



Security Council

Seventy-eighth year

9276th meeting

Tuesday, 7 March 2023, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Ms. Dlhovo	(Mozambique)
<i>Members:</i>	Albania	Ms. Dautllari
	Brazil	Ms. Escorel de Moraes
	China	Ms. Lin Yi
	Ecuador	Mrs. Flores
	France	Ms. Schiappa
	Gabon	Ms. Ndembet Damas
	Ghana	Ms. Abudu
	Japan	Mr. Ishikane
	Malta	Ms. Buttigieg
	Russian Federation	Mr. Kuzmin
	Switzerland	Mr. Berset
	United Arab Emirates	Ms. Al Kaabi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Lord Ahmad
	United States of America	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield

Agenda

Women and peace and security

Towards the 25th anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000)

Letter dated 24 February 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Mozambique to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2023/146)

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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

Towards the 25th anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000)

Letter dated 24 February 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Mozambique to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2023/146)

The President: I would like to warmly welcome the President, Ministers and other high-level representatives. Their presence today underscores the importance of the subject matter under discussion.

In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Pakistan, Panama, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, Uruguay and Viet Nam to participate in this meeting.

I propose that the Council invite Her Excellency Ms. Amal Hamad, Minister of Women's Affairs of the Observer State of Palestine to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting, in accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and previous practice in this regard.

It is so decided.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Sima Sami Bahous, Executive Director of UN-Women; Ms. Mirjana Spoljaric Egger, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross; Ms. Bineta

Diop, Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission; and Ms. Leymah Gbowee, 2011 Nobel Peace Laureate.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Her Excellency Ms. Stella Ronner-Grubačić, European Union Ambassador for Gender and Diversity, to participate in this meeting.

I propose that the Council invite the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of the Holy See to the United Nations to participate in this meeting, in accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and previous practice in this regard.

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/2023/146, which contains the text of a letter dated 24 February 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Mozambique to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept note on the item under consideration.

I now give the floor to Ms. Bahous.

Ms. Bahous: In the 20 years since the Security Council adopted resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, we have witnessed some historic firsts for gender equality. While we should pause to appreciate those firsts, we should also remember that we have significantly changed neither the composition of the people who sit at peace negotiation tables nor the impunity enjoyed by those who commit atrocities against women and girls. In fact, that twentieth anniversary was not a celebration but a wake-up call. We warned that the effects of ignoring our own commitments to women and peace and security would be long-lasting and intergenerational for women, and immediate and drastic for world peace.

We were right to worry. At the Security Council meeting two and a half years ago marking the twentieth anniversary (see S/2020/1076), the Security Council heard from an Afghan woman representing civil society, Zarqa Yaftali. She was proud to be the tenth Afghan woman to be invited to speak to the Security Council. Like most of those who preceded her, she asked that women's rights not be bargained away to reach a deal with the Taliban. And she expressed regret

that women had been excluded from 80 per cent of peace negotiations from 2005 to 2020, including the talks between the United States and the Taliban. A few months later, Zarqa's worst fears materialized, and the Taliban took control of her country once again. I visited Afghanistan with the Deputy Secretary-General only a few weeks ago. Since then, the Taliban have announced more restrictions and detained more activists, including the women's rights defenders Narges Sadat and Ismail Mashal, a university professor who bravely showed his solidarity with Afghan women and their right to education. Since the Council will be holding yet another meeting on Afghanistan tomorrow, I want to ask Council members to speak and act forcefully against that gender apartheid and find ways to support Afghan women and girls in their darkest moment.

Afghanistan is one of the most extreme examples of regression in women's rights, but it is far from the only one. Just five days after the Security Council met to mark the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), fighting broke out in Ethiopia's northern region of Tigray. When a peace deal was signed two years later, some estimated the death toll to be in the hundreds of thousands. We may never know the number of women and girls who were raped, but the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia said that sexual violence had been committed on a staggering scale. Child marriage increased by 51 per cent in one year of conflict, and local health centres, aid organizations and human rights groups continue to report cases of sexual violence.

Since the twentieth anniversary, there have been several military coups in conflict-affected countries, from the Sahel and the Sudan to Myanmar, dramatically shrinking the civic space for women's organizations and activists if not closing it altogether. According to a recent study, for example, politically motivated online abuse about women from and in Myanmar increased at least fivefold in the aftermath of the military coup in February 2021. It mainly takes the form of sexualized threats and the release of home addresses, contact details and personal photos or videos of women who commented positively on groups opposing military rule in Myanmar.

Yesterday the Commission on the Status of Women began its annual session with a priority theme dedicated to innovation and technological change. As my examples so far have demonstrated, women's status is under siege. Aspects of technology, such as

social media, have roles in sharing vital information and rallying support and also in causing further harm through spreading disinformation and fostering violent misogyny. It is critical that Governments and private companies work together to foster technology as an enabler and accelerator of progress.

We also just passed the one-year mark since the start of the invasion of Ukraine and of the largest refugee crisis in Europe since the Second World War. Women and their children make up 90 per cent of the nearly 8 million Ukrainians who have been forced to move to other countries. Similarly, women and girls are 68 per cent of the millions displaced within Ukraine. Peace is the only answer, with women's engagement in the process.

Back in 2020, in a world wracked by a new pandemic that showed the enormous value of caregivers and the importance of investing in health, education, food security and social protection, we had hoped that countries would heed the lessons from decades of activism by women peacebuilders and rethink military spending. Instead, that spending has continued to grow, passing the \$2 trillion mark, even without the significant military expenditure of the past months. Neither the pandemic nor supply-chain issues prevented another year of rising global arms sales. As we meet today at the mid-point between the twentieth and twenty-fifth anniversaries, on the eve of International Women's Day, it is obvious that we need a radical change of direction. The concept note (S/2023/146, annex) for today's meeting asks members for their plans between now and 2025, and I will close with two suggestions about what that change of direction could look like.

First, we cannot expect 2025 to be any different if the bulk of our interventions continue to be training, sensitization, guidance, capacity-building, setting up networks and holding one event after another to talk about women's participation, rather than mandating it in every meeting and decision-making process in which we have authority. I ask that Member States' plans be remarkable for their special measures and accountability with regard to their application. I ask that they be characterized by mandates, conditions, quotas, funding earmarks, incentives and consequences for non-compliance. To transform the way that we do peace and security will take more than exhortations and consultations in the margins.

Secondly, we need to broaden our reach to get resources to those who most need them but do not have them. The best tool that we have in the United Nations to channel funds to women's organizations in conflict-affected countries is the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, which has already funded more than 900 organizations since it was created in 2015 — a third of them in the past year alone. I am especially proud that almost half of those organizations received funding from the United Nations for the first time, and 90 per cent of them operate at the subnational level. We urgently need better ways to support civil society and social movements in those countries. That means being much more intentional about funding or engaging with new groups, especially with young women. Let me assure members that UN-Women is ready to work with them in finding that change of direction and forging a new path forward.

I am grateful to the Government of Mozambique for convening us now to set new goals and make purposeful and effective plans before it is too late.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Spoljaric Egger.

Ms. Spoljaric Egger: I thank the Republic of Mozambique for convening today's important debate.

As we speak, more than 100 armed conflicts are raging around the world. At the same time, hard-won generational gains on gender equality are being reversed. That is no coincidence. As respect for gender equality declines, violence rises. When armed violence intersects with pre-existing patterns of discrimination, the impacts are disastrous for communities. Gender inequality harms us all and holds back women and girls the most. From front lines to camps and prisons, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) sees on a daily basis the brutal impacts of armed conflict on women and girls. They are exposed to sexual violence at the hands of arms-bearers at shocking levels. They die giving birth, unable to access the medical care that could have saved them. Women and girls are displaced, at risk of further abuses, while in search of water, firewood and food in their daily struggle for survival. Some are former soldiers, who are dehumanized and often denied the same treatment as their male counterparts. Some are detained in prisons designed for men and therefore unsuited to their needs. Others go missing and are at greater risk of either not being reported missing or of their missing status not being adequately recorded by

the authorities. And in the digital space, women's safety and dignity are threatened by gender disinformation and abuse.

Civilians, fighters, caregivers, prisoners, mothers, daughters — the realities of women in conflict are all too often invisible and disregarded. Every day, the International Committee of the Red Cross bears witness to the vital role that women play in protecting and leading their families and societies, such as in their mobilization and their search for their missing relatives. The ICRC is also acutely aware that the humanitarian responses that fail to take gender inequality into account are likely to reinforce gender-based discrimination and other harms.

The ICRC's principles are there to guide us — humanity, impartiality and neutrality. Taking those three principles together means that we take the side only of the victims of armed conflict and violence, whether they are men, women or children. Neutrality, in particular, is a practical tool that allows the ICRC to negotiate access to populations affected by conflict in the places that are the hardest to reach. As a neutral organization, we do not take a stand on political, military or ideological matters. But that has never prevented us from seeking to reach people and alleviate their suffering and the harms they face that are shaped by social or political power dynamics.

First, international humanitarian law lies at the heart of protecting all victims of conflict. That means that diverse women, men, boys and girls are protected equally. Respect for international humanitarian law will prevent the enormous harm resulting from the violations of its rules. It will also help to rebuild stability and reconcile societies. Importantly, international humanitarian law prohibits discrimination and requires the parties to armed conflict to assess and take steps to reduce expected civilian harm. The effective implementation of those obligations requires the political will of States to assess their own conduct and to seriously examine whether or not their fighting forces have the resources and expertise to take the protection of the entirety of the civilian population into account. It is urgent that States be committed to applying a gender perspective to the application and interpretation of international humanitarian law. Those commitments can be made in women and peace and security national action plans and related policies.

Secondly, States must ensure that the clear prohibition of sexual violence under international humanitarian law is integrated into national law, military doctrine and training. While acts of sexual violence are prohibited, both explicitly and implicitly, under international humanitarian law and in international and non-international armed conflicts alike, it is too often a known and normalized reality. Currently, national frameworks feature inadequate definitions of sexual violence and multiple barriers that prevent survivors from coming forward. Survivors of sexual violence often suffer from a double violation, in that they face community rejection or stigmatization if they attempt to access support or legal services. Changes to domestic law and policy are required. They should be robust, resourced and implemented. Engaging more boldly and directly with weapons-bearers on the issue of sexual violence, with the ultimate goal of preventing it from occurring in the first place, should become a *de facto* preventive approach that is supported and facilitated in times of peace in order to prevent the worst in times of war.

Thirdly, States can empower women before, during and after the onset of armed conflict to support a greater likelihood of achieving a sustainable peace. If women are absent in former labour markets, if they are not benefiting equally from digital transformation and technological advancement, if they have no access to health care and if they have to live with the physical and mental scars of sexual violence, how will they take their seat at the table?

In peacetime, women must be empowered not only politically and legally but also economically if they are to play a role in political settlements. At the end of the day, only those who control assets will have an influence when important decisions are taken. It is vital that women not just be at the table to make up the numbers, but also be empowered to represent their communities.

Closing the gender gap in innovation and technology is the focus of the Commission on the Status of Women at its sixty-seventh session, which opened yesterday. Nowhere is the digital gender divide more acute than in conflict settings. We must urgently ensure that the promises of technological advancement also support the efforts for its gender equality and women's empowerment in those contexts.

The protection of those faced with the greatest discrimination and dehumanization — very often, women and girls — lies at the heart of respect for the law as a pathway to peace. Peace draws closer when people of all genders are equally respected and protected, free from physical and mental harm, and when they have the opportunities to shape their future.

The President: I thank Ms. Spoljaric Egger for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Diop.

Ms. Diop: Let me recognize you, Madam President, and congratulate you and the delegation of Mozambique on your presidency of the Security Council for the month of March and on convening this open debate on women and peace and security, towards the 25th anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000). I wish you a happy women's month.

Allow me to thank Ms. Sima Bahous, Executive Director of UN-Women, and her team for the various forms of support that we have received in Africa on the implementation of women and peace and security policies and programmes. I recognize the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross and my sister Leymah Gbowee, the Nobel Peace Laureate.

