

**Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*):**

I would like to congratulate Minister Wallström and Sweden on assuming the presidency of the Security Council. I also congratulate the other new members of the Council, namely, Kazakhstan, Italy, Ethiopia and Bolivia.

The convening of this open debate is very timely, as conflicts around the globe are increasingly complex and the United Nations faces new challenges that test its capacity to respond effectively and appropriately. Nevertheless, that is the current situation in 2017, as the Secretary-General rightly pointed out in his statement. Prevention is not simply a priority, but the priority. We have the benefit of the studies that have already been mentioned here on the peacebuilding architecture, on maintaining peace and, of course, on the issue of women and peace and security, all of which reaffirm the importance of focusing our efforts on prevention and the sustainability of peace.

In 2015, we adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with the commitment to leaving no one behind, with a particular emphasis of combating the causes of many conflicts. We also have the resolve and the political will of the new Secretary-General, Mr. Guterres, as clearly evidenced by his plan of action and in what was reiterated this morning. Preventing conflict means strengthening institutions and building resilient societies, prioritizing national and international policies and protecting and empowering women and girls — one of the most important steps in sustainable development.

As is well known, my country is in the process of concluding what could be a peace agreement after more than 50 years. I want to share three relevant points that may be significant lessons learned.

The agreement is anchored in Chapter VI of the San Francisco Charter, as has been mentioned, and is the result of direct negotiations between the parties to the conflict, with the backing of the international community, the Security Council and, of course, the special political mission, as well as the resolute support of our regional body, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. The agreement addresses the causes of the conflict, and its implementation will enable us to generate economic development and well-being in the rural areas of Colombia that perhaps have not experienced development and Government involvement for many years because of the conflict. And, of course, as has been carefully considered in the Security Council, the case of Colombia shows that the help of international donors for the implementation of the agreements in their development components goes far beyond the resources of the special political mission that is now in the country, verifying and monitoring the ceasefire and disarmament.

Finally, the presence of women at the negotiation table and their contribution to the peace agreement and its future implementation as part of the women and peace and security agenda in Colombia is a truly unique experience in a peace process that specifically includes a gender perspective. As Minister Wallström said this morning, investing in prevention is not only morally correct, it is also smart, economically safe and sustainable.