010.

Our commitments to women and peace and security have been reinforced and reiterated by every recent multilateral agreement. Support for women's full, equal and meaningful participation has become one of the most common phrases in the Council's resolutions. What remains is for us to make that a reality in practice, not least through our funding decisions. That is how we give women peacebuilders a fighting chance. It is how we make peace more possible and durable, prevent new conflicts and recover faster from those already upon us. It is how we accelerate our drive towards realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goal 5. It is how we recommit to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action when it turns 30 next year. It is how we turn our commitments into reality and commemorate the anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) in the way the world's women and girls would have us commemorate it. It is how the world needs us to commemorate it. UN-Women stands alongside all members of the Council to make that our shared reality.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Bahous for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Justice Owuor.

Justice Owuor: I thank the President of the Security Council for the opportunity to brief the Council on behalf of the Global Alliance of Regional Women Mediator Networks in today's open debate.

In the complex and often difficult arena of conflict resolution, the participation of women as mediators and negotiators has emerged as the gold standard for successful peace processes. There is clear evidence that, when women are involved in peace negotiations, the resulting agreements are more comprehensive, more durable and more inclusive. Despite that well-documented fact, the actual participation of women in peace processes remains alarmingly low. The Global Alliance of Regional Women Mediators Networks was established in 2019 to address that glaring anomaly. Our founders envisioned a powerful collective of women mediators sharing strategies, expertise, experiences and advocacy, all aimed at ensuring that women's voices lead, structure and shape peace processes.

Six networks make up the Alliance — the Arab Women Mediators Network, the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, the Nordic Women Mediators, the Women Mediators across the Commonwealth, the Southeast Asian Women Peace Mediators and the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation, FemWise-Africa. FemWise-Africa currently chairs the secretariat of the Alliance.

Women mediators networks showcase the very best of women's mediation and peacemaking. We are very good at coordinating and mobilizing support for women's meaningful participation in peace processes, lending legitimacy to the valuable work that women are doing in informal settings, cultivating mentorship for young women mediators, monitoring the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda through feminist mechanisms and fostering communication with civil society.

Our networks also play a key role in positioning women as lead mediators and technical experts in formal mediation processes. FemWise-Africa and the Panel of the Wise registered major wins in inserting women mediators in the African Union's High-Level Mediation Panels for Ethiopia and the Sudan.

Our members have also led shuttle and preventive diplomacy efforts elsewhere in Africa and have made significant contributions to missions to South Sudan and the Great Lakes region. Members of the Arab Women Mediators Network in Palestine, Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen have been instrumental in defusing tensions and mediating conflicts in their communities. They have mediated ceasefires and halts to violations against civilians. Some have brokered the release

of political prisoners. Others have prevented and resolved communal conflicts and are engaged in cross-line negotiations to secure access to water and other vital resources.

While we take great pride in our members' work, the overall trajectory is downbeat and depressing. The mainstreaming of women as leaders in mediation faces serious challenges. If anything, the obstacles to women's inclusion and participation seem to grow bigger by the day. We continue to encounter persistent cultural, political and gender biases; limited access to negotiation platforms; risks to our own safety and security; scanty resources for our work; and unsupportive policymakers, multilateral institutions and national and regional stakeholders. Serious political commitments are needed to implement international frameworks and dismantle gender barriers at all levels of peacemaking.

As the Global Alliance, we forward the following recommendations for the Council's consideration.

First, we must foster political will and increase institutional support for women mediators through policy implementation. I draw the Council's attention to the African Union Peace and Security Council, which directed the African Union in March this year to develop a policy framework for a women's quota in all African Union (AU)-led mediation and peace processes. When adopted, it will guarantee that all AU-led mediation and peace processes must feature a minimum of 30 per cent women as lead mediators and mediation experts. Over time, the ultimate target for women's representation will rise to 50 per cent, we hope and trust. That level of political commitment should be replicated across the globe. For that reason, the Global Alliance fully supports the Secretary-General's call for a common pledge to increase women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace processes.

Secondly, we must invest in resources for women mediators to access the peace table. I do not need to tell members that mediation is expensive work and that, without adequate support, we are unable to deploy our mediators to the negotiation table.

Thirdly, we must recognize and support grass-roots women mediators, who tirelessly engage in front-line conflict resolution at the community level. All networks in the Global Alliance are establishing national chapters aimed at amplifying the voices of

grass-roots mediators. We call on Member States to support those efforts.

As I conclude, I ask Council members not to lose sight of the fact that regional women mediator networks present all of us with a unique vehicle for elevating and solidifying women's leadership in negotiation and dialogue. I invite all members to join us on this journey. Our destination is a global environment in which women mediators and negotiators can realize their extraordinary potential to resolve conflict and build lasting peace. With political goodwill, careful investment and global accountability as our guiding principles, we will surely get there.

It is my most sincere hope that, when we meet next year to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), we will be able to share more successful accounts of women in mediation and peacemaking.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Justice Owuor for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Nu.

Ms. Nu: I am honoured to brief the Security Council at today's open debate on women and peace and security. I am Wai Wai Nu, the Founder and Executive Director of Women's Peace Network, advocating for peace and equality in Myanmar.

The theme of today's debate is welcome given the dire state of women's rights in conflicts and crises across the world and the unacceptably low levels of women's participation in peace processes, both of which the women and peace and security agenda was meant to address. We are seeing record levels of armed conflict — for instance, in Gaza and Ukraine, the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan and unprecedented humanitarian crises in the Sudan, Syria and Yemen. Women have been disproportionately exposed to sexual violence, femicide, gender apartheid, gender persecution and other targeted atrocities. We are also confronted today by an alarming global backlash against gender and women's rights. All these conditions undermine our collective ability to meaningfully participate in peacemaking, and they thereby threaten our very hopes for peace.

Twenty-four years ago, feminist movements around the world reminded the international community of our potential for ensuring an equal, just and peaceful future. The Council heeded those calls by adopting

resolution 1325 (2000). Yet today we are a long way from its promise of equality.

As a human rights defender and former political prisoner, hope for change has long guided my activism. And I am not alone. In Myanmar today, women across the country are resisting the Myanmar military and its 2021 attempted coup and risking their lives to defy all forms of oppression, including patriarchy, homophobia and transphobia. As front-line and human rights defenders, we are doing everything in our power not to return to the pre-coup status quo but to build a new future, one in which we can fully participate regardless of our gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or other differences. But the Myanmar military's nationwide campaign of terror is preventing us from achieving our goal. It is the same military that, according to the United Nations, has committed war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Since the attempted coup, the military has launched air strikes against civilians, targeted homes, schools, hospitals and places of worship and displaced millions. Gender-based violence has increased dramatically in Myanmar since the attempted coup, primarily by the military and other armed groups.

Furthermore, the military has killed and arbitrarily arrested thousands of women, who face torture, sexual violence and the denial of medical care in detention. Since February, the military has forcibly recruited civilians, including young women and internally displaced people, to become cannon fodder and human shields. The military has created a humanitarian disaster and continues to block and weaponize aid to more than 18 million people, more than half of whom are women and girls. Hundreds of thousands have fled Myanmar in search of protection in neighbouring countries, risking detention and forced deportation.

Addressing the root causes of the conflict is vital for ensuring women's full participation in Myanmar's future. And when the key perpetrators of decades of atrocities remain unpunished, as in Myanmar, impunity is the root cause. Just as in Afghanistan, the Sudan, the occupied Palestinian territory and many other contexts, impunity in Myanmar is contagious. It emboldens perpetrators and shows others that they are free to brutalize groups that they deem inferior, especially women. As resolution 1325 (2000) makes clear, accountability and respect for international law are critical for protecting women's rights, not only in Myanmar but also in other conflicts across the world.

Women cannot meaningfully participate in any sphere of life if they are being attacked without consequences on a daily basis. Nowhere is such impunity more apparent than in Rakhine state, where the military and the Arakan Army has been targeting the Rohingya with escalating atrocities in recent months. Since November 2023, the Arakan Army has burned down Rohingya homes and villages and massacred, abducted, tortured, raped and forcibly displaced the Rohingya.

Armed violence, starvation and the lack of water, shelter and medical care have forced at least 40,000 people to flee to Bangladesh. Almost 1 million people are still living in overcrowded camps in Cox's Bazar, where violence has worsened in recent months. According to the United Nations, last year was the deadliest year for Rohingya fleeing over land and sea, with women and girls facing horrific forms of sexual violence. This year will likely be worse, further delaying my community's voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return to their homes in Myanmar.

Myanmar is an example of both an extreme violation of the key principles of the women and peace and security agenda and an illustration of why they are so important. I urge Council members to uphold all pillars of the women and peace and security agenda. Member States should demand women's participation in peace and security decision-making and call on the United Nations to make women's participation a requirement in any peace process that it supports. But it is not enough to express support for women's participation if the conditions for their participation do not exist. Conflict prevention, the protection of human rights and accountability are essential if women are to take their rightful place at the peace table. I further urge Council members to support and fund women's organizations and human rights defenders and take all necessary measures to protect them from attacks and reprisals.

With regard to Myanmar, I urge the Council to hold an emergency open briefing to discuss the situation, prevent further mass atrocities, especially in Rakhine state, and build on resolution 2669 (2022) with stronger action, including a new resolution. The Council should demand that the military cease all acts of conflict-related sexual violence. I further urge the Council to end all supplies of arms, ammunition and aviation fuel; impose targeted economic sanctions on the military; enable cross-border aid and unfettered humanitarian access; and reject the military's so-called census and efforts to hold sham elections. The Council

must refer the situation to the International Criminal Court or support the creation of an ad hoc tribunal and discuss the non-compliance with the provisional measures imposed on Myanmar by the International Court of Justice, which designated the Rohingya as a protected group. The Council should explicitly call for women's full, equal, meaningful and safe participation in decision-making about our country's future.

Today I speak before Council members as one of the few women from Myanmar to address the Council about the unspeakable suffering of my people. That is despite more than half a century of conflict in my country, the decades-long genocide against the Rohingya and the determined efforts of my fellow women to end our plight. Women in Myanmar and across the globe are watching Council members today to see if their words will be matched by action.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Nu for her briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the President of the Swiss Confederation.