Let me just say that the open debate that we are having today is very important to us in order to look back and reflect on what we have achieved and learned since 2020. It will help us to recalibrate the agenda as we move towards the silver jubilee in 2025. It is also an opportunity to assess how we are emerging from the past two dark years of the coronavirus disease, which reversed many of the gains made over the past two decades of hard work and sacrifice by women.

The current impact of armed conflict on women and girls is precarious. The kidnappings in the Sahel, the rape, killing and maiming of young girls and boys in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the destruction of homes, abductions and displacement in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique, and all the ongoing atrocities in the chronic conflict areas in the Lake Chad basin in East Africa, combined with climate change and a decline in financial flows, have exacerbated the suffering of women and girls, stripping them of their dignity through the unprecedented rates of sexual violence and the deprivation of necessary commodities and services. Many girls have seen their futures robbed, as they miss the opportunity to attend school and develop their

human capital. To resolve that, we must restructure and enhance our protection measures.

Unfortunately, while many women are engaged in community and peacebuilding initiatives, their voices are yet to be heard in the peace negotiations and mediation processes during which road maps to return to peace are drawn up. We are changing that situation within the African Union by calling for the deployment of FemWise-Africa in various tracks, not only in track three but also in track one and track two mediation processes.

Let me provide one example. An hour ago, I attended a retreat of Ethiopian women from all areas — not just one part, but different regions. We met at a retreat in Pretoria, facilitated by our sister Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, who is part of the Panel of the Wise. I listened to the women of Ethiopia and their requests regarding, of course, an issue that we have mentioned, namely, violence against women, and how to bring it into negotiation and peacebuilding, which was a priority. The request for 50-50 per cent participation of women in peacebuilding efforts was also highlighted. I think that those are some of the examples in which we see that, when women are not invited to the table, they can create their own table and make sure that they invite other women to come and join them, because they said that they had been waiting, and they could not wait anymore.

If I may be allowed, let me again just highlight the fact that, as I said, as we look forward to the twenty-fifth anniversary in two years' time, my Office, the African Union Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, in line with our mandate to raise the voices of women in peace and security processes, has led a two-pronged strategy to accelerate the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda on the continent.

The first strand of the strategy is strengthening the women and peace and security policy environment by advocating for the adoption and implementation of national action plans by all States, including the remaining States, because, to date, 61 per cent of our member States have adopted a national action plan. Such national action plans are very important. We hope to attain a 75 per cent rate of adoption of national action plans by 2025. It is a commitment that our member States made. We are doing that while strengthening accountability, which is another approach that we need to

put in place, using the Continental Results Framework, which is quite unique in the world, as well as annual reporting on women and peace and security. Eighty-three per cent of our member States reported using the Continental Results Framework. Recommendations as a result of such reporting were presented to the Peace and Security Council for follow-up action. That is what my Office continues to do in our continent.

The second strand is building an African women's movement — the African Women's Leaders Network — in order to complement FemWise-Africa in focusing on women and peace and security. The Network has been established in 32 nations. Through the Network, we are ensuring that women's leadership is mainstreamed in governance and in the peace and development process so as to create a critical mass of women leaders at all levels. We need to make sure that they are in all sectors of life, not just in peace processes. That way, we would no longer need to ask for an invitation to women to participate at the decision-making table, because they would already be there.

The data from the Continental Results Framework show that we are making some — although inadequate — progress in the implementation of existing protection mechanisms, as confirmed by all the previous speakers. Eighty-five per cent of our countries reported, in 2022, that they had established mechanisms to protect from, and respond to, sexual and gender-based violence, such as special courts, gender desks and call centres in security, medical and social institutions as a way of boosting their holistic survivor-centred support in big cities.

At the continental level and in addition to the existing framework, we at the African Union are in the process of developing a convention on violence against women and girls, which was strongly recommended by the two positive masculinity conferences held at the presidential level, in Kinshasa and Dakar, in 2021 and 2022, consecutively. We hope that all Member States will join that process in order to make sure that we address the scourge that UN-Women has called the "shadow pandemic".

However, we need to do more, especially by preventing violations and supporting victims to rebuild better through socioeconomic and psychological programmes. We urgently need measures to end impunity and hold perpetrators to account.

Allow me to conclude by commending the work of the Council in realizing the women and peace and security agenda, including by convening more regular and frequent women and peace and security open debates, inviting women civil society briefers and mainstreaming women and peace and security language in other Security Council resolutions. I believe we can scale up those efforts. We need to make sure there is accountability and that resources are available, so that it is not just words, open debates and resolutions, but also action.

In order to enhance the Council's work on the women and peace and security agenda, I recommend that the Council consider the following.

First, the Council should work more closely with other regional entities, such as the African Union Peace and Security Council, on matters of common concern. We know that the Continental Results Framework we have developed is unique. How do we make sure that the Council is inspired by that tool put in place to measure progress and ensure accountability?

Secondly, we must ensure that women's organizations have access to predictable and flexible funding. Flexible funding, in particular, is important to enable the organizations to effectively carry out peacebuilding efforts in the current difficult circumstances they are operating in, especially in conflict zones.

Finally, we must rethink the structure of our mediation table. We must devise ways to ensure wide inclusion, especially of women and youth, at decision-making tables.

I reiterate our commitment to working with all Member States in efforts to prevent and eliminate conflicts while protecting the dignity of women and girls. We look forward to increased support to the women and peace and security agenda.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Gbowee.

Ms. Gbowee: I would like to take this moment to express solidarity with the women across the world who are suffering injustices and abuse, specifically in places where their right to life, education and bodily autonomy is a daily struggle. I would also like to recognize the efforts of women at the community level who continue to keep hope alive through their advocacy.

Almost 23 years ago, in this very Chamber, a resolution was adopted (resolution 1325 (2000)). Everyone believed it was the key to unlocking the full potential of women in the global quest for peace and security. At the time, the conversation around wars and peace processes was primarily limited to men with political power and men with guns. The common slogan we at the grass-roots level heard was "Men make wars; they should make peace." It has been proven time and again that men do make war, but are unable to make peace themselves.

Sadly, the conversation is the same in 2023. The question we must then ask ourselves as stakeholders is: how do we discuss the issue of peace and security and leave out 50 per cent of the population? How do we change the dynamic of a particular situation without engaging and utilizing all of the resources at our disposal? Twenty-three years after the resolution on women and peace and security, what have I learned?

First, I learned that resolution 1325 (2000) is still seen by many actors as a tool for nations in a state of war, where investment in its implementation is either stalled or slowed.

Secondly, I learned that the national action plans on the resolution are now a tool for politicians and political actors to window dress women and peace and security issues, as a cover-up for their failure to incorporate women's rights issues into their national action plans or national agendas. That is done to impress donors and development partners.

Thirdly, I learned that local activists working on women and peace and security issues continue to do their work, proving time and again that despite the lack of funds, it is not a day job, but an insurance policy for their children and their communities.

There is a need for us to redefine peace as we look towards the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000). Peace, in my opinion, is not just the absence of war, but the presence of conditions that dignify all. The greatest threats to women and peace and security in nations across the world are no longer the barrel of a gun. Economic hardship, health and food insecurity and climate crisis are all part of it. When social budgets for our nations surpass our military budgets, we will begin to see more peaceful communities.

The women and peace and security agenda is not a dormant agenda. It is an actionable agenda. It is not an

agenda for meetings and conversation. If we collectively put some measures in place, we can definitely attain global peace. Here are a few ways we must amplify the women and peace and security agenda.

First, engage local women as peace activists at the very beginning of peace missions. Partner with them and seek their counsel, as they are the custodians of their communities, hence the keepers of vital information.

Secondly, as we have said over the years, we should bring women to the peace table both as negotiators and mediators. It is amazing to see how it is only the men with guns who are consistently invited to the table to find solutions, while women, who bear the greater brunt, are often invited merely as observers. The impact of conflict on the lives on women qualifies us for more than observer status at peace talks.

Thirdly, we must move beyond political rhetoric. It is not okay to have national action plans but not the budgets to match them. Without funding and political will, we cannot move the peace and security agenda forward. Without funding and political will, resolution 1325 (2000) will remain a toothless bulldog.

Every stakeholder globally should see women and peace and security as a holistic part of the global peace and security agenda in all its shapes and forms. Our search for peace in our world will continue to be in vain if we do not bring women to the table. I firmly believe that trying to work for global peace and security without women's participation is like trying to see the whole picture with one eye covered. As Michelle Bachelet has said,

“We simply can no longer afford to deny the full potential of one half of the population. The world needs to tap into the talent and wisdom of women. Whether the issue is food security, [climate change], economic recovery, health or peace and security, the participation of women is needed now more than ever”.

As we approach the twenty-fifth anniversary of the women and peace and security agenda, it is my hope that more will be done and that actionable agendas will be undertaken to move us towards a more peaceful and just world.

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

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

(spoke in Portuguese; English interpretation provided by the delegation)

On behalf of the Government of Mozambique, I am personally pleased to welcome all the briefers and members of the Security Council honouring us with their presence at this high-level open debate on the theme of “Women and peace and security: towards the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000)”, a topic that is undeniably timely and relevant throughout the world, particularly in Mozambique. Let me express our appreciation to His Excellency Secretary-General António Guterres for his visionary leadership of our important Organization, and above all for his commitment to keeping gender issues at the centre of the global agenda while emphasizing conflict prevention, management and resolution, as well as the maintenance of international peace and security. This debate, which is taking place during Women's History Month, provides us with an opportunity to assess the results of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

The women and peace and security agenda constitutes one of the greatest priorities and challenges for the international community, Africa, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Mozambique in particular. The Security Council's adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) in October 2000 represented a significant step forward by clearly highlighting the transformative role that women play in political and socioeconomic processes and in peacebuilding. The resolution calls on national and international actors to include women fully in post-conflict prevention, resolution and recovery and to ensure that all peacebuilding efforts are consistent with the principles of gender equality.

To this day, women constitute one of society's groups that are most affected by armed conflict throughout the world and in Africa in particular. We continue to see serious violations of women's rights, and the majority of refugees and internally displaced people whose situation is caused by armed conflict is made up of women, children, people with disabilities and the elderly. Unfortunately, that sad reality continues to prevail despite the fact that the Security Council has adopted many resolutions aimed at preventing such situations.

Women's participation in decision-making processes concerning issues of peace, security, conflict prevention and resolution, along with their effective participation in peacekeeping missions, is a major challenge. The Government of Mozambique promotes, supports and values women's advancement in all aspects of political, economic, social and cultural life through constitutional rule and its implementation. That is why we have established and implemented a number of instruments that prioritize our country's gender policy and the strategy for its implementation, including a national action plan for the advancement of women, a domestic violence law, a multisectoral mechanism for integrated care for women victims of violence and a law aimed at preventing and combating early marriage, because we believe that such instruments can be of great help to women in overcoming the challenges they face.

At the international level, among other things Mozambique is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. But while we have many instruments, the challenge is to implement them fully.

In order to operationalize resolution 1325 (2000), Mozambique implemented its national action plan on women, peace and security, and we have achieved notable results by emphasizing strengthening women's safety and providing comprehensive services to survivors of various types of violence; encouraging the socioeconomic promotion of women in the context of post-conflict recovery; strengthening the capacity of women and women's organizations in conflict prevention and resolution, particularly at the community level; guaranteeing equal rights to access to land, education and health, with a positive impact on illiteracy rates, which fell from 88 per cent in 1980 to 46 per cent in 2021, and on maternal and child mortality; and increasing women's political representation in governance bodies at the central, provincial, municipal and district levels, most notably illustrated by the fact that the percentage of women in the Assembly of the Republic increased from 25 per cent in 1997 to 43 per cent in its present session, which is presided over by a woman, as was the previous session. Mozambique enjoys gender parity in the Council of Ministers, where women lead important ministries, in addition to women

Deputy Ministers, Secretaries of State and provincial Governors. In judicial bodies, women's participation is substantial at all levels. It should also be noted that there are women Presidents of the Administrative Court and the Constitutional Council, and that the Attorney General of the Republic is a woman. The representation of women in judicial bodies allows for greater attention to the legal protection of women's rights in conflict situations.

