

Mr. Echeverri Lara (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Government of Colombia, I would like to thank the Spanish Government for its leadership in convening this debate on the fifteenth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, as well as welcome the presence of Spanish Prime Minister Rajoy Brey here today. I wish also to thank all delegations that spoke before me for their expressions of support for the peace process in Colombia, on which we hope an agreement will soon be signed.

I wish also to thank the Executive Director of UN-Women and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict for their work and their commitment to this issue, which is of particular importance. I wish also to express our gratitude to the representatives of women's organizations who are with us today for their briefings and their contributions.

Resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, was a milestone in the recognition of the role of women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding processes and reaffirmed the importance of their participation therein. The six subsequent resolutions adopted by the Council on this issue have only enriched this agenda.

However, as pointed out in the concept note (S/2015/749, annex) and as can be seen from the global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), even though we have made major strides in terms of this agenda, further implementation is still required in order to expand the role of women in conflict prevention and resolution and in peacebuilding, and to ensure their equitable participation in peacekeeping efforts as well as in the promotion of peace and security.

The global study is in agreement with the report of the Secretary-General on the future of peace operations and the report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture. These three reports call for strengthening the role of women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, not only as a party affected by war, but also as a fundamental actor in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts and in achieving lasting peace. The participation of women at the various post-conflict stages also takes on particular importance in this context.

Today I wish to reiterate our country's commitment to the issue of women and peace and security. I wish to highlight several aspects that we believe may be useful.

Colombia is close to achieving peace, as affirmed by President Juan Manuel Santos Calderón in the General Assembly Hall a few weeks ago (see A/70/PV.4). We hope that the lessons that we have learned during our many years of internal conflict and the progress that we are achieving on the path to peace can serve as examples in the context of addressing armed conflicts in other parts of the world.

In the dialogue process that is moving forward today with the guerrillas of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, the Government has succeeded in ensuring that women are effectively represented and have a voice at the negotiating table. Currently, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Human Rights Director of the Ministry of Interior, both women, are part of the Group of Plenipotentiary Negotiators, an advisory body in which women members make up the a significant majority.

In addition, forums have been held in different regions of the country, and several delegations of victims have been given an opportunity to travel to address members of the negotiating team. Women made up over 60 per cent of those delegations. A subcommittee on gender was set up precisely for the purpose of ensuring that the rights of women were reflected in the final agreements.

Including in the past century, Colombia has participated in various missions with military or police personnel, in particular by sending observers and experts. For many years, we have received support from the international community. Now we are ready to reaffirm our willingness to cooperate on security. In that regard, we will continue to advise on capacity-building for female police personnel, as we have been doing in several countries, including Haiti. I would also like to inform the Council that, in January, as an expression of our willingness to support the strengthening of international peace and security, Colombia signed a framework agreement with the United Nations on contributing to standby peacekeeping arrangements.

A joint effort by States is the best way of achieving the principles of resolution 1325 (2000). Such is the spirit of today's debate. The Council can count on Colombia in this endeavour to address and overcome the persistent challenges around the world that are hampering progress on the agenda set forth in resolution 1325 (2000).

Since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, States have made significant progress towards greater gender equality and the empowerment of women, who now have real opportunities for leadership at all levels. In that regard, my country is promoting the initiative in support of women candidates for the post of Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Organization, faithful to its duty to uphold human rights in an even-handed manner, now has a great opportunity to lead by example by electing a woman to head decision-making at the United Nations.