A month ago, together with the Secretary-General, I presided over an exchange with high-ranking Afghan women mediators from Orang on how to shape the future of Afghanistan. I cannot help thinking back to the words of one of the speakers,

“At the age of 27, I was already fighting for Afghanistan's future. Today, at 67, I am still fighting. It is like starting all over again”.

At the same event, the actress Meryl Streep pointed out that Swiss women still had no political rights at a time when Afghan women could already participate in their country's political life. And here I am today, the President of Switzerland, presiding over the Security Council — I who am from the same generation as the Afghan female mediator whom I just cited.

Progress is possible and necessary, but history does not move forward in a linear fashion. Nothing can ever be taken for granted, and we must always continue to be on the move. Almost 30 years ago, United Nations States Members took a major step towards gender equality by adopting the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. A few years later, the Security Council adopted resolution 1325 (2000), a visionary document acknowledging not only the right of women to participate fully in peace processes but also the need for such participation. It stressed that peace could be built

only through cooperation at the international, national and local levels. Decades later, those instruments are still not being satisfactorily implemented. Worse still, we are clearly headed in the wrong direction. Women are less and less involved in peace processes, and violence against women and girls is taking on tragic proportions, particularly online. As a woman who has been active in politics for more than 30 years, I wonder to myself what we can do to change things. That question was central to a retreat held by Switzerland this summer and attended by women mediators from all over the world. Three major takeaways emerged, and I feel that they are particularly relevant to our work.

I speak to the Council today as a President, but 20 years ago I was heading a municipality of 12,000 inhabitants. I therefore know from experience that politics needs women at all levels to be effective. The first takeaway is that it must be possible for women to be involved in peace processes and participate in decisions on an equal footing with men, be it in the village square or in the capital, in public or behind closed doors. They need to be sitting at the negotiating table, where decisions are being made. That point must absolutely be underscored: women must not be relegated to subsidiary roles in negotiations.

A Minister of Defence, I saw the same scene play out far too often: towards the end of a decision-making process, someone would suddenly think of women and decide to consult them, only to discover, to their great astonishment, that no women with whom to confer could be found.

That ties in with the second takeaway: an inclusive peace process begins long before the fighting ends. It is important to analyse conflicts through the lens of women's specific expertise. We need to find women experts — be they constitutional lawyers, economists or peacekeeping specialists — and bring them on board very early on in the process. I deliberately use the term “find”, because those women do exist but it takes political will and resources to track them down. For women, greater visibility often means greater risk.

That brings me to our third takeaway: we need to better safeguard women's rights so that women can engage in politics safely. I find it troubling that nowadays women and girls continue to face hostility, intimidation and violence, be it at the highest political level, at a local level or in a personal setting. Technological advances have their downside, as women are being pilloried in

the digital sphere, and artificial intelligence is making attacks even easier.

Research has shown that, when a peace agreement is crafted with the help of women and when it factors in the aspects that affect them, the likelihood of that agreement remaining in place for 15 years or longer increases by 30 per cent — 15 years or longer represents almost one generation and an opportunity for countless children to grow up in peace. Therefore, there is every reason to invest in women's participation. To do so, we have a sound basis for setting standards in the form of 10 Security Council resolutions. We can also rely on the expertise and the resolve of the women who are striving for peace at the highest political and diplomatic levels.

If we are to genuinely celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) next year, the international community must show much greater political will. The Secretary-General invites us to bring that will to fruition in the form of commitments. I wish to act on that invitation, and I pledge that, in its mediation and peacebuilding efforts, Switzerland will honour those commitments and promote and strengthen the full, equal and effective participation of women in peace processes. I invite stakeholders and mediators to also sign those commitments and thereby demonstrate their willingness to consolidate the women and peace and security agenda.

Over the past month, we heard many young peace activists speak here in the Chamber. I am delighted that those young women are here to give us hope by fighting valiantly for a more peaceful world. It was with them and the new generation of mediators in mind that we compiled, ahead of this debate, letters written by experienced women mediators. I have brought Council members those letters today. I hope that they will inspire members too and spur them on to resolutely pursue their commitment to women, peace and security.

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.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): I want to thank Switzerland for bringing us together on this important topic. It is really fitting that we are gathering today on United Nations Day. I also thank Deputy Secretary-General Mohammed for her presentation and Executive Director Bahous and

the other briefers for their critical contributions to our discussion today.

As we mark 24 years since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), I find myself thinking about the moment when the text was adopted. Then as now, we saw horrific civil war in the Sudan, increasing violence in Myanmar, devastating conflict in Gaza, Israel and the rest of the Middle East and draconian repression in Afghanistan. And now we are seeing an unprovoked war in Ukraine. Then as now, women and girls bore the brunt of conflict. Then as now, women were also the key to ending it and preventing it in the first place.

The landmark resolution on women and peace and security codified the pivotal role women play in peacebuilding. In the time since its adoption, the Security Council and the United Nations have further incorporated the framework in our efforts. It has made a difference, but more needs to be done. Before its adoption, women comprised somewhere between 1 and 2 per cent of all peacekeepers. That number has increased almost tenfold, but really it ought to have increased a hundredfold. Between 1990 and 2000, only 12 per cent of peace agreements referenced women. Now that number is 33 per cent, but it should be 100 per cent. Women have increasing representation in the halls of justice, legislative bodies, grass-roots-level peacekeeping efforts and local law enforcement. And of course, there are more than 40 women leading their country's missions in the United Nations, including within the Fab Five, here in the Security Council — but again, the numbers could and should be higher.

Representation is not good just in and of itself. We have seen that when women are involved in the peacebuilding process, in the United Nations and beyond it, the result is a more just and durable peace. Take Liberia, which was ensconced in civil war 25 years ago. I vividly remember the images of women and girls gathering in the streets to demand an end to the violence, and I was there as they rebuilt democracy in the years to come — a democracy that persists to this day. Still, as the report of the Secretary-General (S/2024/671) makes clear, not every country is so lucky. Progress has been rolled back and inequalities remain entrenched, including in the United Nations system. Indeed, the striking similarities between the world two and a half decades ago and the world today just go to show that there is so much more work to be done. We have the responsibility to root out injustice and inequity within the United Nations system so that we can live up

to the potential of the women and peace and security agenda. I believe that there are three keys to doing just that, which are what I would like to call “the three I’s”: investment, initiative and implementation.

Let us start with the first “I”: investment. Simply put, we must provide the resources needed to mitigate the crises of today and address the day after. We welcome the Secretary-General’s recommendation for increased women and peace and security funding at the national, regional and local levels. The United States continues to answer that call, whether by committing resources to Government-led women and peace and security centres or investing in rapid response funds to support women’s participation in politics and public life. All of that is in addition to the almost \$40 million that we have given to the Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund.

In addition to funds, we must also lend political will. And that brings me to my second “I”: initiative. That means pushing the envelope on the women and peace and security agenda in our own respective countries and within the multilateral system. That was the impetus behind the United States Women, Peace and Security Act of 2017 — a legal framework to guide our thinking at home and abroad. Since its adoption, we have launched partnerships with UN-Women to help Ukraine to implement its women and peace and security national action plan and to help Ethiopia to create a more gender-inclusive cessation-of-hostilities agreement. We have centred the perspectives of women peacebuilders, first responders to gender-based violence and civil society leaders in the Sudan, as we work to end the war and the catastrophic humanitarian situation it has created.

We have also collaborated with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to create a first-of-its-kind policy framework for the Multinational Security Support Mission in Haiti, including measures to ensure compliance with international human rights standards, establish a gender advisory position and incorporate an action plan on women’s participation and protection. We remain eager to work within the Security Council to ensure that the women and peace and security resolution fulfils its full potential. It was for that reason that the United States signed on to the common pledge to increase women’s full, equal and meaningful participation in peace processes. It is also why, along with 10 other members of the Council, we signed and advanced a statement of

shared commitments on women and peace and security. We encourage newly elected members to do the same.

Finally, we get to the third “I”: implementation — the most important of the three. We must commit not just to talking about women and peace and security commitments but to implementing the women and peace and security agenda. We must commit to protecting and promoting the fundamental freedoms of women and girls, including those from minority racial and religious communities, the disability community and the LGBTQI+ community. We join the Secretary-General in urging accountability for those who violate women’s human rights, whether it be the Taliban seeking to erase women from public life in Afghanistan or generals using rape and sexual violence as a weapon of war in the Sudan.

The world is not as different from 2000 as we would like it to be, or as women and girls deserve for it to be. But if we invest in, take initiative on and fully implement the women and peace and security agenda, we can chart the course towards a more secure and peaceful future for women and girls and for all of us.

Let me end by sharing that, this morning, I had the opportunity to meet with three extraordinary women who were awarded the State Department’s Global Anti-Racism Champions Award: Urmila Chaudhary, a Nepali human rights defender; Tanya Duarte, an Afro-Mexican feminist and anti-racist activist; and Tomasa Jacomé, an indigenous human rights defender and politician from Bolivia. They all demonstrated our need to support and commit to the women and peace and security agenda. I promised them this morning that I would amplify their voices here in the Security Council today. I thank them for the extraordinary work that they do, and I thank everyone here today for their commitment.

Ms. Gabrič (Slovenia): I would like to thank the President of Switzerland for presiding over this open debate on United Nations Day, to express our gratitude to all the briefers here today and, in particular, to thank the civil society breifier for her powerful message.

Today violence and conflict are at record highs worldwide. We are witnessing a worrisome erosion of norms — something that disproportionately affects women and girls. Slovenia is deeply concerned about the lack of progress in implementing the women peace and security agenda. We therefore call for concrete action to increase women’s full participation in all

aspects of conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Let me underline a few points in that respect.

First, we must make peace processes more inclusive. Slovenia supports efforts to ensure that at least one third of participants in all peace efforts are women, while our ultimate goal is to achieve full parity. We must lead by example. To that end, we support the common pledge to increase women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace processes.

Secondly, to make peace processes truly inclusive, we must strengthen interactions with local and grass-roots women's organizations. That will not be possible without sufficient funding. The global decline in financing for gender equality is a matter of great concern for Slovenia. To counter that trend, we are committed to ensuring that 85 per cent of our development programmes will promote gender equality and women's empowerment by 2030. Along those lines, Slovenia remains committed to the cause of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund and UN-Women.