Within the scope of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), the coordination, monitoring and accountability of global commitments in terms of women and peace and security has been strengthened. We reaffirm the commitment of the Government of the Republic of Mozambique to continue its internal efforts with a view to ensuring the increased involvement of women in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts, as well as in the maintenance of international peace and security.

As the United Nations, we must work harder to incorporate the gender perspective into peacekeeping operations; ensure that parties to armed conflict take special measures to protect women, girls and children from gender-based violence, in particular the different forms of sexual violence; guarantee the socioeconomic empowerment of women and girls in the post-conflict period as a fundamental tool for their reintegration; strengthen society's awareness of gender equality and women's rights in all spheres; and ensure that Security Council missions take into account gender mainstreaming and women's rights, including in consultation with local and international women's groups.

We hope that at the end of today's open debate, we will be able to positively assess the effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) by Member States and envisage their full compliance therewith. We also hope to forge synergies among Member States and other relevant actors with a view to strengthening strategies and ongoing actions in the field of gender equality and the effective involvement of women in peacebuilding and peacekeeping, as well as to ensuring that all peacebuilding efforts are consistent with the principle of gender equality.

There is no doubt that by involving more women in the peacebuilding and peacekeeping agenda in our countries, we will achieve success. Women — who give life — do not wish under any circumstances for the lives

of the people they bring into the world to be taken away. We must protect and leverage women's sensitivity and capacity to resolve conflicts and maintain peace on our planet.

(spoke in English)

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I call on the President of the Swiss Confederation.

President Berset *(spoke in French)*: First of all, I would like to thank Mozambique for convening today's open debate on this very important topic.

The statements already made indeed reminded us once again that sustainable peace must be built by and with women, or it will simply not exist. In that context, the term "women and peace and security agenda" is not just confined to the United Nations — it is a reality. And I can share with the Security Council that I had the opportunity to see that reality again last month during my visit to your country, Mozambique, Madam President, in Maputo, of course, but also in Cabo Delgado and Mueda, and in Pemba, where I met with President Nyusi. And the discussions I had in that context showed me that women are committed to peace, both in their communities and at the national level, and that in doing so they are contributing to building a just and equal political and economic future for their country.

Twenty-three years have now passed since the member States of the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. That resolution truly made history, marking the first time that the Council recognized the key role played by women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. It also marked a real paradigm shift, because security would no longer be understood exclusively in military terms but instead would focus primarily on the individual. We also recall that the adoption of that pioneering resolution was made possible thanks to the tireless work of civil society, including peace activists and the feminist movement.

The women and peace and security agenda is universal, and its implementation is a daily priority. The current crises and conflicts in Ukraine, Afghanistan, Syria and Yemen are grim reminders of that. The Security Council must continue to play its leading role in promoting the agenda. However, it is very important for each State to have a direct role to play in that context at the national level — that is probably one of the most

significant elements of resolution 1325 (2000). In that context, it is very encouraging to see that more than 100 countries have adopted national action plans for its implementation — you mentioned, Madam President, the plan adopted by Mozambique. Switzerland, of course, also adopted a national action plan — we were among the first countries to do so, in 2007.

In two years, we will celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). That will undoubtedly be a special moment for us to take stock. But at the same time, we already know today the challenges that need to be addressed urgently — above all, the fact that women are often the primary targets of violence, hate speech, threats and reprisals. Those types of violence — including of course sexual violence — are unfortunately well known. But they also take new forms, including the violence perpetrated in the digital space, especially hate speech.

Those types of violence are structural, which means that no society or country is immune to them. And within each country or all together, including within the Council, we can take concrete measures to address that scourge by undertaking national strategies and commitments in our countries. Switzerland, for example, has made combating gender-based violence a main focus of its Gender Equality Strategy 2030. To address the emerging challenges I have just mentioned, we also support research on the links between cybersecurity and women, in addition to actively promoting the integration of the agenda of resolution 1325 (2000) into our national cybersecurity strategies. That is why Switzerland created the Swiss Women in Peace Processes Network, a network that not only brings together the expertise and experiences of Swiss women in peace processes but also collaborates with other regional networks — African, Commonwealth, Mediterranean and Nordic networks — in order to share best practices.

Therefore, I would also like to recall that ensuring women's participation requires clear political support and adequate resources. That condition must be met in order to enable women to speak out and contribute to sustainable peace, and for them to do so safely, freely and without fear of reprisals.

The topic of resources brings me to one of my last points. As we are all aware, the mandates of the Council increasingly refer to the women and peace and security agenda, which is encouraging. But words must now

be matched with concrete actions in terms of budget, personnel and policy. In that regard, Switzerland is committed to ensuring that the Council implements the women and peace and security agenda in all the contexts and topics on its agenda. Our co-chairing with the United Arab Emirates of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security and our support for the Shared Commitments initiative are part and parcel of the goal of making that approach a natural reflex in the work of the Council.

The women and peace and security agenda is a pioneering agenda. It is an innovative agenda, and I have just reminded the Council why — because it exists simultaneously at the global and local levels. And its implementation must be further accelerated. It must be a pillar of the Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace and enable us to move forward together on the path to sustainable peace. Our response to the current and emerging challenges to peace must absolutely take the central element of gender dimensions into account. I hope that we can celebrate the next anniversary of the resolution in two years' time with a real sense of common achievement, and above all a sense that this sentiment is shared by all who are working for peace all over the world.

The President: I now call on the Minister of Justice in charge of Human Rights of Gabon.

Ms. Ndembet Damas (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I congratulate Mozambique for its initiative in holding today's high-level debate, which addresses one of the priorities on Gabon's international agenda. It is a great opportunity, two years before the 25th anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), to assess the progress that has been made and to draw up realistic perspectives in our collective march towards the recognition of the central role of women in peace processes, from conflict prevention to post-conflict recovery, through mediation, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts.

I would like to thank the Executive Director of UN-Women, Ms. Sima Bahous; the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Ms. Mirjana Spoljaric Egger; and the Special Envoy of the African Union Commission for Women, Peace and Security, Ms. Bineta Diop, who have brilliantly defined the contours of our debate. I also thank Ms. Leymah Gbowee, the Nobel Peace laureate, for her inspiring presentation.

The international context today is marked by multiple crises. Many parts of the world are now caught

in the grip of armed groups and terrorist gangs. Women and children are exposed to inhuman tragedies. The situation is unacceptable. The international community must provide concerted, supportive and inclusive responses. Women should no longer pay the heavy price of armed conflicts but should rather play an increasing role in the response to them by participating fully in all peace and decision-making processes. Their participation in all stages of conflict prevention and resolution is one of the surest ways to achieve a more sustainable peace.

While it is undeniable that the Council's advocacy for the recognition of women as key actors in peace processes has gradually achieved significant resonance, my country remains concerned about the worrisome regression in the promotion of women's rights in several regions of the world, which is undermining the positive results we have achieved in the past few decades. We cannot underscore enough that recognizing the centrality of women in peace processes is a catalyst for their empowerment and for the alleviation of tensions in our socioeconomic and political landscapes. It also helps to create an enabling environment for conflict prevention and the peaceful resolution of disputes that may arise.

That is why Gabon, under the impetus of President Ali Bongo Ondimba, has made reducing gender inequalities a key parameter of its policies, which are based on the promotion of women's participation in all decision-making processes. That strategic course is clearly reflected in the presence of women in leading positions such as Vice-President of the Republic, President of the Senate and President of the Constitutional Court, as well as at the helm of sovereign ministerial departments, including the Ministries of National Defence and of Justice. All of those positions of high responsibility in Gabon are held by women of stature. This is not a fad. We are more intent than ever on ensuring that women are permanently represented in the sphere of governance. To that end, we will be implementing a political mentoring programme for women aimed at encouraging them to become involved in political action in order to significantly increase their representation on all decision-making bodies.

Gabon has remained firm and consistent in its advocacy for women's inclusion, participation and resilience-building. During our recent presidency of the Security Council, in October 2022, we initiated an important public debate on the importance of

strengthening women's resilience and leadership as a way to achieve peace in regions plagued by armed groups (see S/PV.9158). Our continuing aim is to transcend words and give real visibility to the ability of women to stand up, reclaim their destiny and participate in the development of their own narrative.

We want to affirm once again that women have a fundamental role to play in the drive to silence the guns. They contribute significantly to the fight against the illicit transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their uncontrolled proliferation in many regions, particularly on the African continent. Women have a central role to play in responding to the humanitarian consequences of conflict and in combating sexual and gender-based violence and the recruitment of child soldiers. We must restore women's place at the local, national and global levels. Promoting gender equality and women's meaningful participation is a choice in favour of the prevention of armed conflict and violence. Promoting the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda includes strengthening our response against violence and war. We therefore call for the strengthening of national, regional and global efforts to achieve an inclusive and effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and other relevant resolutions, as well as for reinforcing the gender dimension at all stages of peace processes and in all prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts.

We should make no mistake. The viability of our societies and the resilience of our communities will be measured by the place we give to the other half of humankind. As for the Council, it must go far beyond principles and good intentions to truly translate the spirit of resolution 1325 (2000) into action as a guarantee of the effectiveness and sustainability of our collective actions in line with the legitimate expectations and aspirations of the peoples of the world.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Women and Human Rights of Ecuador.

Ms. Flores (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this open debate on the women and peace and security agenda. We have taken note of the valuable information presented by Ms. Sima Bahous, Executive Director of UN-Women; Ms. Mirjana Spoljaric Egger, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross; Ms. Bineta Diop, Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission;

and Ms. Leymah Gbowee, activist and representative of civil society.

I would like to begin by acknowledging the significance of resolution 1325 (2000) as one of the most representative decisions ever adopted by the Security Council. Its content articulates the most important elements of previous resolutions, particularly resolutions 1261 (1999), 1265 (1999) and 1296 (2000), and constitutes a turning point in its recognition from an intersectoral perspective that conflicts have a disproportionate impact on the lives and integrity of women and girls.

My country, Ecuador, is committed to the inclusion of women in strategic spaces for the maintenance of peace. At the local level we therefore underscore the importance of increasing the numbers of women in our armed forces and national police. Those women are trained to be agents of peace and to mainstream a spirit based on respect and the protection of human rights. We are working on the national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), with the support of UN-Women and the substantive contribution of civil society organizations. We believe that this will allow us to increase the participation of women in all areas and at all levels, and to empower their leadership.

We are a plurinational country and we recognize the richness of diversity. Accordingly, I can affirm with satisfaction that the active involvement and participation of indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian, Montubio and rural women as well as women from all sectors, in the round table discussions and decision-making processes, together with the will of the national Government, have resulted in the creation of the first Ministry for Women and Human Rights, from which we will ensure the implementation and mainstreaming of the principles of resolution 1325 (2000).

As an elected member of the Security Council, Ecuador has upheld the women and peace and security agenda as a priority in the Council's processes and products. It should be noted that Ecuador is a signatory of the Statement of Shared Commitments on Women, Peace and Security. We will continue to work to fight sexual and gender-based violence, which is a constant present in almost all conflicts: Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Yemen, Syria, Mali, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, among others.

We believe that political violence, hate speeches and sexual violence are tactics of war; they only serve to dehumanize the actors, exacerbate differences, deepen gaps and delay the possibilities of negotiation.

A few hours before commemorating International Women's Day, it is more pertinent than ever to refer to the transformative role of women in processes of political transition and peacebuilding. One success story is that of Colombia, which is known as a milestone in the integration of gender considerations in conflict resolution. Women survivors of violence in that country have contributed substantively to the processes of mediation, negotiation and the establishment of sustainable peace.

