

Mr. Tangara (Gambia): I will read out this statement on behalf of the President of the Republic of the Gambia.

“Allow me first of all to seize this opportunity to commend and congratulate the Prime Minister of Spain for having convened such an important debate on women and peace and security. It is with great pleasure that I join other participants here in this very important forum at this high-level debate on women, peace and security, which also seeks to review the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), following the Security Council’s due recognition of not only the particular effects of conflict on women but the need to also include them as active stakeholders in conflict prevention and resolution.

“Fifteen years ago, the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the legal and political framework within which national Governments, regional organizations, the United Nations system and non-State actors are obliged to address the situation of women in crisis and war. It is worth noting that the resolution was adopted on 31 October 2000 following decades of lobbying by women’s rights activists, and that it was the first resolution that specifically addressed the impact of war on women and girls, thus underscoring the premise that women’s inclusion, their presence and participation in the process, their perspectives and their contribution to substantive talks will certainly improve their chances of achieving a viable and sustainable peace.

“Bearing in mind the fact that resolution 1325 (2000) emerged a decade after the end of the Cold War, when new kinds of violence and warfare were already evident, in particular it was also a recognition of the complexity of post-conflict peacebuilding in countries such as Bosnia, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, when social fabric and trust within communities had been destroyed. However, although resolution 1325 (2000) and the six subsequent resolutions that followed have given much-needed international attention to the impact of conflict on women and girls, women still face a fight for recognition in both war and peace. A study conducted to mark the tenth anniversary of the resolution found that United Nations Missions had achieved little success in improving the participation of women in peace negotiations and agreements. Women in rural areas still felt excluded. The report went on to state that while some progress had been made in passing laws against sexual and gender-based violence and improving women’s security, conflict-related sexual violence as a deliberate strategy in areas of conflict still occurred with impunity and had proved a formidable challenge for peacekeeping missions.

“Fortunately, more and more women are taking an appropriate stance, and more men are supporting them in this venture. Resolution 1325 (2000) provides a vehicle for bringing together economic, political and security interests to address the link between gender and

conflict, and I am proud that we in the Gambia have not abandoned, and will strive to ensure, our constant presence in the global arena.

“The Gambia promotes the participation of women in peace processes by means of its policy with regard to recruitment and secondment as well as in its support for qualified candidates. This is to ensure that experts seconded to civilian peacebuilding operations as well as participants in military peacekeeping operations receive a high level of training in the specific area of gender in preparation for their deployment on mission.

“The protection of women is a priority of the Gambia’s peacebuilding efforts, since it is women who tend to suffer the most from violence during and after armed conflicts. Protection of the rights of women and the girl child is also one of the main aspects of the Gambia’s human rights policy. In the international context, the Gambia makes women’s rights and the violation thereof the subject of discussions. The Gambia also points to violations of women’s rights in the context of armed conflict and multilateral negotiations as well as in bilateral demarches and interventions.

“The Gambia is also committed, at the international level, to combating trafficking in women and girls and to protecting the victims of trafficking. Other priorities include efforts to improve the protection of internally displaced persons, many of whom are women, and to oppose immunity for those who perpetrate crimes against women in the context of armed conflict.

“Furthermore, the Gambia supports projects and actors that address the specific problem of violence against women, rape, trafficking and the exploitation of women in the context of armed conflicts, either through prevention and protection of the victim or by efforts to end impunity. We have a policy of zero tolerance with regard to the sexual exploitation of women in all cases involving civilian and military personnel seconded to peacebuilding operations. Training modules specifically address the problems of trafficking in human beings and women’s vulnerability to sexual abuse in conflicts, including by those involved in peace missions.

“Resolution 1325 (2000) specifically calls for gender perspectives to be taken into consideration in the negotiation and implementation of peace agreements, as well as for the participation of women in all mechanisms for the implementation of such agreements.

“Particular attention is paid to the gender aspect of transitional justice, which is one of the priorities of the Gambia’s policy in the area of human rights and humanitarian activities. Central to these efforts are the women’s amendment of 2012, the national agenda on women’s empowerment policy 2010-2020, the children’s act, the trafficking act, the refugee act and, most recently, the domestic violence and sexual offence acts of 2013. All

these procedures are indeed very innovative in that they consistently take women's rights into consideration. This can be seen, for example, in the definition of so-called gender crimes, the rights of women in court procedures, in the representation of the two sexes in the court's various bodies and in the organization of the court with regard to the protection of victims and witnesses. Additional forms are to be provided for projects that support the inclusion of women in political and legal transitional processes, with a view to ending impunity in cases involving crimes against women. This is intended to facilitate implementation of the corresponding procedures and evidentiary rules contained in the statutes.

“The Gambia has demonstrated effective involvement in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), especially through the development of its national action plan, the sine qua non for the effective implementation of the resolution by all Member States. However, to date, the record shows that only 21 out of 192 States Members of the United Nations have done so. We all have our individual roles in ensuring the resolution's implementation so that women's contribution to peacebuilding and decision-making are recognized and women's rights are ably protected. I am happy to report that these measures have led to a considerable number of reported cases of sexual and gender-based violence at the Edward Francis Small teaching hospital thanks to a complaints unit at the Women's Bureau, a unit jointly set up by the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, the Child Protection Authority, the Ministry of Interior, inter alia, strengthened by a multisectoral national steering committee under the auspices of the office of the Vice-President and the Ministry of Women's Affairs, with a mandate of coordinating, monitoring and evaluating implementation.

“Indeed we cannot but agree with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon when he said that participation alone is not sufficient. Women must not just sit at the peace table. They must be heard. Not only should women serve in police forces and peacekeeping missions, but they should also influence decision-making.

“At this fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), I wish to emphasize the importance of reflecting on what has been achieved, the lessons learned and how to become more effective in securing concrete changes not only for the prevention of violence but also the protection of human rights and for making progress on all issues related to gender equality.

“In conclusion, I wish to put on record my fervent hope that this meeting will inspire better and more innovative initiatives on resolution 1325 (2000), gender-conscious responses to peace and security and effective contributions to conflict prevention and the protection and effective participation of women.”