Thirdly and lastly, we must establish an environment that allows and enables women to safely engage in peace efforts. That includes repealing all discriminatory laws and practices, as well as zero tolerance for any form of retaliation or reprisal for their involvement in peace processes.

With each passing day, the voices of women and girls from Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Israel, Lebanon, Myanmar, Palestine, the Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Yemen and too many other situations become ever louder. They demand not just our attention but our commitment to action. But let me be clear: we will not achieve any progress if we do not stop the violence, silence the guns and return to diplomacy. We must fight against impunity and ensure accountability for gross violations of the rights of women and girls, including through international courts, such as the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court, as well as through the use of targeted sanctions against perpetrators. We must work to prevent sexual and gender-based violence and, when it occurs, our response must be survivor-oriented and must include access to sexual and reproductive health and rights services, including contraception, safe abortion and psychosocial support.

Empowering women and ensuring their participation in leadership and decision-making is not

merely the right thing to do, but it is also an essential thing for building resilient and successful societies. As I come from a country with a women and peace and security national action plan, I am proud that Slovenia is living up to that expectation, with women holding, for the first time, the positions of President of the Republic, President of the National Assembly and Minister for Foreign Affairs. As Minister Tanja Fajon said at the Women Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in Toronto last month, research shows that women in decision-making positions take actions that are more beneficial to people and society. The promotion of gender equality must therefore remain a guiding and global principle in the formulation of national and international policies.

Let me therefore conclude by agreeing with the Secretary-General — as long as oppressive patriarchal social structures and gender biases hold back half of society, peace will remain elusive. Therefore, this is a call to all of us — let us make women and girls an equal part of the solution for a more peaceful world. Let us work together to dismantle patriarchy in favour of true equality.

Lord Hermer (United Kingdom): I would like to thank our briefers for their essential contribution to today's open debate.

On United Nations Day, I want to start by recalling that last month my Prime Minister gave a clear recommitment to the United Nations, to the rule of law and to the need to work together for peace, progress and equality, and empowering women and girls is a vital part of that. Addressing structural gender inequality is a vital part of that. Tackling misogyny is a vital part of that. And ending impunity for conflict-related sexual violence is a vital part of that.

We are approaching the twenty-fifth anniversary of the women and peace and security agenda, and I am proud of the role that the United Kingdom has played. There is much to celebrate, yet the overall implementation is lagging. Not one of the peace agreements reached in 2023 included a women's representative or a women's representative group as a signatory. The proportion of women killed in conflict has doubled compared to 2022.

Building on Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield's essential three Is, may I propose three areas for our collective action.

First, concerning conflict prevention, conflict is at a post-Second World War high. Women and children are

disproportionately affected, and we need to reinvigorate conflict-prevention efforts, while taking a gender-responsive approach. Through our Resourcing Change project, the United Kingdom is supporting women's participation in formal and informal mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflict, including in Nigeria and South Sudan.

Secondly, we must stand together to prevent conflict-related sexual violence and end impunity. The United Kingdom remains committed to the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative and to our work with the International Alliance to build a stronger international response. Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative programmes have contributed to vital legislative changes around the world. We have sanctioned perpetrators for conflict-related sexual violence crimes in seven countries, and I call upon States to redouble efforts to seek justice and accountability and support for survivors.

Thirdly, I call upon States Members to support women's rights organizations as the driving force behind the women and peace and security agenda. I am proud of the United Kingdom's £33 million partnership with the Equality Fund, which has supported more than 1,000 women's rights organizations, including in conflict settings, since 2019. In the Sudan, the United Kingdom has supported the establishment of an anti-war pro-democracy coalition, working with more than 200 women. In Myanmar, the United Kingdom is contributing more than \$1.3 million over three years in long-term support to grass-roots women and LGBTQ+ led organizations to build capacity and support inclusive and strategic cooperation among local-level women leaders and community representatives.

Women's full, equal, meaningful and safe participation is crucial to achieving lasting peace, and we condemn the shocking levels of reprisals against women peacebuilders. But we must also recognize that the long-term solution to gender-based violence in conflicts requires all societies to address its root causes. It requires addressing gender inequality systematically, not just in criminal courts or in peace negotiation halls but also in how girls and boys, as well as men and women, relate to each other in classrooms, in playgrounds, at workplaces, in public life and online. The link between gender inequality and gender-based violence in conflict must be systematically addressed.

Therefore, as we approach the twenty-fifth anniversary, we must celebrate the women's rights organizations and peacebuilders who have championed the agenda. We welcome the Secretary-General's common pledge to prioritize women's participation in peace processes to address that gap, but we must go further and faster to build a more inclusive, sustainable and peaceful future for all.

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett (Guyana): I welcome President Viola Amherd of the Swiss Confederation to the Security Council on this United Nations Day for the open debate on a topic that remains integral to the achievement of the women and peace and security agenda and to sustainable peace and security. I also thank Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, UN-Women Executive Director Sima Sami Bahous, Justice Effie Owuor and Ms. Wai Wai Nu for their briefings.

Almost 25 years after the Council formally recognized the critical role of women in conflict prevention, resolution and recovery in resolution 1325 (2000), women remain drastically underrepresented in peace processes. Their human rights and freedoms continue to be trampled upon and their voices sidelined. In several places, their lives have changed — and for the worse.

As Executive Director Bahous reminded us, the Secretary-General's report (S/2024/671) paints a grim picture. In 2023, the proportion of women killed in armed conflicts doubled as compared to the previous year. The number of United Nations-verified cases of conflict-related sexual violence was 50 per cent higher than the year before, and the number of girls affected by grave violations in situations of armed conflict increased by 35 per cent. Millions of women and girls are faced with repeated displacement, sexual and gender-based violence, starvation, a lack of access to essential health services and deprivation of basic needs. For more than two years, girls in Afghanistan have been denied a secondary education, while in the Sudan and Haiti women and girls are enduring abhorrent abuse and sexual violence. In Gaza, women are experiencing unspeakable violence and, together with children, they represent the majority of those killed. The lifeline provided to them by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) for decades, and indeed to everyone in the occupied territories, is now under the grave threat of being taken away. All of that is occurring with seeming impunity for the perpetrators.

Despite those harsh realities, the Council has on many occasions engaged with indomitable women from conflict-affected countries who refuse to give up and are persevering in their efforts to improve the lives of those in their countries. In Gaza, for example, despite being forced to live in overcrowded shelters with a lack of hygiene and privacy, having to give birth in appalling conditions and having to face grave safety and security risks, women are organized in the shelter committees established by UNRWA and are part of decision-making and providing feedback. Those local and grass-roots efforts require our collective support, but we must do more than that. I echo the Secretary-General's call for the twenty-fifth and thirtieth milestone anniversaries of resolution 1325 (2000) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action to be not just occasions for the renewal of commitments and ambitious rhetoric but also a time to expend political capital and financial resources in order to make a tangible difference to women on the front lines of conflicts and crises, a time to equip them with the necessary tools and resources, a time to give them a seat at the table and a time to listen to their views.

Sadly, amid record levels of armed conflict and violence, the transformative potential of women's leadership and inclusion in the pursuit of peace remains largely unrealized. Peace will never be whole or sustainable without the participation of half of those who should benefit from it — women. That is why, when the fourth meeting of Special Envoys on Afghanistan is held in Doha, women from Afghanistan must not be relegated to the sidelines and Sudanese women must not be excluded from diplomatic initiatives either. In all situations of conflict, women must not be absent from decision-making. We have repeatedly said at the United Nations that when women are part of peace processes, the outcomes are better. We must make good on that understanding.

There must be a determined approach to advancing the women and peace and security agenda through the combination of political will and an enabling environment with targeted measures, including quotas and parity requirements. Efforts should be made to ensure that their participation is free from violence and harassment by enacting and enforcing appropriate legislation, including for online spaces. Women must not be seen only as victims or those in need of protection but also as active participants and decision-makers. Let us build on the modest progress made so far, some of

which was outlined by the Deputy Secretary-General. Let us learn from best practices, such as in Colombia, where women represented 50 per cent of Government negotiators. Let us work to ensure women's equal and meaningful participation and leadership in peacebuilding processes. That is the sustainable path to peace.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes President Amherd of the Swiss Confederation as she presides over today's important meeting and thanks Deputy Secretary-General Mohammed and Executive Director Bahous for their briefings. I also listened carefully to the statements made by the representatives of civil society.

Next year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). Over the past few decades, guided by the outcomes of the fourth World Conference on Women and the spirit of resolution 1325 (2000), countries at large and the international community as a whole have been raising awareness about gender equality. Measures to protect women's rights and interests and promote their status have been continuously implemented. Women's contributions to the cause of peace and development have been increasing. At the same time, the international situation is volatile, the development gap is widening and women's empowerment and development gains risk are being eroded. Many challenges remain in making the vision of the fourth World Conference on Women a reality. I would like to emphasize the following four points.

First, we must make every effort to create a peaceful and tranquil living environment. According to the Secretary-General's most recent report (S/2024/671), more than 600 million women and girls are living in conflict zones. Armed conflicts are having devastating effects on civilians, especially women. In Gaza, the war has continued for more than a year. Almost 30,000 women and children have been killed and more than 2 million people are struggling in a living hell. In Haiti and the Sahel, large numbers of women and girls are becoming innocent victims of gang violence, terrorist forces and armed conflicts. If survival and safety cannot be guaranteed, how can we even start to talk about anything else? The Security Council should fulfil its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security,

shoulder the important mission of comprehensively preventing and diffusing conflicts and promoting the political settlement of hotspot issues; in particular, it should take effective actions to promote ceasefires and cessations of hostilities in conflict areas and to create favourable conditions for women and girls to be free from the flames of war and from fear.

Secondly, we must step up efforts to increase women's representation in peace processes. In the past few years, women have become an indispensable and significant force in peacebuilding and peacekeeping. China has noted that the Secretariat has taken several positive measures to support women in assuming high-level positions, including those of head and deputy head of mission. At the same time, it should be noted that the degree and level of women's participation in political and peace processes vary from country to country. Women from developing countries are relatively less informed and less able to participate and are seriously underrepresented in the United Nations system. China calls on the international community to take more effective measures to fully tap the potential of women's talents in developing countries and to encourage more women from those countries to participate in peacekeeping operations and political good offices.