We salute and pay tribute to women mediators and peacebuilders, and we hope that these bold examples multiply for the good of societies in general. We also express our admiration for women humanitarian aid workers. Their leadership is fundamental for international aid to reach women who are heads of household, sick, disabled, refugees or displaced. We call for the cessation of all gender-based violence, which has been recurrent against female personnel.

Let us hope that in future open debates we can celebrate that the Taliban regime's discriminatory policies against Afghan women and girls have finally been reversed, that the victims of sexual violence in Haiti or in any other country in conflict will be consigned to an infamous past, and that, in general, women will feel safe in times of war or of peace.

I conclude my statement by emphasizing that Ecuador believes that achieving peace and preventing conflicts are fundamental objectives, and that, in order to achieve them, the Security Council must, in view of the imminent twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), continue to activate the relevant mechanisms.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection of Ghana.

Ms. Abudu (Ghana): Let me congratulate you, Madam President, and your country, Mozambique, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March. We also commend you, Madam, on the able manner with which you are presiding over this meeting and look forward to your continuing leadership.

As we recall the promise that resolution 1325 (2000) held when it was adopted in this very Chamber under

the Council presidency of Namibia (see S/PV.4213), we salute not only the efforts of the members that worked tirelessly to ensure the unanimous adoption of the first-ever resolution on women and peace and security, in October 2000, but also the support of women-led civil society organizations and women's advocacy groups whose efforts brought it to life.

We commend the Mozambican delegation for affording the Security Council the opportunity to take stock of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and to set goals towards its further implementation and advance the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace and security. In this regard, we also express appreciation to all the briefers for their rich perspectives, which rightly point us towards the actions required to fulfil the commitments we have all made.

Since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), there has been a significant increase in the frequency of gender-specific provisions in the mandates of United Nations peace operations among other decisions and elements of the Security Council. We have also witnessed a steady rise in the number of women, women's groups and gender experts who serve as official or unofficial negotiators, mediators and advocates, as well as the number of women who brief the Council.

However, in spite of the encouraging progress, in many conflict contexts all over the world, women are seen only as powerless victims to be exploited, rather than as agents of change whose capabilities could be useful. Indeed, while we are proud witnesses of the remarkable work done by women peacebuilders and women's advocacy groups all over the world, we are equally disheartened by the fact that in many societies today women have been robbed of their will to celebrate or even live.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban's continuing and progressive closure of the public space to women is unacceptable and represents an erosion of the gains made in the area of women's rights. In Colombia, Afro-Colombian women have historically faced multiple forms of discrimination, abuse and exclusion from political and economic decision-making processes due to the intersection of their race, gender and economic status. From Myanmar to Yemen, mothers, sisters, wives and daughters continue to be subjected to sexual violence, harassment and many other violations, often as weapons of war. Torture, arbitrary detentions and

harassment are also directed at the women who risk their lives defending women's rights.

It is in these contexts that we urge Governments, regional organizations and the international community at large to take concrete steps to protect the rights of women and ensure their participation in decision-making processes. In this regard, we welcome the immense courage and resilience shown by women civil society actors and peacebuilders in Africa over the years. Their ability to achieve considerable gains despite financial, cultural, technical and security challenges is a shining example of the well-known resourcefulness and bravery of the African woman.

In West Africa and the Sahel, women's groups have played a critical role in advocating peace and reconciliation. In Mali and Nigeria, networks of women's civil society organizations work tirelessly, inter alia, to promote dialogue and understanding between different ethnic and religious groups, rescue abducted women and girls in occupied territories and provide rescued survivors with assistance and support. Those organizations and many others like them on the continent are making a real difference in the lives of women in Africa, and I wish to reiterate the importance of joining international efforts with those that are already happening at the grass-roots level.

At the national level, we urge Governments not to lose momentum or diminish their ambitions. In Ghana, under the coordination of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, the Government will continue to effectively implement resolution 1325 (2000) through the second national action plan, which spans the period from 2020 to 2025. With the support of stakeholders, such as the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre and the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, my Ministry, under the national action plan, is overseeing the training of women in peace and security, including on issues such as conflict detection, prevention and mediation at the community level.

We appreciate the contributions of the Elsie Initiative Fund, which has made it possible for appropriate facilities to be available for our female troops deployed to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and also to maintain a commitment to enhancing the levels of Ghanaian women in United Nations peacekeeping operations. We will continue to

increase Ghana's protective abilities through national legislation and policies.

In conclusion, as we mark this day dedicated to women, let us remember that women's voices bring real gender perspectives to peace discourses, leading to the development of better policies and more sustainable peace deals. Therefore, the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peacebuilding deserves our zealous and concrete action. We look forward to the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) and hope that our redoubled efforts will bring us closer to our goals.

The President: I now call on the Permanent Representative of the United States and member of President Biden's Cabinet.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): I thank you, Madam President, for bringing us together for this important discussion today. I would like to welcome all our guests, including the President of the Swiss Confederation and all the Ministers who are in the Chamber with us today. Their presence reflects the high priority they give to this important issue. Today's meeting is an opportunity to discuss our collective efforts to fully implement the women and peace and security agenda as we approach 25 years since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), and as we kick off the sixty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women. I would also like to thank Nobel Peace Prize winner Leymah Gbowee for her briefing, as well as Executive Director of UN-Women Sima Bahous, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross Mirjana Spoljaric Egger and African Union Special Envoy Bineta Diop for joining us for this important debate and for their thoughtful and insightful interventions. All their messages were very powerful.

We welcome Mozambique's efforts to focus on the unique impact of conflict on women and girls, the need for gender mainstreaming and the importance of the meaningful participation of women at all levels in decision-making processes. When I travelled to Mozambique earlier this year, I met with women driving positive change through entrepreneurship — women such as Marta Uetela, who founded a company that produces high-performance prostheses from recycled ocean plastics. It is our collective responsibility to continue to uplift and empower women change-makers across Africa and the globe, because the simple fact is that when we do, we create a more peaceful, more

prosperous world for all. It has been proven time and time again that women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace processes as leaders, negotiators, peacekeepers and peacebuilders increases the chances of establishing a just and lasting peace.

Since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) at the start of the twenty-first century, the Security Council has adopted 10 stand-alone women and peace and security resolutions. But while those efforts are commendable, we need to focus on how to most effectively implement the women and peace and security agenda. As the Secretary-General made clear last year (see S/PV.9064), the Security Council's implementation of those goals remains an ongoing challenge, especially in the Council's regional mandates.

We see that most acutely in Afghanistan, where the Taliban has reneged on its promises to the international community and to Afghan women and has implemented draconian, oppressive measures against women and girls. Afghan women are now barred from working in non-governmental organizations, and they are unable to attend universities and secondary schools. That is a profound crisis. It will prevent Afghanistan from achieving stability, economic prosperity and future growth. It places women and girls at increased risk of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation, and it hinders life-saving humanitarian aid from reaching Afghans in desperate need. The Security Council must continue to insist that the Taliban reverse those horrific edicts and honour its commitment to the people of Afghanistan. We welcome Deputy Secretary-General Mohammed's recent visit to Afghanistan, but we remain concerned that the Taliban has not changed course. If anything, it has become more entrenched.

Of course, the challenges ahead of us are not confined to one country or one region. Over the past year, women and girls have faced violence, repression and exclusion in Iran, Ukraine and elsewhere around the world. Last November, while in Kyiv, I met with victims of Russia's war of aggression, women who had been raped and tortured by Russian forces. And I can tell you I will never forget the pain etched into their faces. There must be accountability for those atrocities. In January, I travelled to Somalia and saw the devastation wrought by the ongoing drought. In particular, those dire conditions have exacerbated gender-based violence, which has been compounded by the backsliding of women's political participation, peacebuilding and access to humanitarian assistance.

Let us be clear: lasting peace and an inclusive, prosperous society depend on women's leadership and political participation in Somalia.

But even as we confront those immense challenges, we must highlight the bright spots and celebrate our progress. In that vein, I want to applaud my colleagues from Ghana for adopting the most recent women and peace and security national action plan and for hosting the next United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference. We will continue to work with Ghana to encourage troop- and police-contributing countries to increase the number of women deployed to United Nations peacekeeping operations in military and police contingents and to ensure that women peacekeepers serve in positions of leadership.

On the subject of peace and security, I would like to note that with United States funding, the United States Institute of Peace supports women leaders in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda who work to counter violent extremism and advocate for women's leadership in local, regional and national strategies on countering violent extremism. We have also engaged in similar programmes in Mali and the Niger, and we will continue to connect with women leaders across the Sahel. Such engagement is imperative as groups, including the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, Al-Qaida, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab and the Taliban, directly target women and girls to achieve their ideological and tactical objectives. By supporting women and young people as prevention actors, we can more effectively and sustainably address the conditions conducive to terrorism. I also want to note that along with Romania, the United States is serving as co-Chair of the Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network for 2023. We look forward to working with our Namibian colleagues to standardize the approach to establishing and sustaining centres of excellence for women and peace and security.

The United States is proud to be the first country with a comprehensive law on women and peace and security and the first with a strategy that cuts across our entire Government. We urge all countries to take the necessary step of codifying resolution 1325 (2000) into their national laws. Women and girls around the world are counting on us. They are counting on us to build a more just, secure and equitable future. Let us do that work together.

Lord Ahmad (United Kingdom): I would like to begin by first thanking you, Madam President, and Mozambique for taking the lead in our vital discussions today and setting our sights on the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000). And in doing so, I join others in recognizing the insightful, valuable and expert contributions of Sima Bahous, Executive Director of UN-Women; Mirjana Spoljaric Egger, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross; my dear friend whom I see on the screen, Ms. Diop — it is always good to see and hear from her — and, of course, the inspirational Leymah Gbowee.

Peace and security mechanisms must be built on the needs of all people everywhere, and they must be shaped by the voices of all people. Indeed, those were the founding principles of the very Organization in which we sit today, the United Nations. The Security Council knows that time and time again, mediation, conflict prevention and conflict resolution have proved more successful when they are inclusive. They work better and last longer when women are central to peace and to building progressive societies. The evidence is staring us in the face. Yet it is an undeniable fact that tragically, as we sit here in 2023, we are seeing a stagnation of the women and peace and security agenda and a regression in women's rights around the world. As we were most notably reminded, that is happening not just through the barrel of a gun, but as Ms. Gbowee reminded us, through a shared denial of women's rights, whether economic, social or educational.

We are seeing concerted efforts to weaponize gender and attempts to weaken the international system and destabilize the principles and fundamentals of democracies around the world. For its part, the United Kingdom has resolved not just to protect but to strengthen gender equality, and that should remain an absolute commitment for us all. I therefore call on all my colleagues and the nations represented here to stand together against the rollback of fundamental human rights. When the rights of women and girls are pivotal and central to society, societies and countries progress and prosper. The United Kingdom is committed to and passionate about seeing and ensuring progress on women and peace and security in all its aspects. I was delighted that we launched our fifth national action plan only last month, setting out how we will ensure that we put women at the centre of conflict resolution and peacebuilding programmes over the next five years. It is a new and reinvigorated plan for a new global context.

Our colleagues have listed the tragedies of conflicts around the world — from the suppression of the rights of women in Iran to the tragedy of the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan, where we have seen the Taliban's suppression of the rights of women and girls, using the false, erroneous narrative of trying to justify their abhorrent actions through religion and culture. Let us be absolutely clear in saying that there is no religion or culture that calls for the suppression of women's rights. The Taliban should realize that point and face the reality that their country's progress will be guaranteed only when the rights of women and girls are secure in all their elements. We are also seeing the suppression of the rights of women through the tragedy of war and the weaponizing of rape in conflicts such as that in Ukraine. The war on Ukraine continues and the rights of women continue to be suppressed.

In other areas, such as Tigray and Yemen, where conflicts continue, we are also witnessing a regression in women's rights. It is therefore important that we recognize, as we are doing at the current session of the Commission on the Status of Women, that those threats are not just limited to national contexts. There are also transnational threats in areas such as climate and cyberspace. But the issue is not only about our commitment overseas. We are embedding the same principle in ensuring that women are central and pivotal to all solutions in every facet of society — in our democratic domestic systems, military cooperation and international diplomacy. Frankly, all countries that talk that narrative will have to walk the walk together if we want to make genuine progress by 2025.