Thirdly, we must comprehensively promote development-based women empowerment. One in 10 women in the world lives in extreme poverty today. Women's economic empowerment is a sine qua non for the advancement of women and is also an essential requirement for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. China commends those countries that have formulated national strategies and plans to protect women's rights and interests. China especially commends their effort in combining the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with their continuous investment in education for all, poverty eradication and job creation, so as to help more women change their destiny. Colombia's integration of its national development with the implementation of peace agreements in order to allow more women to benefit from socioeconomic development is commendable. We call on the Afghan authorities to strengthen the protection of the rights of women and children, which we believe will contribute to peace, stability and prosperity in Afghanistan. The Security Council and the international community should put into practice the concept of development for peace, create better conditions for women to enhance their own capabilities,

create more opportunities for women to participate in economic development and jointly address the root causes of conflicts.

Fourthly, we must jointly promote the global cause of women's development. Looking around the world, the development of women's causes in various countries and regions is still uneven. We support UN-Women, the United Nations Development Programme and other agencies in continuing to play their role in helping women from developing countries, especially those in conflict areas, to equally enjoy the opportunities brought about by economic development and scientific and technological progress and to effectively address the challenges posed by poverty, backwardness, discrimination, prejudice and the digital divide. Developed countries should sincerely honour their official development assistance commitments and increase their financial, technical and capacity-building support for the development of women's causes in developing countries. International multilateral financial institutions should allocate more funds to improving women's livelihoods in developing countries. We also support the deepening of South-South cooperation to promote exchanges of experience in advancing women's undertakings in various countries to achieve common progress.

China has always been a staunch advocate for and active contributor to the advancement of gender equality and women's development. We have trained more than 200,000 women in more than 180 countries and territories, sent more than 1,000 female peacekeepers to the United Nations and cooperated with UNESCO on establishing the Prize for Girls' and Women's Education. Within the framework of various multilateral organizations, such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, China has actively pushed for the establishment of platforms for exchanges and dialogues, carried out capacity-building projects and promoted women's empowerment and development.

In September, the United Nations officially launched the commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the fourth World Conference on Women. China is ready to work with the international community to continue to put into practice the spirit of the World Conference on Women in an equal, inclusive and sustainable manner and to make greater contributions to the realization of a more peaceful, better and happier future for all women.

Mr. Afonso (Mozambique): Mozambique wishes to thank you, Madam President, for organizing this important annual open debate and for your leadership on this matter. We extend our profound appreciation to the Deputy Secretary-General for her insightful briefing and her commitment to gender issues. Our gratitude also goes to Ms. Sima Sami Bahous, Executive Director of UN-Women; Justice Effie Owuor, co-Chair of FemWise-Africa; and Ms. Wai Wai Nu, Founder and Executive Director of Women's Peace Network. We thank them for their comprehensive briefings and, more importantly, for their commitment to the cause of women worldwide.

Mozambique is a country that attained its liberation approximately 50 years ago, counting on the strong engagement and contribution of women. It is therefore part of our history and tradition to recognize the crucial role of women in peace and security and development, at both the national and international levels.

In that connection, we wish to recall that, in the course of our presidencies of the Security Council in March 2023 and May 2024, Mozambique organized two high-level debates under this agenda item. The first was on the theme "Women and peace and security: towards the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000)" (see S/PV.9276) and the second "Maintenance of international peace and security: the role of women and young people" (see S/PV.9637). Those two events served to reaffirm that we are together in the Council in underscoring the importance of the vital role and contribution of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

We need to work together, collectively, to consolidate the gains obtained so far. But we also need to counter the negative trends concerning women's full participation in resolving our society's challenges, in particular those factors related to war, terrorism and conflict situations in general. We believe that there are some concrete initiatives that could be undertaken by the Security Council, by the United Nations, by regional organizations and by Member States individually. Such measures could include the following.

First, financial support should be enhanced for women-led organizations and initiatives focused on women and peace and security. That is crucial, as it would empower women to take on leadership roles in peace processes, fostering gender equality and

women's empowerment. In that context, international cooperation is essential.

Secondly, the Security Council should ensure that we devote more and continuous attention to issues on women and peace and security.

Thirdly, national Governments must develop and effectively implement national action plans for the women and peace and security agenda. In that context, we wish to share that Mozambique's national action plan on women and peace and security is comprehensive. Our national plan is aligned with the objectives of the Southern African Development Community regional strategy on women and peace and security.

Fourthly, regional organizations play a vital role in advancing the women and peace and security agenda. They can tailor their strategies to address specific regional challenges.

Fifthly, civil society has a role to play in mobilizing support for the women and peace and security agenda and promoting awareness of the importance of women's participation in peace and decision-making processes.

Mozambique reaffirms its commitment to continue its national efforts to reduce gender inequalities because it is part of our development process and a requirement of our peacebuilding process. Our efforts are also geared towards the high integration of women in decision-making processes, as well as in conflict prevention and resolution, peacemaking, peacebuilding, peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction.

Mr. Camilleri (Malta): I thank you, Madam President, for organizing and chairing this annual open debate. I also thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Executive Director Bahous, Justice Owuor and Ms. Wai Wai Nu for their briefings and compelling calls to action.

Nearly 25 years ago, the Council recognized the grave threats armed conflicts pose to gender equality and women's rights. In response, it established the women and peace and security agenda to confront those challenges. Yet today we witness a troubling regression in our hard-won achievements across all key indicators. In 2023, the proportion of women killed in armed conflicts doubled. Women accounted for less than 10 per cent of negotiators and a mere 2 per cent of peace agreement signatories. Funding for women-led organizations in conflicts, which are critical lifelines for sustainable peace, has declined for three consecutive years.

While the Security Council created the women and peace and security agenda, its transformative potential relies on the profound engagement of diverse stakeholders. However, growing geopolitical fragmentation, patriarchal backlash and the alarming shift from diplomacy to military escalation have intensified the global backlash against gender equality.

In the conflict situations on our agenda, women and girls, including those with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, are at a heightened risk from sexual and gender-based violence. They are further marginalized from protection and peace processes.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban's systematic gender discrimination is creating both existential and operational challenges, including for principled humanitarian action. In Gaza, women are giving birth under bombardment, deprived of antenatal care and medication, and facing hunger. More than 52,000 pregnant women have been denied access to health care, violating the Geneva Conventions' protections for maternal health. In Myanmar, as highlighted by Ms. Nu, Rohingya women and girls in Rakhine state are caught in the crossfire of intensifying conflict, facing dire circumstances with limited access to protection or safe refuge. The Council must act to uphold the dignity and rights of women in those and all conflict situations.

First, we must strengthen our commitment to preventing, averting and end conflicts through disarmament and demilitarization. We urge the adoption of robust, gender-responsive arms control mechanisms, consistent with article 7, paragraph 4, of the Arms Trade Treaty, to prevent weapons from being used to perpetrate sexual and gender-based violence.

Secondly, we strongly support the Secretary-General's call for increased, sustainable and flexible funding for the women and peace and security agenda. It is imperative that we expand investments in local women-led peacebuilding organizations.

Thirdly, we must pursue all available mechanisms to ensure justice and accountability for gross violations of women's rights. Those include targeted sanctions and leveraging the mandates of the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice.

Fourthly, we must both enable and protect women peacebuilders and human rights defenders, who cannot participate meaningfully in peace processes if they are under threat. The Council must demand accountability

for reprisals and enhance its mechanisms to safeguard civil society engagement. We welcome the Secretary-General's call for a common pledge to fast-track women's participation in formal peace talks and urge that substantive gender equality concerns be integrated through gender-responsive conflict analysis and more inclusive multi-track process design.

As we approach the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), we must redouble our efforts to defend and strengthen the women and peace and security agenda. Women's human rights are not negotiable. They are the foundation of lasting peace. We must stand with women's movements, which are at the heart of the women and peace and security agenda. This is not a fight for women to fight alone. Men, too, have a central role to play towards achieving those goals and in ensuring that the women and peace and security agenda is given the importance it deserves.

It has been a privilege for Malta to serve as coordinator of the group on shared commitments on women and peace and security in the Security Council. We encourage all incoming Council members to join them and to actively promote their work. Even after our term on the Council ends, we will continue to work collectively to implement those commitments, safeguard progress and unlock the transformative potential of the women and peace and security agenda.

Mr. Bendjama (Algeria): I would like to extend my thanks to Switzerland for convening this important open debate. I would also like to thank the briefers for their insightful remarks.

As we approach the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), which acknowledges the crucial role of women in conflict prevention, management and resolution, we must confront the ongoing challenges in realizing the women and peace and security agenda. Today's changing environments, marked by armed conflict, climate disasters and emerging technologies, complicate our efforts. Supporting women in peacebuilding is essential for achieving lasting stability and resilience. To translate political will into tangible actions under the women and peace and security framework, various stakeholders should work together on the following vital commitments.

First, they should reinforce accountability and sanctions against actors who violate international humanitarian law and women's rights in conflict zones.

Secondly, they should adopt a collaborative approach that involves all relevant stakeholders, including the United Nations, regional organizations and civil society, with a view to enhancing women's roles in peace and security through partnerships and cooperation.

Thirdly, they should promote gender equality policies and develop comprehensive national programmes to empower and protect women, particularly in the digital context and during armed conflicts.

Fourthly, they should ensure capacity-building for the empowerment of women and girls.

Fifthly, they should ensure that there are transitional periods for the withdrawal of peacekeeping operations to guarantee the protection of women, who are often the primary targets of violence.

Recognizing the necessity of amplifying women's roles in public life and society, my country, Algeria, has worked diligently to support women as key architects of peace at both the national and regional levels. As part of our commitment to implementing resolution 1325 (2000), we adopted a national action plan in July 2023, prioritizing the improvement of women's inclusion as a national priority.

According to the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2024/671), published in September, the United Nations has recorded a dramatic rise in the proportion of women killed and the number of women and girls affected by sexual violence. The international community must act in a timely manner to protect women and children targeted in armed conflicts.