One of the key objectives of our new plan is to prevent gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence, and, importantly, to support its incredible and courageous survivors in their recovery and in seeking justice to rebuild their lives. As the United Kingdom's Prime Minister's Special Representative for Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, I was honoured and humbled to host our recent conference in November 2022, which demonstrated a sustained international resolve to ending those heinous crimes. We saw 53 countries come together, and Pramila Patten, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, signed the political declaration. Forty countries made tangible national commitments on steps they intend to take. The truth is that it is a fundamental and tragic fact that in 2023, sexual violence in conflict is real.

It is happening. I was therefore delighted when my friend and colleague James Cleverly, Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom, announced a new three-year initiative on preventing sexual violence in conflict, backed by more than £12 million in new funding, to build accountability and justice around the world.

Looking ahead, it is important that we hold ourselves to account through the new international alliance, which I am delighted to announce, on preventing sexual violence in conflict, and which will bring together leading Member States. I am delighted that we are also joined in the Security Council by my friend the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, who again, as we were reminded by the Minister for Women and Human Rights of Ecuador, has made great strides on this important agenda. I therefore call on my colleagues and all nations represented here today to join us in strengthening that alliance to ensure that those incredible, courageous survivors of sexual violence are not just given a voice but are pivotal and central to building our international strategy to ensure that we prevent sexual violence in conflict.

We ensure that accountability is inherent and that we fully engage with survivors' voices. I ask Governments to embed survivors' voices in their own peacebuilding systems. We would be glad to share our experiences. For me personally, working with such incredible survivors has demonstrated that, through their direct input and action, there is a direct impact on our policies and programmes in a most positive way, enriched by their experience and their valuable advice and courage in speaking out.

Twenty-three years on from the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), we must not resolve just to stabilize and strengthen rights. We should work to ensure that we put women at the heart of every conflict resolution and of building stability and security around the world. Let us not look back in another 25 years to say that we squandered the opportunity. Indeed, I know that we will not do that. We owe it to those who suffered in the past, to the women and girls who suffer today and to all the incredible women and girls around the world who suffer at the hands of repressive, regressive regimes. We must not let this tremendous opportunity pass us by. We must act now. Simply put, it is our duty and our obligation.

Ms. Schiappa (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Madam President, for having

convened this open debate. I wish to commend your exemplary commitment to the women and peace and security agenda. I would also like to thank our briefers for their valuable insights into our debate.

On the eve of 8 March, and at a time when we are witnessing unprecedented setbacks in women's rights throughout the world, the Security Council's strong commitment to fully implementing the 10 resolutions making up the women and peace and security agenda in its four dimensions is crucial.

First, in the area of prevention, the segregation policy practised by the Taliban in Afghanistan, which massively and systematically violates the rights and freedoms of Afghan women, is intolerable and serves to plunge the country into crisis.

Secondly, in the area of protection, in all conflict and crisis situations, to take the current examples of Ukraine, Yemen and Somalia, women are particularly affected, even deliberately targeted, by sexual and gender-based violence. Those responsible must be held accountable for their actions. In that regard, France welcomes the role of the International Criminal Court in combating impunity. We call on all our partners to step up the pressure on the perpetrators of such crimes by placing the perpetrators of such violence under sanctions.

Thirdly, in the area of women's participation, only 28 per cent of peace agreements include provisions on the role of women. In the past 25 years, only 2 per cent of mediators and 8 per cent of negotiators were women. Yet the involvement of women in peace talks increases the probability of a sustainable peace agreement by 35 per cent, according to UN-Women. Our Council must work to implement the "never without them" principle in its work.

In the context of its feminist diplomacy, France is fully committed to implementing the women and peace and security agenda through its third national action plan. We will continue to support the establishment of robust mandates and provision of adequate resources to ensure the protection and participation of women in United Nations missions and operations. We will continue our efforts to promote the gender balance of staff and the full, equal, meaningful and effective representation and participation of women at all levels of responsibility in such operations. To that end, France funds projects to train French-speaking female officers and gender advisers in peacekeeping operations. We

will continue to act against all forms of violence, threats or reprisals against women peacebuilders.

Such ongoing support for the women and peace and security agenda is reflected by the convening in Paris in June 2021 of the Generation Equality Forum, co-chaired by Mexico and organized in cooperation with UN-Women. We call on all States to join the momentum generated by the Forum, which mobilized more than \$40 billion in pledges, and to endorse the Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, launched at that event.

We support civil society organizations in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, in particular through the Support Fund for Feminist Organizations, which France established, and which has mobilized more than €120 million since 2019 to fund the activities of women's movements worldwide. We will preserve the Fund so that women's rights are supported on the ground.

It is through concrete commitments that it will be possible to fully implement the women and peace and security agenda. In that regard, Member States can be assured of our unwavering support.

Ms. Buttigieg (Malta): I begin by thanking you, Madam President, for having convened this open debate to reflect on the challenges of and opportunities for accelerating the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. We also greatly appreciate the contributions of today's briefers, and we thank them for enriching the discussion with their insights.

Last year, the United Nations pronounced that the unconditional defence of women's rights and the protection of women human rights defenders should be among the most visible markers of the United Nations work on peace and security. That must remain our goal, and we must immediately accelerate action. Despite ample evidence that gender equality offers a pathway to sustainable peace, the Security Council's robust normative framework, comprising 10 resolutions on women and peace and security and 16 presidential statements, has yet to be effectively resourced and made operational.

Despite such commitments, we continue to witness harrowing violations against women all over the world, including in many countries on the Council's agenda, including Afghanistan, Ukraine, Myanmar, Yemen,

Syria, Haiti, the Central African Republic, Mali, the Sudan and Somalia.

Malta deplores the Taliban's relentless and systematic gender persecution of and discrimination against women and girls across political, economic and sociocultural spheres. We cannot risk normalizing those violations. The perpetrators must be held accountable. Our expectations are clear. The full spectrum of the rights of Afghan women and girls must be respected — women's right to live in dignity and their rights to political participation, work and education and to defend their rights without fear of reprisals. The world cannot watch as the progress made over the past 20 years, including on gender equality, is reversed. As an international community, we are obliged to respond to abuses of governance that institutionalize discrimination. We must refocus on the implementation challenges of the women and peace and security agenda in the following ways.

The protection of women human rights defenders is a collective moral responsibility. The United Nations system must ensure that the risks facing women are never used as an excuse to exclude them. The mandates that we authorize must monitor and respond to such risks and reprisals against all human rights defenders and peacebuilders.

The United Nations must lead by example. We must ensure women's full, equal and meaningful participation in all peace and security efforts, beginning with those authorized and led by the United Nations. Only then can we ensure that processes are inclusive and sustainable and meet the needs of the communities that they are meant to protect.

Funding must be directed so as to reverse the funding deficit with regard to gender equality in crisis situations. In all actions to prevent conflict and build peace, we must also address the distinct and disproportionate impact of the climate crisis on women and girls.

Our actions to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism must respond to the misogyny and patriarchal violence used by terrorist and violent extremist groups regarding their propaganda, recruitment tactics and victims.

To address impunity, we believe that the Security Council can make more proactive use of targeted sanctions against those who perpetrate and direct

sexual violence in conflict and, where appropriate, include sexual violence as a stand-alone designation criterion. We must also ensure survivor-centred approaches in preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence.

Finally, we welcome the women and peace and security national action plans adopted by 105 countries. Malta adopted its first national action plan in 2020 and is working on increasing outreach and awareness on this important agenda both locally and internationally. We actively encourage those who have not done so to develop strategies that strengthen their domestic and foreign policies in relation to the women and peace and security agenda.

Malta is a proud women and peace and security shared commitments' holder. Resolution 1325 (2000) was an evolutionary step forward in the Security Council's architecture and repertoire of practice. It is indeed one of the most-quoted and well-known resolutions. However, we must ensure that resolution 1325 (2000) does not remain a topic of discussion in academic or political circles. We must use it as a catalyst to bring about transformative change, sustainable and inclusive peace and gender equality for all.

The President: I now call on the Minister of Culture and Youth of the United Arab Emirates.

Ms. Al Kaabi (United Arab Emirates): We thank Mozambique for organizing this open debate on the eve of International Women's Day, and Foreign Minister Dlhovo for presiding over today's meeting. Throughout Mozambique's history, its women have proven time and again that we should not underestimate women's contributions to peace. As Dame Graça Machel said in 2015,

“[g]ender equality is the goal that will help abolish poverty, that will create more equal economies, fairer societies and happier men, women and children”.

That is a necessary reminder that women's full, equal and meaningful participation is part and parcel of nation-building and efforts for security and stability.

The United Arab Emirates would also like to thank UN-Women Executive Director Bahous, International Committee of the Red Cross President Spoljaric Egger, Special Envoy Diop and Nobel Peace Laureate Gbowee for their powerful briefings.

The message is clear — globally, with every step forward for women and girls, we take two steps back. There are continued misogynistic, violent attacks against women and girls who try to build and sustain peace across conflicts. Afghan women and girls continue to be systematically erased from their society. Women and girls are forced to take refuge away from their homes because of the devastating impacts of both the earthquakes in the Middle East and the war in Ukraine. In fact, just today, during First Lady Olena Zelenska's visit to the United Arab Emirates, she met with Ukrainian women and girls who escaped the war.

For this mid-term review, and as we advance towards the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), I would like to share the following three goals that the United Arab Emirates believes support the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

First, the women and peace and security agenda must be a key prism through which we look at emerging and new threats. Climate change, for instance, is the greatest threat that this world is facing, and it disproportionately impacts women and girls, affecting their education and employment opportunities, as well as their health and physical safety. We must support their participation and amplify their voices in efforts to mitigate, adapt to and address climate-induced issues. As the United Arab Emirates prepares to host twenty-eighth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, two thirds of the Emirati leadership team and more than half of the management team are women. Excuses for excluding women are no longer acceptable, and we must all hold ourselves to the same standards.

Secondly, to advance the women and peace and security agenda, the international community, and in particular the Security Council, must pay equal tribute to its four pillars. If the goal is to mainstream this agenda, it must be implemented in its entirety, consistently, into all policy and programming — with partners from all segments of society. That is why one year ago, the United Arab Emirates convened a ministerial open debate (see S/PV.8989) on the occasion of International Women's Day that focused on the relief and recovery pillar, in our view an underdeveloped one. Our approach to the women and peace and security framework must be balanced if we are to address crises and conflicts holistically. We must strengthen women's roles throughout the entire conflict continuum.

Thirdly, the protection of women and girls is one of the strongest tools to defend their participation and empowerment. Crimes of sexual and gender-based violence continue to be the cheapest weapon of war, terrorizing and controlling whole communities. As we heard today from President Spoljaric Egger, all parties to conflict should incorporate a gender perspective into the application and interpretation of international humanitarian law. We must also face the reality that — all too often — perpetrators of sexual violence enjoy impunity for their actions. To deter such heinous acts, States and conflict parties must also implement a robust and consistent accountability framework in order to address conflict-related sexual violence, including by building the capacity of relevant accountability institutions and promoting a survivor-centred approach.

Today's taking-stock exercise does not just mean listing missed opportunities. The women and peace and security agenda has also made great strides since 2020 that we can and must build on. Initiatives such as the Generation Equality Forum's Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action has brought together 196 signatories, all committed to advancing the role of women and girls. More Member States, including my own, are utilizing tools, such as national action plans, to implement resolution 1325 (2000). Also last month, an additional senior women protection adviser was deployed to another United Nations peace mission, now a total of eight. While still a low number, it reminds us of the objective we continue to work towards.

There is no doubt that those of us present today are united in our endeavour to succeed in this important work. But for that to happen, we must uphold our commitments to implementing the agenda in our individual countries' policies as well as in the international arena.