I cannot conclude without reiterating that in Gaza, the Israeli aggression has inflicted a particularly cruel toll on women, leading to significant violations of their rights — as women and as human beings. Among the 42,000 Palestinians who have lost their lives in Gaza, tragically, 14,000 were children, and more than 10,000 were women. Words can no longer convey the atrocities and the horrors that Palestinians, especially women, are facing daily. They are unspeakable. We reiterate our call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza and in Lebanon to ensure that all civilians, especially the most vulnerable, by which I mean women, are protected by international humanitarian law.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Switzerland for convening today's debate and the various briefers for their briefings.

As we are preparing to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), women continue to have minimal involvement in peacekeeping processes and are disproportionately affected by armed conflict. The implementation of the 10 resolutions adopted by the Security Council under the women and peace and security agenda is critical. I would like to make three points.

First, we must continue to take action to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention and in peacemaking. Together with the United Nations, over the past three years, France has invested more than \$1 million to train female officers and special military advisers on gender issues in the conduct of operations. Women's participation in peace talks must also be strengthened, and peace agreements must contain provisions on equality between men and women. I am thinking about the peace process in Colombia, in which women negotiators play a key role, and Burma, where it is essential for women to be involved in the quest for a lasting political solution. France supports the joint commitment made by the Secretary-General to ensure greater space for women in mediation processes. We also support general recommendation No. 40 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making processes, which was adopted the day before yesterday in Geneva.

Secondly, our approach must be based on law and justice. All States must honour the international commitments they made, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. I am thinking about Afghanistan, where the Taliban are carrying out a policy of segregation against women and girls and systematic violations of their rights. I am also thinking of the Yazidi women's quest for justice. France welcomes the work conducted by civil society organizations. We will continue to support them through our Support Fund for Feminist Organizations, which has raised €250 million for the period from 2023 to 2027.

Thirdly, women and girls must be protected from all forms of violence in armed conflict, including sexual violence. In the space of a year, cases of conflict-related sexual violence have increased by 50 per cent. In the Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Ukraine, Burma and the Near East, we must combat impunity by supporting national and international jurisdictions. That is the purpose of the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Patten, who, in March, launched in The Hague the first international conference of prosecutors on the subject. We welcome the efforts by the International Criminal Court to investigate sexual violence. France recalls its support for the Global Survivors Fund, founded by Ms. Nadia Murad and Mr. Denis Mukwege.

Lastly, France is in favour of the Council using sanctions more often against perpetrators of conflict-related sexual violence.

Feminist diplomacy is at the heart of France's foreign policy. The implementation of the women and peace and security resolutions through our third national action plan is a priority. As a member of the group on shared commitments on women and peace and security, France encourages the newly elected members of the Council to join this initiative.

Mr. Hwang (Republic of Korea): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this timely open debate of the Security Council on women and peace and security. I also appreciate the insights shared today by the Deputy Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN-Women and briefers from civil society organizations.

The long list of speakers for today's meeting vividly demonstrates how important this agenda is within the United Nations. However, the progress achieved by the Security Council over the past 24 years on the women and peace and security agenda, since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), is now being eroded by rising geopolitical tensions, patriarchal resistance and targeted attacks on women's rights. Drawing on the Peacebuilding Commission's advice and the Secretary-General's most recent report (S/2024/671), it is clear that these setbacks demand urgent action. In that regard, I would like to focus on three points.

First, women must not only have a seat at the table but also be integral drivers of peace processes and decision-making. We have consistently witnessed how

women act as front-line responders and peacebuilders, showing extraordinary resilience in conflict settings. However, where are these women when it comes to peace negotiations and critical decisions? Too often, their roles are limited to local or track 2 levels, while decision-making remains predominantly in the hands of men. That dynamic must change. Women should be empowered to lead in shaping every stage of a peace process, from planning through implementation. A noteworthy example is Colombia. Women's participation at the national level ensured that the 2016 peace agreement included more than 100 gender-specific commitments. Such efforts must not be confined to this case. I echo Ms. Wai Wai Nu from Myanmar in emphasizing that the impunity enjoyed by perpetrators of atrocities against women must stop and women's participation in peace processes should not be a symbolic gesture but rather fully recognized and institutionalized.

Secondly, sustained financial support must be directed to women leaders and organizations, particularly at the grass-roots level. While women's participation at the national level is essential, local organizations are often the most underfunded, despite their critical role in driving transformative change from the bottom up. To advance these efforts, we are proud to announce a \$1 million contribution, focusing on strengthening Sudanese women's representation in conflict resolution, to the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, the only global mechanism directly supporting local and grass-roots women's organizations in conflict settings.

Lastly, it is essential to have more dedicated spaces where the women and peace and security agenda can be embedded as a global normative framework. As part of our effort to amplify the agenda, Korea launched its Action with Women and Peace Initiative in 2018. That has created a platform that brings together women peacebuilders, peacekeepers, survivors and human rights defenders around the world. Under this Initiative, we will host the sixth annual International Conference in Seoul this December, in the lead-up to the twenty-fifth anniversary of the women and peace and security agenda.

In addition, this year, Korea, together with United Nations Population Fund, hosted the launch of the 2024 State of World Population report in Seoul, at which we shed light on, in particular, the issues of sexual and reproductive health and mainstreaming gender in

development policy. We strongly believe that when we fail women, we fail everything.

Mr. Yamazaki (Japan): I thank Switzerland for convening this open debate and Her Excellency President Amherd for presiding over it. I also thank the Deputy Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN-Women, Justice Owuor and Ms. Nu for their comprehensive briefings.

Since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) in 2000, there has been some progress in promoting the women and peace and security agenda globally. However, as the report of the Secretary-General (S/2024/671) warns, we are concerned about the insufficient progress on the agenda, as well as the stagnation and regression across key indicators, including the escalating backlash against women's rights and gender equality throughout the world.

As emphasized by the Secretary-General's report, ensuring the effective implementation of existing frameworks remains one of the most urgent needs for advancing the women and peace and security agenda. Despite progress, much remains to be done, particularly in ensuring women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace processes. In that regard, Japan has made concrete steps of its own. Since the adoption of our first national action plan in 2015, Japan has implemented the plan in a steadfast manner by specifying targets and designating responsible ministries and agencies. This year, Japan has strengthened those efforts by establishing a cross-organizational women and peace and security task force within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to enhance coordination and transparency. The task force collaborates closely with other related ministries and agencies, including the Ministry of Defence and the Fire and Disaster Management Agency. We have also put in place mechanisms for annual progress reporting, which are evaluated by experts and civil society organizations. That ensures accountability and helps further the effective implementation of our national action plan.

Globally, as of June this year, 110 countries and territories had adopted national action plans on women and peace and security. We encourage more countries to adopt a national plan and strengthen it with adequate resources and monitoring mechanisms. I am also pleased to share that Japan joined the common pledge for women's participation in peace processes, led by

the Secretary-General. We hope that the pledge will help accelerate the existing frameworks related to the women and peace and security agenda.

Japan believes that the holistic empowerment of women, which includes the elimination of existing gender-inequality, will ultimately contribute to the participation of women in peace processes. In that regard, allow me to share a few examples from our global initiatives, which leverage new technologies to promote women's empowerment.

In Madagascar, Japan supported a project of the United Nations Population Fund to provide life-saving sexual and reproductive health, family planning, integrated knowledge and services that are related to gender-based violence for the most vulnerable and underserved women and girls in hard-to-reach areas in southern Madagascar, using new technologies, such as drones for health-care commodities delivery and an order-management system. Through the project, essential sexual and reproductive health supplies were delivered by drones to remote communities and health centres.

Ensuring the economic security of women affected by conflict is another key aspect of the women and peace and security agenda. In Poland, at the Polish-Japanese Academy of Information Technology, the Japan International Cooperation Agency has provided information technology training for displaced populations from Ukraine. More than 80 per cent of the participants have been women, and the training has led to actual employment. The initiative aims to offer enhanced livelihoods for Ukrainian women and to contribute to the economy of the host country, Poland.

As an adherent to the women and peace and security shared commitments, Japan has been committed to the women and peace and security agenda both within the Security Council and across the United Nations system. The women and peace and security agenda has become one of the main pillars of Japan's foreign policy, and, in 2025, Japan will co-chair the Women and Peace and Security Focal Points Network, together with Norway, hosting the capital-level meeting in Tokyo in February 2025. Through all those efforts, we will endeavour, together with our partners in the international community, to enhance women's participation and engagement in the relevant women and peace and security processes in a completely substantive way. Japan will remain firmly committed to advancing the

women and peace and security agenda together with Member States, United Nations agencies, civil society organizations and other stakeholders.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): You are President two times over today, Madam President, and we welcome your participation at this meeting. We thank Deputy Under-Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and UN-Women Executive Director Sima Sami Bahous for their assessments of the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. We note the contribution made to the debate by the civil society representatives.

Russia has been a pioneer in establishing and promoting equality between men and women and has always welcomed the contribution of women to the work of our Organization and to the realization of its purposes and principles, among which peacekeeping plays an important role. Women's participation in peacekeeping and peacebuilding processes must be encouraged and supported. Women are not only the immediate victims of all conflicts in need of protection, but they also bear the brunt of protecting children and helping the elderly, which is why women are more interested than anyone else in bringing about peace. Their contribution to reaching solutions to security problems, resolving armed conflicts and post-conflict reconstruction cannot be over-stated.

Women's participation builds more stable and trusting connections in post-conflict societies, prevents violations against women and children and facilitates follow-up measures to rehabilitate and reintegrate their victims, ultimately preventing the return of violence. But engaging women in peacebuilding is not a mechanical process, and neither is it merely a matter of numbers or statistical balances. We must broaden interaction, first and foremost, with women living in the middle of conflict-affected areas, especially with regard to internal armed conflicts. It is important to avoid the politicization of women's participation in peacebuilding processes, where, instead of representatives of the local population bearing the brunt of the conflict, non-governmental organizations or individuals, ostensibly representing women's rights but in reality implementing the agenda of their sponsors, are brought to the fore with the help of donor countries and other external actors. Such approaches are not helpful to peacebuilding and should not be encouraged within the United Nations.

Overall, increasing the role of women in peacebuilding processes should be part of a more comprehensive effort to strengthen women's economic potential. Support for women's access to education, employment, entrepreneurship, access to financial services and modern technologies, protection of the family and maternal and child health is needed. In that context, we cannot avoid the issue of unilateral coercive measures, which hinder post-conflict reconstruction, exacerbate the vulnerable situation of women and children, deprive them of social protection and, sometimes, simply lead to starvation. We call on the United Nations to actively monitor the adverse impact of such measures on all segments of society, gather relevant data and not be afraid to make it part of its reports on specific situations.

In assessing the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, we cannot fail to note the unevenness of the United Nations efforts. For example, we know about the active implementation of the agenda in Africa. However, we do not know how it is being implemented in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. We do not see the convening of Security Council meetings on women in Gaza. And neither do we see the enthusiasm of a number of delegations that traditionally call themselves champions of the agenda for advancing relevant provisions for that conflict.

In conclusion, I would like to underscore that women's peacekeeping in a rapidly changing world should be an organic part of strengthening national and regional efforts to ensure security and achieve lasting and sustainable peace. Russia stands ready to engage in constructive cooperation to achieve those goals.

Mr. Sowa (Sierra Leone): I thank Her Excellency Ms. Viola Amherd, President of the Swiss Confederation. I welcome to the Security Council today and thank the Swiss presidency for convening this high-level open debate. I also thank Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, Executive Director Sima Bahous, Justice Effie Owuor and Ms. Wai Wai Nu for their very informative and inspiring briefings. I furthermore thank His Excellency Secretary-General António Guterres for the annual report on women and peace and security (S/2024/671), which paints a thought-provoking picture of the gains and the challenges relating to the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in the political, social and economic spheres of society. Lastly, we thank the Peacebuilding Commission for its helpful written advice (see S/2024/757).

Sierra Leone remains deeply concerned about global trends showing that the women and peace and security framework, designed to uphold women's full participation as agents of change in peace and security, is facing significant challenges. The Secretary-General's report highlights alarming increases in violence against women and girls and restrictions on the agency of women and human rights defenders — a stark reminder of the obstacles we still face in achieving the women and peace and security agenda. Despite the progress made since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) almost 25 years ago, women remain disproportionately affected by conflict, violence and restrictive policies, yet their participation in peace processes remains limited. That is despite the undeniable contributions that women make to peacebuilding and conflict resolution, both locally and globally.

Sierra Leone therefore welcomes the commitment to strengthening the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of women in peace processes, as demonstrated by the African Union Peace and Security Council and the United Nations Security Council during their recent consultative meeting on 18 October 2024. The inclusion of a dedicated pillar on the role of women in post-conflict reconstruction and development and the revised African Union policy on post-conflict reconstruction and Development are positive steps forward.

In strengthening the practical applications of the women and peace and security framework, Sierra Leone wishes to make three points.

First, we believe that resolution 1325 (2000) can be most effectively implemented through a comprehensive and actionable framework that connects it to other resolutions, such as resolution 1820 (2008), resolution 1888 (2009) and resolution 1889 (2009), alongside international agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Sustainable Development Goals and, in terms of the regional context, the African Union's Agenda 2063. Collaborative approaches that prioritize gender equality from the outset, including gender-responsive conflict analysis, participatory planning and robust monitoring and evaluation systems, are key to ensuring that women are actively involved in all stages of peace processes.

Secondly, an inclusive policy system must actively engage diverse female stakeholders to address the

immediate security needs of women in conflict zones and the socioeconomic drivers of conflicts. In essence, women must not only have a say in the development and implementation of peace processes during and after conflict but should also be actively involved in national development activities that help forestall conflict. The development of national action plans, informed by regional and global frameworks, is essential in that regard. That aligns with tools — such as the African Union's Continental Results Framework, the European Union's Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security and the United Nations systemwide action plan — that help to ensure coherent action at all levels. In that regard, Sierra Leone launched the third generation of its national action plan to enhance women's role in peace and development on 3 October, thereby reaffirming the country's commitment to advancing women's participation in peacebuilding, leadership and national development.

In addition, on the global stage, as co-Chair of the Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security, we have helped to enrich the Security Council's information on engagement in relation to women and girls in the Sudan, Yemen, Iraq, Somalia, Libya, Myanmar and Ukraine through meetings of the Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security. With the other 10 Council members that have signed the statement of shared commitments on women and peace and security, we have raised our collective voice in defence of women's rights. For example, we have advocated for Colombian women to have equal access to land.

Thirdly, amplifying women's voices and ensuring their safe and meaningful participation in peace processes requires more than normative frameworks. It requires practical, political, financial and logistical support. During Sierra Leone's presidency of the Council in August, we spotlighted the issue of sustaining the women and peace and security commitments in the context of accelerated drawdowns of peace operations. That issue not only impacts the safe and meaningful participation of women in peace processes, but it also highlights the concern about the seeming lack of trust in the engagement between United Nations missions and host countries and the impact that that surely has on the rights of women and girls.

Women's networks face significant barriers, including tokenistic participation, restrictive societal norms and threats, both online and offline. We must

utilize new technology, such as digital platforms, to facilitate women's participation in peacebuilding, provide tools to protect them from online harassment and develop mechanisms to counter disinformation campaigns. In that vein, Sierra Leone passed a cybercrime law in 2021, which guarantees the protection of citizens, especially women, from online bullying and abuse, through the imposition of stiff fines and jail sentences on any individual sharing grossly offensive, indecent or obscene messages without consent. To address the issue of tokenism, Sierra Leone has taken significant steps at the national level, including the enactment of the 2022 Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act and the 2022 Public Elections Act, which ensure a minimum 30 per cent representation of women in political and public decision-making bodies. In that regard, Sierra Leone has quotas of 30 per cent women in Parliament and of more than 30 per cent women in Cabinet positions. Furthermore, one of the key institutions responsible for the consolidation of peace in Sierra Leone, the Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion, is led by a woman, and there is significant participation of women in its activities.

We call on Member States to support similar legislation to not only empower women but also to protect them, including by ensuring that women human rights defenders can operate without fear of threats or reprisals. Regional and international institutions must also directly fund women's groups and networks at the local and national levels, particularly those operating in conflict zones. Increased funding, capacity-building and technical assistance will help to amplify women's voices in peace processes and support their role in shaping peace agreements and conflict resolution strategies.

Let me conclude by underscoring that Sierra Leone remains steadfast in its commitment to gender equality, women's empowerment and the women and peace and security agenda. We recognize the need for greater collaboration among international organizations, national Governments, civil society and other stakeholders in achieving the full objectives of resolution 1325 (2000). By aligning our efforts, we can overcome the significant challenges that remain and advance the meaningful participation of women in peace processes at all levels.

Mr. De La Gasca (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to thank the briefers for the considerations

they raised during their statements. I listened carefully to all of them.

The record number of conflicts and crises around the world has increased the number of women and girls who are victims of multiple and intersectional forms of violence. They are restricted in their right to social, political and economic participation, and they are prisoners of institutionalized structures of gender-based discrimination. Ecuador expresses its concern about the absence of women's full, equal, meaningful and secure participation in peacemaking and peacekeeping processes, the alarming increase in the number of women and girls who have been killed or who have fallen victim to conflict-related sexual violence and the gap in funding to unlock and accelerate their access to rights.

Ending the violence and addressing the root causes of conflicts are the ultimate solutions and, while it is an elusive ideal, we believe that now is the right time to step up investment in social advancement programmes and women's economic and political empowerment. The role of multilateralism and the promotion of women's participation at all levels of that sphere is essential to mainstreaming the principles of the women and peace and security agenda, to identifying the needs of women and girls and to the search for gender-sensitive solutions, including preventing and combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Throughout the past two years in the Security Council, Ecuador has clearly conveyed the message that the time for women and young people is now.

Today, 24 October, United Nations Day, is a good time to reflect on the Organization's achievements regarding women but also on the challenges that remain. We think that the time has come for a woman to hold the position of Secretary-General. Women's perspectives make a difference, giving victims a voice and empowering them. That is decisive in eradicating impunity and ensuring that, in fragile environments, the rule of law persists. For that reason, the presence of women cannot be postponed in exercising preventive diplomacy; at the negotiating table for peace agreements; in strengthening State capacities, transitional justice, security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; and of course, in electoral processes and political life. In that regard, as co-penholder of the resolutions adopted by the Security Council on the situation in Haiti, Ecuador has promoted incorporating robust language to

promote women's political participation, establishing a framework for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and increasing the number of sexual and gender-based violence advisers at the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti.

Creating environments of security and trust, in which women and girls can access and exercise their rights without restriction, is a responsibility for all States, whether or not they are in a situation of conflict. The reconfiguration of old threats and the emergence of new ones force us to create frameworks for the promotion and protection of their rights. Resolution 1325 (2000) is a clear expression of the inextricable link between peace and development, which is why Ecuador has worked together with the United Nations to create the national plan of action on women and peace and security 2025–2029, so that the prevention, protection, attention and punishment of violence against women and girls also allow us to accelerate the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

I take this opportunity to welcome the written advice (see S/2024/757) of the Peacebuilding Commission for today's meeting. Many relevant points outlined in that written advice have been incorporated into this statement. In turn, those points are based on the Commission's Gender Strategy Action Plan. Former Secretary-General Kofi Annan said that, in war-torn societies, the work of women peacebuilders is our only hope for the future. For that reason, and just under a year before the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), we believe that we must redouble our efforts so that girls from all corners of the world can return without delay to the classroom and grow up in stable, safe and peaceful societies.

I want to conclude with the following words of Secretary-General António Guterres: "[w]omen and girls will not be silenced. Their demands for rights and freedoms resonate throughout the world". Ecuador will always listen to them.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liechtenstein.

Ms. Hasler (Liechtenstein): I congratulate Switzerland on its second Security Council presidency, and I am happy to see that this debate is being presided over by a woman Head of State.