Ms. Escorel de Moraes (Brazil): Brazil congratulates Her Excellency Minister Verónica Nataniel Macamo Dlhovo and the presidency of Mozambique for providing us with this opportunity to reflect upon the women and peace and security agenda as we approach the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000). We also thank all the briefers for their eloquent and inspiring presentations. It is always good to see in practice the increase in the number of women briefers — one of the concrete results of a process

formally initiated with the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000).

The advances brought about by the women and peace and security agenda should not be underestimated. Today it is widely recognized that women have an indispensable role to play in matters of international peace and security. Such an assumption can be considered by some as commonplace. It is, however, part of a gradual mindset shift engendered by women and peace and security resolutions. Women — like children — were once generally seen solely as victims of conflict and in need of protection. They are now also seen as indispensable agents of peace, especially if the primary objective is sustainable peace. It is also clear now that gender equality is a driving force for peace within and among nations.

Women contribute to building societies that are less susceptible to violence, more resilient and inclusive. They help promote community reconciliation and lead successful pro-peace movements. But women and peace and security resolutions have come to formally identify a serious flaw — women have not been given the same space and opportunity as men to act in favour of peace. That is the message behind the calls that we often hear in this Chamber for the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace negotiations, peacekeeping and post-conflict situations. It will not suffice to have more women at peace negotiating tables or in peacekeeping operations, for instance, if we do not ensure that their voices are heard and their perspectives are taken into account. We must ensure that women's views count — and that we do not count only the women.

Since 2000, women and peace and security resolutions have also identified important protection gaps, as they recognize that women continue to face serious and multiple challenges in conflict situations. Sexual violence against women and girls, as well as against men and boys, for instance, was formally identified as a tactic of war in resolutions that call for the prevention, investigation and punishment of such acts and emphasize the need for support and services for survivors. That has led to the inclusion of more specific protective measures in the mandates designed by the Council. However, as pointed out in the most recent resolution on women and peace and security, resolution 2538 (2020), the United Nations must step up its efforts to also protect women peacekeepers from sexual harassment and other security threats.

The list of normative contributions brought about by the women and peace and security agenda is long, but the implementation gap is also wide. Brazil is proud to be part of the group of Council members that have made the women and peace and security agenda one of the priorities of their mandates in order to work for effective implementation. The group made up of the signatories of the statement of shared commitments has called for more women briefers, as well as more specific discussions of the Council on areas of concern. It has also used media stakeouts to draw attention to country-specific situations. We decided to sign the statement of shared commitments because we believe women's perspectives should inform the Council's decisions on all the items under its agenda. We stress that the idea has always been to integrate women's perspective into the daily practice of the Council and not to have those issues discussed in separate meetings attended only by women. That is why women and peace and security resolutions call for the increased participation of women briefers, panellists and delegates in all our meetings.

Brazil will continue to advocate for the implementation of the women and peace and security resolutions, not just in theory but also in practice. We need to guarantee the integration of gender-sensitive approaches in the design, planning, implementation and evaluation of all United Nations programmes and policies. That approach should be applied at all levels, from the Security Council to the country level. We also need to find ways to increase funding and resources for women-led organizations and grass-roots movements working on peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Women-led organizations often work in difficult conditions, with limited resources and funding, as Ms. Bahous has often reminded us in this Chamber. Yet they play a pivotal role in peacebuilding efforts. Therefore, we should provide them with the necessary means and tools to enhance the impact and sustainability of their actions. The Peacebuilding Commission has made efforts in that regard, which Brazil commends and supports. We thank UN-Women and the other organizations that have strived to collect and analyse sex-disaggregated data to ensure that we have a comprehensive understanding of how women are affected by conflict and peacebuilding efforts. Such data can inform evidence-based policymaking and programme design, helping to ensure that woman's experiences and perspectives are fully integrated into our endeavours to achieve sustainable peace.

Before concluding, I would like to refer to the fact that the Brazilian Government recently recreated the Ministry for Women and has been working to substantially increase the number of women in Government leadership positions. That is part of our general commitment to gender equality and women and girls' empowerment. As the annual open debate on women and peace and security will be held during Brazil's presidency of the Council in October, we intend to follow up on the discussions being held here today and focus on women as agents of peace — women mediators in parliaments and the judiciary and women diplomats, peacebuilders and peacekeepers. We need women in all those areas and in decision-making positions so that they can make a difference in how States handle defence and security matters. If we truly want to give peace a chance, women must be given a chance too. That, in our view, is the true spirit behind the women and peace and security resolutions.

Mr. Kuzmin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mozambique for convening today's meeting. We thank our briefers: Ms. Sima Sami Bahous, Executive Director of UN-Women; Ms. Mirjana Spoljaric Egger, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross; Ms. Bineta Diop, Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission; and Ms. Leymah Gbowee.

The discussion today confirms the continued importance of resolution 1325 (2000). The Council's regular debates on women's issues provide an opportunity for evaluating the progress made, providing guidance on further strengthening women's role in and contributions to conflict prevention and resolution and post-conflict recovery, and strengthening measures to protect women in armed conflict.

As set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council is imbued with the authority to specifically define its contribution to the international women's agenda. In order to make progress, we believe that it is important to avoid duplication in the work of the various organs of the Organization. The work of the Security Council should seamlessly dovetail with that of the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Peacebuilding Commission. The Security Council must remain focused on preventing and eliminating violence against civilians in armed conflict. Unfortunately, despite the many efforts made, women continue to fall victim to armed hostilities. Protracted and low-intensity

conflicts create an additional layer of problems. Issues involving women's advancement, overcoming poverty and access to education in countries in armed conflict must receive increased attention. The family is of particular value, and protecting it is a top priority.

We are focused on cooperating constructively with all interested States to harmoniously advance women's issues on the Council's agenda. In October 2025, we will mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). We should approach that anniversary in solidarity, while demonstrating the Council's weighty achievements and unity.

Ms. Dautllari (Albania): We appreciate your focus on this issue during your presidency, Madam President, and we also thank the briefers for their information today.

The adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, in October 2000 marked a historic moment. Over the years, the women and peace and security agenda has become a normative focal point for addressing the challenges, interests and aspirations of half of the world's population — women and girls. Since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the Council has adopted nine other resolutions on women and peace and security. And the issue has turned into one of the most dynamic and attention-grabbing topics, not only for the members of the Security Council but also for the wider United Nations membership. In that regard, the role of the Security Council in creating a comprehensive normative framework is undeniable, especially in integrating operational language and references to women and peace and security in its various resolutions.

However, reality still needs to catch up with our common aspirations and determination. The implementation of the women peace and security agenda remains problematic, revealing a gap between promise and practice. That is especially glaring when it comes to women's continued underrepresentation, and sometimes extreme marginalization, in formal decision-making on peace and security, including in peace negotiations and the general impunity still afforded to perpetrators of violence and abuses against women and girls, including conflict-related sexual violence.

The gap has been widened further in different parts of the world. In Ukraine, the lives of millions of Ukrainian women and young girls have been devastated. In Afghanistan, the Taliban is a disaster

for women, and they continue to fail the Afghan people in every respect. In Iran, Mahsa Amini launched an unstoppable struggle for basic dignity, and her tragic case demonstrates the brutality that women face in that country. The events in Syria, the Sudan, South Sudan, Myanmar, Haiti and Mali, to name only a few, have threatened not only the fragile gains of the women and peace and security agenda, but also the lives and work of women peacebuilders themselves. They have also tested the international community's ability to fulfil the Council's mandate of maintaining peace and security.

As we have heard from many, the increased global pushback on women's and girls' enjoyment of human rights is alarming. For that reason, we must redouble our efforts to make the women and peace and security normative framework a reality. We need to support and connect the work of the women at the grassroots level, including in conflict zones and in peace processes, to the women and peace and security agenda. In that regard, United Nations country teams and mediation teams, as well as Special Envoys, Special Representatives and other relevant stakeholders, should play a more proactive role. In that context, Albania strongly supports the Secretary-General's call to action urging peacekeeping partners to invest in grassroots women's networks and to support women's mobilization for peace. And we need men to stand up and support those calls as strongly as the women do.

The women and peace and security agenda is central to Albania, which sits atop of the most gender-balanced Governments, with 75 per cent of ministers being women. The agenda is also our core priority in the Security Council. During our presidency in June last year (see S/PV.9064), we invited 19 briefers from civil society, 15 of whom were women. Also, in our capacity as Coordinator of the Shared Commitments initiative, Albania will continue to work to ensure that the women and peace and security agenda is fully integrated into all aspects of the Council's work. Of course, the women and peace and security agenda is also central to our priorities for rejoining the Human Rights Council. If elected, we will advance the agenda and explore closer synergies between the two Councils.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that there are no shortcuts. No lasting peace can be achieved without the meaningful participation and engagement of women.

Mr. Ishikane (Japan): I would like to express my appreciation to you, Madam President, for convening

today's important open debate on women and peace and security. I thank all the briefers for their comprehensive briefings.

Over the past 25 years, the Security Council has discussed this important agenda extensively. Nevertheless, many women and girls are still suffering around the world. It is of course of the utmost importance that all parties to conflicts abide by resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions, including with full respect for international law applicable to the rights and protection of women and girls. Nonetheless, we must not forget that the women and peace and security agenda requires all Member States to act. In that context, I fully agree with the relevance of the scope that you set out for today, Madam President, asking us to elaborate on what each of us can do.

I believe that the national action plans on women and peace and security hold the key to securing appropriate engagement. Japan announced its first national action plan on women and peace and security in 2015 and revised it after its initial three-year implementation period. We are currently in the process of formulating our third action plan, and our experience has shown that three elements are particularly important, namely, comprehensiveness, inclusiveness and reviews.

First, national action plans have to be comprehensive. In our action plan, numerous concrete actions are specified, and relevant Government ministries and agencies are required to exercise their ownership and report on their progress. We have also included actions that pertain to natural disasters, since they also pose significant human security challenges and are relevant to the protection and empowerment of women and girls in fragile situations. The inclusion of international cooperation and sharing experience with countries in need is another important feature.

Our action plan covers a wide range of international cooperation to address human security crises. For example, Japan has been a major contributor to the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. We have supported its expert teams in building capacity in the judicial and security sectors. Our recent activities involve those in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, Somalia and Iraq. At the same time, our action plan also includes other human security concerns, such as water and sanitation, health and education. It also recognizes the necessity of

providing seamless assistance. Based on our plan, Japan funded 69 projects run by international organizations and 18 by non-governmental organizations during the second three-year period, an increase from 52 and 10, respectively, during the first period.

Secondly, inclusiveness needs to be ensured. Women and peace and security is not only about the public sector — civil society also matters. That is why we have included a periodic external review mechanism by academic and civil society experts in the action plan. Their findings are also accessible to the public. As a result of growing public awareness, a parliamentarians' network was launched last month. Such political commitment will be a huge boost.

Thirdly and finally, reviews are necessary for accountability and beyond. Publishing an action plan is not an end in itself; we need actions and, more specifically, refined and enhanced actions. A proper review process improves our efforts. I trust that our third action plan will exceed our second with that process.

The Security Council must live up to its words and not just welcome the efforts of the willing. I hope that everyone here will recommit to the women and peace and security agenda and develop national action plans, and that this debate will be of great help to that end.

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

I now call on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of Slovenia.

Mr. Mesec (Slovenia): Slovenia aligns itself with the statements to be delivered by the observer of the European Union and on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

The latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2022/740) reveals significant setbacks in the global situation of women in recent years. That trend is cause for concern and is further compounded by global security developments, including environmental degradation, which is one of the biggest threat multipliers for women and girls.

We thank Mozambique for organizing this debate and welcome the opportunity to engage in taking stock of the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. Allow me to underline the following.

First, national action plans are major contributions that every United Nations Member State can make to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). They represent a commitment to prioritize the promotion of women's participation and protection in all aspects of peace and security. In our experience, drafting an action plan can have a catalytic effect not only on women's participation, but also on the activities of all relevant stakeholders. Slovenia therefore started drafting its third plan this year.