In many parts of the world, the year 2023 was a devastating one for women and girls. The number of

women killed in armed conflicts doubled as compared to the previous year. Conflict-related sexual violence increased significantly; so, too, did the number of girls affected by grave violations. I am particularly concerned about the escalation in the Middle East. It has had devastating impacts on civilians, many of whom are women and children. The conflicts in Ukraine, the Sudan and Myanmar, among others, have put a particular burden on women as well. The overall trend of more Governments and non-State actors resorting to military action and the use of force must be changed urgently by choosing diplomacy, mediation and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

I appreciate that today's debate focuses on the participation pillar of the women and peace and security agenda. Women's diverse perspectives — for example, women peacebuilders' awareness of indicators pointing to increased tension within their communities — help to prevent the outbreak of violence or conflict. Evidence clearly shows that women's participation in conflict resolution, as negotiators or mediators, leads to better and more sustainable results. Yet, all too often, women are not fully and equally included in mediation and peacebuilding processes. At times they are even excluded altogether, owing to a lack of political will and sometimes ignorance. Fulfilling our shared commitments under the women and peace and security agenda and the Pact for the Future (General Assembly resolution 79/1) requires investing more in women's participation in mediation, including through local peacebuilders and the mainstreaming of gender expertise in all stages of peace processes. Women's voices everywhere are essential for a sustained, positive peace that goes well beyond silencing the guns.

Under Taliban rule for three years now, Afghanistan has witnessed one of the most severe situations of persecution of women and girls worldwide. Afghan women and girls are now even prohibited from speaking in public. We must therefore use our voices to speak up on their behalf. The United Nations — and the Council in particular — has a special responsibility. The full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of Afghan women in the process leading to a country at peace, as mandated by resolution 2721 (2023), must remain a priority. The persecution of women and girls in Afghanistan likely constitutes a crime against humanity. I recall the International Criminal Court's jurisdiction and its role to advance accountability for that crime among the many others committed. As long

as the Taliban continues to disregard the most basic norms of human rights, we cannot see eye to eye with it.

The situation in Myanmar, especially for its women, continues to be of grave concern. Women have played a key role in resisting the military coup, and they have challenged long-prevailing gender norms in a patriarchal society. I commend the important contributions and courage of all of the women working for a democratic transition to a peaceful Myanmar, and I welcome today's briefer Ms. Wai Wai Nu, Founder and Executive Director of Women's Peace Network, who represents those women. We welcomed resolution 2669 (2022), but we also deplore the lack of its implementation. It is time for the Council to follow up in the light of the dire situation on the ground, in particular in the humanitarian area. If Council action continues to be unavailable, the General Assembly must step in, as it did in 2021, with the adoption of resolution 75/287, on which Liechtenstein was proud to lead.

The use or threat of the veto is no longer the final word on matters of peace and security thanks to the veto initiative, which has resonated so strongly within the membership and will hopefully prompt the Council to live up to its responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Minister of Defence and Minister for Gender Equality and Diversity of Luxembourg.

Ms. Backes (Luxembourg): Next year will mark 25 years since the unanimous adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). With that landmark resolution, the international community emphasized the absolute necessity of ensuring women's full, equal and meaningful participation across the conflict prevention and peace spectrum. It remains a powerful affirmation of a simple truth: there cannot be peace without full respect for women's rights. But the gains we have made are at risk of being rolled back. After 24 years of the women and peace and security agenda, what remains the norm is not women's participation, but women's underrepresentation. The report of the Secretary-General (S/2024/671) documents that, and the Deputy Secretary-General gave us ample examples in her briefing this morning.

To change that unacceptable reality, Member States must start to view gender equality not as a nice-to-have, but as a strategic military capability — a critical shortfall that needs acute investment. We have the data to show

that investments in that area pay off. The likelihood of achieving a peace agreement increases dramatically when women are involved. Peace agreements are also 64 per cent less likely to fail when civil society representatives participate. Women's involvement improves negotiation outcomes and ensures that peace agreements reflect broader societal needs, resulting in more effective and sustainable conflict resolution. Women's leadership in peace processes is a catalyst for positive change, challenging the traditional narrative that frames women as solely victims of conflict. We need women to be leaders and mediators to help bridge divides and foster dialogue.

We know that sustainable peace is not created through the absence of war. Sustainable peace is created through a concerted effort from all segments of the population in favour of a just and inclusive society. That is why it is essential that we ensure the meaningful participation of civil society — including the LGBTIQ+ — without fear of reprisals in those discussions. That is a lesson that my own country has taken to heart, as we are currently finalizing our second national action plan on the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. Civil society was involved throughout that process.

The backlash against women's rights is sadly a worldwide phenomenon, but it is most pronounced in conflict settings. From the Sudan and Myanmar to Afghanistan and Gaza, women continue to suffer the brunt of the effects of war. International humanitarian law and international human rights law continue to be flouted. Conflict-related sexual violence is twice as high as it was last year.

In Ukraine, Russian armed forces have been systematically using sexual and gender-based violence as a weapon of war, in clear violation of Council resolutions. The large-scale, deliberate destruction of critical infrastructure has left health-care services out of reach for survivors, including in the context of sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as other critical forms of support. That creates a far-reaching protection gap that must urgently be addressed. I therefore call on all actors to respect international humanitarian law.

Next year will mark a critical juncture for the international community: 25 years since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), 30 years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and

five more years to go to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Those are all interconnected processes that we must collectively drive forward to fulfil the mandate of the Security Council in line with the Charter of the United Nations and to cooperate in promoting respect for human rights, including women's rights, as a way to maintain international peace and security. Luxembourg can be counted on to do its part.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of Albania.

Mr. Hasani (Albania): I would like to begin by expressing my gratitude to Switzerland and to you, Madam President, for prioritizing women and peace and security on the Council's agenda. I also extend our thanks to all the briefers for their significant contributions to this important debate.

Investing in women and peace and security initiatives remains a priority for Albanian foreign policy, as demonstrated by our service on the Security Council over the past two years. Our understanding is clear: collective investment in the women and peace and security agenda directly contributes to sustainable peace, international security and economic stability.

As we near the twenty-fifth anniversary of the landmark resolution 1325 (2000), the women and peace and security agenda has gained considerable prominence in global discussions. Notably, half of United Nations States Members are now actively implementing national action plans, which reflects a growing commitment to translating the women and peace and security agenda into tangible actions and outcomes. That progress is essential for ensuring that the voices and experiences of women are central to peace processes and decision-making at all levels.

But despite those significant advancements and frameworks, a considerable gap persists between commitments and actual implementation, particularly in terms of women's representation in peace and security decision-making. We are deeply concerned about the alarming backlash against women's rights, which poses significant risks to the progress we have made so far. Women peacebuilders, journalists and civil society leaders are facing severe threats, including violence and even enforced disappearance. Recent conflicts all around the globe are only contributing to those negative realities.

I would like to emphasize three key points that, in our view, would significantly advance the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

First, in order to advance effectively, it is essential to allocate adequate financial resources to support women peacebuilders, particularly those operating in conflict-affected areas. After more than two decades of implementing resolution 1325 (2000), we must intensify our efforts to enhance funding for women peacebuilders and human rights defenders on the front lines of peace and security. Beyond financial contributions, it is a crucial step towards fostering gender equality and empowering women in their roles, amplifying their voices and strengthening their initiatives through recognition and support. We should create a more inclusive and effective approach to conflict resolution and peacebuilding, thereby contributing to lasting stability.

Secondly, it is crucial to establish meaningful quotas for women's participation in peace processes. We fully support the recommendation of the Secretary-General for an initial minimum target of one third of participants, which is nowhere near enough — it should be more than 50 per cent. Nonetheless, we strongly believe that achieving gender parity and ensuring women's perspectives and experiences are integral to peace negotiations should remain high on our agendas. Women bring unique insights, addressing the specific needs of diverse communities and fostering more inclusive and durable solutions to conflict. Gender balance strengthens the peace process but also empowers women as leaders in their societies.

Thirdly, it is imperative to leverage new technologies to amplify women's voices in peace processes. Social media campaigns, online forums and virtual participation in negotiations can significantly enhance women's engagement and visibility. By creating platforms, we can foster greater inclusivity in peace processes. In addition, robust cybersecurity measures are essential to protect women from online harassment and disinformation campaigns. Safe digital environments allow women to participate freely and confidently and to contribute without fear of retribution. Harnessing technology today not only empowers women but also enriches the overall peacebuilding dialogue, making it more dynamic and representative of the diverse communities affected by conflict.

Albania has made significant strides in empowering women and promoting gender equality. My Government is committed to policies that enhance women's meaningful engagement in public life. Women's political empowerment is fundamental for achieving gender-equal decision-making across all sectors, including peace and security. In cooperation with UN-Women, Albania has integrated gender-responsive budgeting at all stages, both at the central and local levels. We understand that commitment to increasing budgetary allocations for gender equality programmes enables the full participation of women for sustainable development and enduring peace.

Albania is currently drafting its second national action plan on women and peace and security, further reinforcing its commitment to those principles and ensuring that women's voices are at the forefront of peacebuilding efforts in our region. At the United Nations and as a member of the Human Rights Council, Albania remains steadfast in our commitment to prioritizing the women and peace and security agenda. Moreover, we will continue to amplify the voices of women's civil society organizations and human rights defenders, while ensuring that their perspectives are reflected in the relevant outcomes and deliberations.

Lastly, it must be our unequivocal message that women bring invaluable perspectives and skills to the peacebuilding process. Achieving lasting and sustainable peace is impossible without the meaningful and safe participation of women. It is imperative that we collectively work towards that goal, recognizing the essential role women play in shaping a more peaceful and equitable world.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Ms. Omoyi (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Madam President, for giving me the opportunity to speak here today as the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In the lead-up to the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) next year, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has made great strides in advancing women's political participation. Women account for 32 per cent of the Government, which is also headed by a woman.

But women in my country also face challenges. Many women have been key players in promoting peace and resolving conflicts. They have played crucial roles in mediating, negotiating and rebuilding our communities. Despite the obstacles — given that women are still the main victims in armed conflicts — clear progress has been made. However, much remains to be done for women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, given that they are subject to unrelenting sexual violence, excluded from peace processes and face economic and social obstacles. We need to strengthen our commitment to ensuring women's full and equitable participation in peace and security processes. To that end, we believe that the following measures should be taken.

First, we should strengthen women's participation by ensuring that they are represented at all levels of peace and security processes, including peace negotiations and peacekeeping missions.

Secondly, we should offer specific training on women's rights and gender inclusion for military, political and other peace actors.