Secondly, we must recognize the important role of women in preventing and resolving conflicts, as well as in building and sustaining peace. Slovenia's Peace Operations Training Centre conducts training sessions on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in international missions and operations, as well as on the interplay among water, climate change and peace and security. We also welcome the inclusion of women in the discussions and outcomes of the Security Council. A systematic and inclusive approach is therefore important, as is taking into account peacekeeping mission mandates and country-specific work.

Protecting women from reprisals for having shared information on specific topics and situations with the Security Council is an area in which more efforts are needed. Those brave women are true agents of change, and any attempt to silence their voices is reprehensible. The Security Council needs to do everything in its power to enable their safe work.

Thirdly, we need to address the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices more effectively, as that remains a pervasive and systemic problem in many conflicts. We should do more to ensure accountability and end impunity for the perpetrators of those crimes and to deliver justice to survivors. That is why we support the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies initiative.

On the eve of International Women's Day, allow me to stress that prioritizing women's empowerment in peace and security settings must remain an ongoing effort. We are proud that women in Slovenia now hold the highest political and security offices in the country. We believe that only by working together will we be able to ensure the full, effective and meaningful

participation by building more inclusive, resilient and peaceful societies for all.

The President: I now call on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of Czechia.

Mr. Jurečka (Czechia): Czechia aligns itself with the statements to be delivered by the representative of the European Union and on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

Let me thank Mozambique for calling today's meeting to remember the deep purpose of the first Security Council resolution on women and peace and security (resolution 1325 (2000)), which was adopted 23 years ago.

As the Russian aggression against Ukraine continues, Czechia continues to stress the urgent need to truly work together to advance the women and peace and security agenda in practice. It is essential to integrate it into all aspects of the work of the Security Council. It is widely accepted that peace and security efforts are more sustainable when women fully and equally participate, but there is still a huge gap between words and actions. The number of women involved in peace processes has not increased much. The world is facing many security challenges, for example, new crises, new conflicts, global health problems and climate change. Those are all obstacles to fulfilling the agenda. They amplify gender inequality and increase gender-based violence.

Russia's war is a serious violation of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law. It has cast a significant shadow over the progress made in implementing the women and peace and security agenda. Vulnerable civilians, including women and girls, are being killed every day. They are victims of horrible conflict-related sexual violence. Millions of people have fled Ukraine since the beginning of the Russian aggression one year ago. Czechia is one of the target countries. Almost half a million refugees from Ukraine have already been granted temporary protection in Czechia, 80 per cent of whom are women and children. We are working together with civil society and academia to reflect that new situation in the implementation of women and peace and security principles through our second national action plan.

Women must have their seat at the table during all stages of peace dialogues — it is that simple. That

includes representatives of civil society organizations and human right defenders. It includes all stages of peace dialogues, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, post-conflict reconstruction and accountability-seeking processes. Only working together will bring us closer to the peace and security we need.

The President: I now call on the Minister of Solidarity, Social Integration and Family of Morocco.

Ms. Hayar (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I am pleased to congratulate the Republic of Mozambique on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council this month. I welcome Ms. Verónica Nataniel Macamo Dlhovo, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mozambique, and thank her for choosing the subject of today's open debate on women and peace and security, more than two decades after the adoption of the historic resolution 1325 (2000). I would also like to thank Ms. Sima Bahous, Executive Director, UN-Women, Ms. Mirjana Spoljaric Egger, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Ms. Bineta Diop, Special Envoy on Women and Peace and Security of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission; and Ms. Leymah R. Gbowee, for their excellent briefings.

Resolution 1325 (2000) stresses the importance of the equal participation of women and their full participation in all efforts aimed at maintaining peace and security at all levels of decision-making, as well as their protection from physical and gender-based violence. A great deal has undoubtedly been done to implement resolution 1325 (2000) demonstrated by the participation of more women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations. There is also greater attention to the rights of women and gender equality in United Nations political efforts aimed at conflict resolution.

Nevertheless, a great of work remains to be done to address all the challenges that prevent the empowerment of women, particularly in conflict and crisis situations. There needs to be a greater effort by the international community to ensure that women's issues are placed at the core of all efforts pertaining to peacekeeping, peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

In August 2021, the Kingdom of Morocco adopted its first national plan for women and peace and security, which consists of a comprehensive political framework pursuant to resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent Council resolutions. Our initiative translates the vision

of His Majesty King Mohammed VI for promoting gender equality and protecting women's rights.

The women and peace and security national plan was subject to a broad consultation among all relevant departments and sectors as well as civil society, with valuable contribution and support from UN-Women. The Kingdom of Morocco has adopted a comprehensive integrated approach in the preparation of that national plan, with a view to addressing new security threats, including emergency situations, such as the coronavirus disease pandemic. The Moroccan national plan empowers women in all areas to face emerging threats in a regional and international context that is increasingly complex.

Our national plan was launched in March 2022 in New York, at an event chaired by my colleague His Excellency Mr. Nasser Bourita, the Moroccan Minister for Foreign Affairs and African Cooperation and Moroccans Residing Abroad. That event was also attended by his counterparts, the Foreign Ministers of Gabon, Ghana, Colombia and the State Minister of Norway, the Executive Director of UN-Women and the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Women and Peace and Security.

Under the guidance of His Majesty King Mohammed VI set forth in his address at the ceremony celebrating the twenty-third anniversary of his accession to the throne, the Kingdom of Morocco has been implementing the national plan by following a result-oriented approach with the support of its international partners. Based on best international practices and outcomes of the African Union's implementation of its women and peace and security agenda, our national work plan is a platform for action, with three main areas: first, preventive diplomacy, mediation and peacekeeping; secondly, strengthening a culture of peace and equality; and thirdly, women's economic participation. Our national work plan also serves as a springboard for addressing the regional and global challenges that threaten women's rights, security and participation in all areas of life in Africa. The implementation of our national work plan includes South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation with sisterly African countries.

The Kingdom of Morocco has sought to serve the principles of peace and security since the 1960s through its participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations. The Royal Armed Forces have been present in peacekeeping operations on four continents, but

mostly in Africa. Like the other royal institutions, the Royal Armed Forces implement the directives of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, who, as the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, attaches particular importance to the full and entire participation of Moroccan women. Since 1992, 2,100 Moroccan women have prevented violence against women and protected women's rights in conflicts and in post-conflict contexts by participating in peacekeeping operations. They have also contributed to strengthening the role of women in resolving conflict, establishing peace and protecting civilians, as provided for under the mandates of the peacekeeping operations in which those Moroccan women serve.

In addition to peacekeeping, Moroccan women have served in many other areas including health, telecommunications, logistics, administration, social aid and military operations. Moroccan women currently participate in four peacekeeping operations, namely, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO). There is in fact a women's unit of the rapid intervention brigade of the Royal Armed Forces within MONUSCO peacekeepers.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity, as we will soon be celebrating the International Women's Day, to stress that gender equality and the participation of women are basic human rights for women and that they must be upheld if we are to bring peace to societies and strengthen their ability to realize the Sustainable Development Goals.

The President: I now call on the Minister of Equality between Men and Women of Luxembourg.

Ms. Bofferding (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Mozambican presidency of the Security Council for organizing today's open debate.

Luxembourg fully aligns itself to the statements to be made on behalf of the European Union in its capacity as observer and of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

Since the Security Council adopted resolution 1325 (2000), progress has been made towards the goal of the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in

peace processes. The Council has played a crucial role in advancing the rights of women and girls, including by recognizing acts of sexual and gender-based violence as a tactic of war. However, as we approach the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the resolution, it is important to recognize that much remains to be done.

Despite that progress, women and girls continue to face multiple challenges with respect to their participation in decision-making processes and in conflict-prevention and conflict-resolution efforts. This is especially true for LGBTIQ+ persons as well as women with disabilities. People, especially women, including migrant women, must be politically and economically empowered and equally represented at all levels of decision-making. That is why we continue to fund initiatives to promote the empowerment and participation of women and girls, including through our official development assistance. As a signatory of the Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, and guided by its new humanitarian strategy, Luxembourg pays particular attention to gender issues and contributes to the efforts of our humanitarian partners to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence, including in forgotten and underfunded crises.

In line with its feminist foreign policy, Luxembourg continues to implement its national action plan on women and peace and security through which it is committed to promoting the situation and representation of women in civilian missions. We welcome the strengthening in 2022 of the language on women and peace and security in the resolutions on the United Nations missions in Afghanistan and Yemen, and we encourage members to continue to integrate these concerns into the Council's decisions.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that it is essential to ensure the safety of Council briefers, in particular women human rights defenders, by preventing and effectively responding to any attempts at reprisals. As the report of the Secretary-General for 2022 indicates (S/2022/740), the world is experiencing a reversal of generational gains in women's rights. That trend affects women and girls in the growing number of conflict situations in Ukraine and beyond. For that reason it is now more important than ever to translate our commitment into action.

The President: I now call on the Minister of Social Development of Jordan.

Ms. Mustafa (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to congratulate you, Madam President, on Mozambique's presidency of the Council this month, and to wish you every success. We also thank Ms. Sima Bahous, the Executive Director of UN-Women, and all the other briefers for their valuable statements.

For many decades now the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has been living up to its international commitments to ensuring respect for human rights on our lands. We have ratified a number of conventions pertaining to the promotion of human rights, including the rights of women, and on enhancing the effectiveness of women's roles in the society. Jordan has been expanding its efforts regarding the participation of women in decision-making, making meaningful amendments to laws on elections and political parties in order to increase women's leadership in society. We have also developed and adopted national legislation aimed at protecting the safety of women and girls, including laws on domestic violence and human trafficking. We have added an article to the Jordanian Constitution guaranteeing the State's protection of women from all forms of violence and discrimination.

Jordan was among the first Arab countries to adopt a national plan for implementing resolution 1325 (2000) and has been commended by the United Nations for linking that plan to two major issues, the first being the enhancement of women's role in fighting extremism and terrorism, and the second the protection of women refugees from violence. The plan also includes a number of measures for helping and protecting Syrian victims and refugees. The relevant national authorities have adopted a strategy of action for providing services to refugees, including in combating gender violence, building service providers' capacities and improving their infrastructure. We have also implemented several measures designed to incorporate the women and peace and security agenda into our national strategies, including our strategies on women and on social protection.

Jordan's national plan for its response to the Syrian crisis includes many aspects within two major sectors — first, the protection of refugees, and secondly, support and empowerment for the local communities hosting refugees, instituting effective measures to enhance the protection and social care of refugees, especially women. We have continued to host women refugees in all our shelters and social centres, regardless of their nationality, and our

Ministry of Social Development has received a United Nations award for public services related to protection from domestic violence. We are now about to launch our second national plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

Jordan has always been a pioneer in supporting United Nations peacekeeping operations and an example to follow in discipline and sound behaviour. We have been always ready to take part in United Nations missions in conflict areas worldwide. Under the guidance of His Majesty King Abdullah II, Jordan's contribution to and participation in United Nations missions will remain an example to follow, as they reflect the humanitarian role we have played in helping to achieve security and stability in regions all over the world. In that context, Jordan is undertaking a comprehensive review of its national legislation and policies with a view to increasing the number of women participating in United Nations peacekeeping forces.

In conclusion, I want to reaffirm that the best way to guarantee the implementation of all the commitments in resolution 1325 (2000) is by providing the necessary financial support and adopting a normative framework with an accountability mechanism for the objective and meaningful implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

Ms. Lin Yi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I congratulate you, Madam President, on steering today's meeting, and I thank Executive Director Bahous, President Spoljaric Egger and Special Envoy Diop for their briefings. I am pleased to be attending today's Security Council meeting in my capacity as the Vice-Chairperson of the National Working Committee on Children and Women under the State Council of China.