Thirdly, we should set up performance-evaluation indicators and monitoring mechanisms to assess the impact of peace and security initiatives and adjust strategies accordingly.

Fourthly, we should launch awareness campaigns to promote the importance of including women in peace and security processes.

Fifthly, we should promote the country's national positive masculinity strategy.

As part of its measures to implement resolution 1325 (2000), the Democratic Republic of the Congo is currently reviewing for approval its third national action plan on women and peace and security.

We also need to strengthen our legislation and policies by adopting and implementing legislation and policy that protects women's rights and guarantees their equitable participation in the peace and security process.

We call on the international community and all our partners to support those efforts and to work with us to create an environment in which women can contribute fully to building peace and security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and throughout the Great Lakes region.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of Palestine.

Ms. Al-Khalil (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Madam President, and your country's delegation for convening this important open debate.

As we meet today in the Security Council on the occasion of the anniversary of adopting the landmark resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, the women of Palestine and the Palestinian people as a whole are going through one of the harshest and most dangerous chapters of their history since the 1948 Nakba. They are subjected to genocide in the Gaza Strip and apartheid in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, by Israel for the sole purpose of forcibly displacing our people, expelling them from their land and their homeland and erasing their history, present and future. The genocide perpetrated by the Israeli occupation in the Gaza Strip is a war against humankind as a whole. Applying double standards, the absence of accountability and the failure of the international community to deter Israel from committing massacres in Palestine have emboldened it to carry out aggression against brotherly Lebanon.

Time in the occupied territory is marked in blood, and with the violations targeting women and girls in particular, wherever they are, time is of the essence. The Council must translate the commitments under the women and peace and security agenda into concrete actions that protect women and girls in the occupied Palestinian territory from all forms of abuse, torture, danger and Israeli practices, including sexual violence, the ongoing settler terrorism and the accelerated pace of apartheid practices that isolate the Palestinian territories from each other to prevent citizens from accessing their agricultural lands. To name just one example, there is the case of Hanan Abu Salameh, a female Palestinian citizen who was executed in cold blood in the town of Faqqua, in Jenin governorate, while she was picking olives last week. We also call upon the members of the Council to shoulder their responsibilities and to work for the release of all Palestinian women prisoners from Israeli occupation prisons and detention centres.

We have come here today to emphasize that the ugly colonial face of Israel cannot conceal the faces of more than 2.7 million Palestinian women and girls fighting for life, human dignity, justice, the right to return, freedom and independence. They are confident that their suffering, which has moved the world's conscience, will be a curse that haunts the war criminals. From this Chamber, we salute those women and girls for their

courage and strong will. We stress that we will spare no effort in upholding their voices until their suffering is over and the injustice against them ends.

We are also here to reiterate our gratitude to all countries and peoples that have expressed their support for the Palestinian people on their way to freedom and independence. We recall the sacrifices of the dozens of men and women human rights defenders in the occupied territory, including United States activist Aisha Nour, who was killed in cold blood in the town of Beita by deadly Israeli force.

Despite the obstacles imposed by Israel on Palestinian women and girls that impede progress towards achieving the women and peace and security agenda, we underscore that the State of Palestine is determined to respect the agenda and fulfil our obligations to it. However, we are still waiting for the Council to meet its obligations and achieve an immediate and lasting ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, ensure the entry and distribution of urgently needed humanitarian aid to Palestinian civilians in the Strip, most of whom are women and children, and support humanitarian organizations working on the ground, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

We also call upon the Council to take effective action to implement its resolutions on the question of Palestinian and to respect the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice regarding the illegality of the Israeli occupation and the need for ending it without delay as the only way to remove all obstacles that prevent Palestinian women and girls from enjoying their right to self-determination.

Despite the magnitude of the tragedy and the bitterness of loss experienced by our people, Palestinian women remain the guardians of their dream of freedom and independence. They remain partners in the national decision to build an independent Palestinian State along 4 June 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as its capital.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Georgia.

Ms. Totladze (Georgia): First, I would like to thank you, Madam President, for convening today's open debate. Let me also express my appreciation to the briefers for their insightful briefings.

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

As we approach the milestone twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of landmark resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, accelerating our efforts to ensure the effective implementation of the women and peace and security agenda remains vital. We share the concerns raised in the Secretary-General's report on women and peace and security (S/2024/671) regarding the lack of overall progress on women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace processes, political leadership and access to decision-making. In the face of a record level of armed conflicts and violence, the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda remains too slow. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable and disproportionately affected by wars, conflicts and crises. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has served to underscore the importance of a special focus on women and the women and peace and security agenda.

Georgia continues to attach significant importance to the advancement of the women and peace and security agenda and supports women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace processes. The adoption of the Pact for the Future (General Assembly resolution 79/1), along with its accompanying documents last month, signifies clear political will from world leaders to guide humankind towards fulfilling existing obligations, promoting global peace and security through adherence to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law and creating a better present and future for generations to come. We look forward to its swift implementation, including action 19 of the Pact, which is vital for advancing the women and peace and security agenda.

The protection of the rights of women and girls affected by the conflict, including women internally displaced persons (IDPs) and those living in the Russia-occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions of Georgia, remains an absolute priority for us. With that aim in mind, Georgia has regularly adopted national action plans for the implementation of resolutions on women and peace and security since 2012. Currently, we are in a process of drafting our fifth national action plan, covering the period from 2025 to 2027. As a result of the implementation of those national action plans, progress has been achieved in strengthening gender equality in the security sector, protecting the rights of women and girls affected by the conflict, incorporating their needs into the policy planning stages and highlighting their role in peace negotiation processes.

In that regard, Georgia remains committed to regularly addressing the issues of conflict-affected women, including IDPs, within the Geneva International Discussions. Regular dialogues are held by the Georgian Geneva International Discussions team with conflict-affected women and representatives of civil society organizations working on women's rights, in order to exchange information about the peace negotiations and to ensure that the needs and priorities of women IDPs and conflict-affected women are integrated in the planning for the peace process and raised in negotiation formats, particularly in the Geneva International Discussions and the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism.

Regrettably, despite those efforts of the Government of Georgia to empower conflict-affected women, Russia's ongoing illegal occupation and effective control over the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions of Georgia, as legally attested to by the landmark decision of the European Convention on Human Rights, hinders the peace process and prevents women and girls remaining on the other side of the occupation line from benefiting from the human rights protection framework of the Government of Georgia.

It is extremely concerning that the dire humanitarian and human rights situation on the ground is further exacerbated by a dangerous trend of the deliberate targeting of the female citizens of Georgia, including cases of detention of young Georgian women with fictional and absurd charges. Such violent actions include a strong gender dimension and are aimed at pressuring and humiliating the most vulnerable part of the ethnic Georgian population in the occupied regions.

In conclusion, let me once again reiterate Georgia's commitment to joint global efforts aimed at better implementing the women and peace and security agenda.

The President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the representative of Chile.

Ms. De la Fuente González (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you very much, Madam President, as Switzerland for the opportunity to participate in today's open debate.

We also took note of the briefings and the contributions made today by the briefers and the representatives of other Member States.

Peace is not sustainable if more than 50 per cent of the global population is not part of peacekeeping and

peacebuilding, particularly today, in a context where the rights of millions of women and girls are being violated in various corners of the world. Given that concern, in 2023, our country put forward its feminist foreign policy. One of its priorities is the women and peace and security agenda, which stems from the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) in 2000. Chile is committed to implementing resolution 1325 (2000). We have held fast to our conviction that the full and effective participation of all women is essential for peacebuilding.

For nearly 25 years, the agenda has encouraged us to consider its scope, its impact and a new outlook on an increasingly challenging future with new threats and new agendas for peace. One key tool for our consideration is the establishment of national action plans, which show us the progress we have made and the path we must follow. Our appeal to the international community is clear. We invite all States to develop or update their national action plans, recognizing that they are a key element in making peace more inclusive and equitable and in understanding that the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of women in peace processes must be ensured. They must be leaders at all levels of the decision-making process, making use of existing tools to ensure that this role is central and not marginal.

In that regard, the Government of Chile is proud to represent the first country in Latin America to launch a national action plan, in 2009, and is about to launch its third national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The update responds to the emerging needs of a changing and constantly evolving international system. Let me also add that that shared work involves specific Government agencies and strong citizen participation. The third plan addresses issues such as the impact of climate change, disaster management and the fight against transnational organized crime, as we know how those factors disproportionately affect women and girls. Our comprehensive approach seeks to address not only traditional security challenges, but also current risks that exacerbate women's vulnerability in conflict.

Similarly, let us not forget that the women who participate in peace processes do not constitute a homogeneous group. In Chile, we recognize the importance of using cross-cutting approaches for

the drafting and implementation of the action plan, such as those involving non-discrimination, equality, intersectionality, interculturality, human rights and territorial approaches, since it is only through them that we can ensure that no one is excluded from peace processes and the restoration of peace in post-conflict situations. Chile stands fully ready to share its experience in working with other countries to develop their national action plans, as we firmly believe that the exchange of good practices strengthens collective capacities.

The inclusion of women in peacebuilding, we believe, is critical. The Security Council, as well as United Nations States Members, must continue to promote the agenda, and we must make it relevant for 2024. In line with that premise, Chile has promoted concrete initiatives to empower women in peace processes, as part of the Regional Network of Mediators of the Southern Cone, which will hold a meeting of women mediators in the region in March 2025 to strengthen women's training and capacities in mediation, dialogue and negotiation in conflict resolution. Within the Network, and together with UN-Women, Chile has proposed to flesh out opportunities to offer up our good offices for States requesting them by drawing up a map of regional conflicts.

Chile reiterates its commitment to international peace and security and respect for international law, human rights and multilateralism, as indispensable values for building fairer and more equitable societies. Our commitment is not represented only by words, but meaningful action. We will continue to work together with the international community to ensure that women can take their rightful place in peace processes and post-conflict peacebuilding, as we are convinced that that is the only way to achieve sustainable peace for all. We firmly believe that incorporating the gender perspective in foreign policy is not only fair, but imperative to face the current challenges in terms of peace and security. There is no peace without women.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are still a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting. Given the lateness of the hour, I intend, with the concurrence of members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.05 p.m.