Twenty-three years ago, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1325 (2000), which redefined the relationship between women and peace and security. Since then, women have begun to be seen not merely as victims of war but as contributors to peace, and their active role and participation in the field of peace and security has continued to grow. More and more women are serving as special representatives and envoys and becoming mediators for hotspot issues. More and more are sitting at negotiating tables and signing peace agreements. More and more are wearing Blue Helmets and becoming defenders of peace and security. More and more are devoting themselves to humanitarian relief and becoming guardians of vulnerable groups

in conflict areas. She-power continues to grow, and the foundations for lasting peace continue to be consolidated. At the same time, in many countries and regions, women are still suffering in conflicts and from instability, hunger and poverty, gender discrimination and violence. We still have a long way to go in building a world where women are free from the scourge of war and fear and where societies are founded on gender equality and inclusive development.

The Beijing Declaration of the Fourth World Conference on Women pointed out that peace is attainable and is inextricably linked to the advancement of women. The Platform for Action adopted at the Conference lists women and armed conflict as one of its 12 priority areas, emphasizing that if women are to play an equal part in securing and maintaining peace, they must be empowered politically and economically. In 2025 we will mark the thirtieth anniversary of the World Conference on Women held in Beijing and the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We call on the international community to make greater efforts to fulfil its commitments on the women and peace and security agenda at an accelerated pace, achieve synergy between it and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and inject new momentum into the cause of global gender equality and women's development.

China is an advocate of gender equality and has taken concrete actions to empower women. In the grand process of promoting China's path to modernization, the status of Chinese women has undergone tremendous changes and their sense of achievement, happiness and security has continued to improve. We have made it a national priority to protect women's rights and interests and have established a legal system for that purpose that includes more than 100 laws and regulations. We support the active participation in politics of women from all walks of life and continue to expand the channels for women to participate in decision-making and administration. Women currently make up more than 40 per cent of the workforce in China, approximately 45.8 per cent of scientific and technological workers nationwide and 55 per cent of digital entrepreneurs. From rural revitalization to scientific and technological innovation, from social governance to international exchange, China's women have increasingly become leaders in all walks of life, writing exemplary and heroic chapters in our national history.

In the course of maintaining our common security, promoting our common development and building a common future, the positive contributions of China and China's women are manifest. Over the past 30 years, China has deployed more than 1,000 female uniformed personnel to United Nations peacekeeping operations, who have performed tasks such as mine clearance and the removal of explosive ordnance, security patrols and medical treatments, bringing hope to people in conflict areas. In recent years, we have helped developing countries implement 100 maternal and child health projects and worked with UNICEF to improve maternal and newborn health in various African countries. We have provided emergency food aid to women and children facing the threat of hunger in the Horn of Africa and helped to eliminate poverty for low-income women and their families by promoting Juncao technology. We have trained more than 130,000 women from developing countries and founded the UNESCO Prize for Girls' and Women's Education in order to enable more women to use knowledge and skills to change their lives.

Tomorrow is International Women's Day. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my best wishes to all female colleagues and all the women of the United Nations family. When more women are able to create value and gain the opportunity to realize their dreams, our world will be one step closer to peace, civilization and prosperity.

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

Ms. Katana (Kenya): Kenya congratulates Mozambique on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March.

The occasion of International Women's Day is an important reminder that gender equality and women's empowerment are essential to international peace and security. I thank all the briefers for their insights and recommendations. As we take stock of where we are with the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, we must look ahead to where we need to be in anticipation of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the landmark resolution 1325 (2000), which was spearheaded by Namibia in October 2000. It is a tragedy that, more than two decades on, women remain on the periphery of decision-making, including in peace and security processes. At the same time, women's rights continue to be violated in many parts of the world, while

the financing of women's organizations in conflict-affected countries remains minimal. And yet women continue to work for peace despite the threats of human trafficking and sexual and gender-based violence and in the face of the brutality of conflict itself.

Indeed, women's preventive role and their leadership in the whole peace continuum — as first responders, peacekeepers, peacebuilders, mediators, peace signatories, activists, advocates and human rights defenders — have been clearly demonstrated. Considering the impact that armed conflicts and non-inclusive structural and cultural norms have had, particularly in rolling back decades of progress, it is important to enhance women's livelihoods and operationalize their role in building, negotiating and keeping the peace. At all levels, we need to make women's work, experiences and accomplishments visible, amplify their voices and invest in their competencies.

At the international level, the Security Council can play an important role in implementing the existing women and peace and security normative framework by supporting and investing in regional and local efforts, all of which are reflected in the shared commitments initiative that Kenya was honoured to co-found, alongside Mexico and Ireland. The Council should also invest and utilize local women's agencies as interlocutors in security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration mechanisms.

At the regional level, my delegation commends our sister, Ms. Bineta Diop, and her Office for their strong advocacy for the domestic integration and comprehensive implementation of the women and peace and security pillars, encouraging intergenerational dialogues and promoting women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace processes in Africa. We encourage enhanced social integration of the pillars and objectives of our region's women and peace and security frameworks and policies, including the African Union Gender Policy, and their linkages to Agenda 2063 of the African Union and Silencing the Guns in Africa.

At the national level, Kenya places great importance on supporting women's leadership at all decision-making levels, as informed by our Constitution, laws and policies. We are currently implementing and conducting a mid-term review of our second women and peace and security national action plan. We place women's economic security at the heart of our

continued implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. On 2 March, the Government revamped and digitized our Women Enterprise Fund to enhance financial inclusion and accelerate women's economic empowerment. A contextual approach that utilizes local women's expertise also remains a priority, especially when it comes to collecting gender-disaggregated data to address challenges and enhance opportunities for our local women and girls. Kenya also sees the value of enhanced gender mainstreaming in early warning and response mechanisms, including through local peace committees and local mediation networks. In that regard, we have developed a gender-responsive, community-led, early warning and early response framework.

To conclude, I underscore the need to inspire young and future generations and all segments of society with regard to the centrality of the women and peace and security agenda for the peace, prosperity and stability of communities.

The President: I now call on the Minister of Social Affairs and Community Development and Minister of State for Women and Children Affairs of Kuwait.

Ms. Al-Baghli (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, Madam President, I would like to congratulate your friendly country on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council in March. I wish you and your delegation every success. I also thank you for convening today's important public debate on the theme "Women and peace and security: towards the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000)", as well as the briefers for the valuable information and views they shared.

Today's important meeting is being held on the eve of International Women's Day, which is an important opportunity to highlight women's achievements across the world and their vital role in all political, economic and social sectors. It is also an opportunity to remind all of us that greater efforts are still needed nationally, regionally and internationally in order to empower women, strengthen and protect their rights, ensure that their voices are heard and their participation guaranteed in decision-making processes, and reduce the gender gap.

Our world is faced today with challenges and crises, including armed conflicts, climate change, natural disasters, economic and financial crises, food insecurity and many more serious challenges. We must

recall that those challenges are interrelated, intertwined and complex, and have immediate effects on the lives of hundreds of millions of people, especially women and girls. That should compel us to give them more attention, time, effort and work, in order to reach that to which we all aspire — namely, achieving goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Resolution 1325 (2000), which established the women and peace and security agenda more than two decades ago, and the nine subsequent resolutions adopted by the Council to endorse that agenda, have been a cornerstone of international multilateral action and an important tool for enhancing the effectiveness of national, regional and international efforts in conflict prevention and resolution as well as societal progress in the social, economic, development and political fields. History demonstrates that women are always the first victims of wars and conflicts and in security, social, economic, political and even climatic crises. As a result, women have proven, time and again, that they are capable of being resilient in the face of difficulties. They have played important and essential roles in preventing and resolving conflicts, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, political processes, humanitarian responses, reconciliation and mediation efforts, and rebuilding and recovery after conflicts and wars. In that context, we emphasize that their participation in political processes and peacebuilding has a positive impact on the outcome of those processes, as reports and statistics indicate that women's participation increases the likelihood that peace agreements will be sustainable.

In that regard, I must point out that my country was keen on the participation of Yemeni women in the peace negotiations held in the State of Kuwait in 2016 under the auspices of the United Nations. I take this opportunity to reiterate the State of Kuwait's support for involving women in all political negotiation processes held in our region and around the world.

The State of Kuwait attaches great importance to the issue of advancing Kuwaiti women, empowering them and promoting and protecting their rights. In that regard, we reaffirm that Kuwaiti women have been increasing their gains in recent years, especially since they obtained political rights and ran for office in 2005. Today I consider myself a vivid example of those successive gains that Kuwaiti women have

obtained, as I participate in this Council session not only as the Minister for Social Affairs and Community Development, but also in my capacity as Minister of State for Women and Childhood Affairs, a new ministerial post in the State of Kuwait, which reflects the keenness of the political leadership in my country to empower Kuwaiti women, promote their rights and support their vitally important role in the advancement and development of the country, pursuant to the constitutional provisions of the State of Kuwait and the implementation of the New Kuwait Vision 2035.

In conclusion, I extend my respect and gratitude to the women in my country, the women of Kuwait, for their great sacrifices over time. Our history demonstrates that Kuwaiti women faced the occupation with courage, as martyrs of Kuwait, until rights were regained and my country was liberated by Council resolutions. Kuwaiti women also played a pivotal role in building and developing our society, contributing to all fields and sectors, and were an essential element in Kuwait's efforts to confront the coronavirus disease pandemic.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth of Ireland.

Mr. O'Gorman (Ireland): I would like to thank Mozambique for organizing today's important open debate as we approach the twenty-fifth anniversary of the landmark resolution 1325 (2000). I also thank Executive Director Bahous, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross Egger and Special Envoy Diop for their briefings, as well as Ms. Gbowee, whose work has inspired a generation of women.

This year, we will mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the pivotal Good Friday Agreement, which ended 30 years of conflict in Northern Ireland. As we reflect on the achievements of the women and peace and security agenda, I am reminded of the women of Northern Ireland, who fought to be included in the peace process. Along with women across the world in the most challenging of environments, their persistence and courage paved the way for the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000).

Yet, sadly, real participation remains the exception, and women continue to be excluded from decision-making. Their perspectives and experiences are too often ignored. There have, of course, been bright spots. In Liberia and Colombia, women have

been instrumental in driving change and shaping a more peaceful future.

Yet there is an alarming and accelerating pushback on gender equality and women's rights more broadly. In many cases, we are actually going in the opposite direction. Nowhere is that more evident than in Afghanistan, where girls and women are being systematically erased from public life by the Taliban. Yet Afghan women and girls continue to bravely speak out, demand their rights and insist on their participation despite great personal risk.

Meanwhile, Russia's illegal, full-scale invasion of Ukraine has forced millions of women and girls to flee their homes, increasing their risk of trafficking and sexual exploitation. For Ukraine to emerge from the war and continue along its European Union path, it is essential that women be represented in all decision-making platforms on de-escalation, conflict prevention and mitigation.

In Haiti, Libya, Myanmar, Syria, Yemen, Iran, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic — across the Council's agenda — women are seeing either their rights denied or their interests sidelined in key political processes, including United Nations-led processes. We can, and we must, do better.

That is why the upcoming twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) must be an urgent call to action. As Member States, we need to look at the challenges that women face in a holistic way. But we cannot afford to wait another two years

to make resolution 1325 (2000) and all the subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security a reality for women and girls the world over.

During its recent term on the Security Council, Ireland sought to amplify the voices of women directly affected by war and conflict. Together with Kenya and Mexico, Ireland initiated a set of commitments on women and peace and security during our respective presidencies, which included striving to ensure women's participation and civil society representation at Council discussions. Fifteen Council members in total have participated in that initiative. We hope that more will do so.

At the country level, Ireland is committed to advancing the women and peace and security agenda through national action plans and an all-of government approach. Yet we know that there remains much more to do to close the gap between rhetoric and reality.

In conclusion, I want to stress that having women in this Chamber and at this table matters. They should never face intimidation, threats or harm as a result. Not only must their voices be heard, but also their perspectives taken into account and their safe participation ensured if we are ever to fully fulfil the promise of resolution 1325 (2000).

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

The meeting was suspended at 1.20 p.m.