

Mr. Hilale (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you on your country's assumption of the Presidency of the Security Council this month and to thank you, Sir, for convening this debate of highest importance on women and peace and security. I also thank you for affording us the opportunity to meet today, not only to celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) but also to take stock of the progress made to date, as well as to define the gaps and challenges that remain to be addressed and to renew our commitments.

The historic adoption 15 years ago of resolution 1325 (2000) recognized the role that women play in matters of peace and security, not only as victims but also as agents of change and indispensable actors in the re-establishment, maintenance and consolidation of peace. That resolution enabled us to make significant progress towards women's autonomy, particularly in conflict situations, by developing national action plans with quantifiable indicators and through the implementation of follow-up mechanisms. Since the adoption of that resolution, a number of new commitments were undertaken, aimed at according greater political recognition and stronger emphasis to the question of women and peace and security in political discourse. Six other Security Council resolutions have contributed to developing that political framework and to promoting positive norms. The adoption of all those resolutions sends a strong message with respect to the firm and continuing commitment of the international community to advancing women's independence and to protecting their rights.

Despite some signs of progress, the impact on women's lives and on their role in the world has been sporadic. Conflicts have devastating consequences for everyone, but women and girls are often the target of gender-based violence and are those most excluded from the political processes that are essential to guaranteeing peace and security. Because women are the most vulnerable and the most frequently targeted members of populations in situations of conflict, they have an undeniable and unique contribution to make to peace negotiations. Members of the Council will note that the experience of both Haiti and West Africa has proven that, when women are involved in peace processes, they have been able to bring their sensitivity and creativity not only to the peace process itself but also to national reconciliation efforts and the process of socioeconomic reintegration.

Conflict prevention is an essential element of the women and peace and security programme. Women's perspectives on the tensions in social relationships, their awareness of threats to personal, social and community safety, their knowledge of the flow of small arms and light weapons in the heart of communities, and their interpretation of extremism in local discourse help shape the primary mechanism for rapid response and early warning when conflict is imminent; yet they are rarely heeded or taken into account by the local authorities tasked with security.

Conflict prevention is a central pillar of the programme for women and peace and security. Since 2000, however, prevention has unfortunately failed to receive the same degree of sustained attention as post- conflict problems such as the reconstruction of State security services.

Resolution 2122 (2013) recognizes that lack of attention and aims to promote the role of women at all levels in conflict prevention, resolution and recovery. The resolution has filled a gap in interpretation, which was formerly focused only on the prevention of gender-based violence during conflicts rather than on preventing conflicts themselves. It is therefore necessary to follow a more comprehensive and holistic approach that tackles the root causes of conflicts, and not just their impact on women, girls, men and boys.

The establishment of genuine peace in society requires healthy and inclusive political, economic and social structures. Local women's organizations are drivers in promoting women's empowerment and their effective participation in political, economic and social life. My delegation endorses the recommendations set out in the Secretary-General's later report (S/2015/716), in particular those that encourage equal and timely access to basic services, putting an end to discriminatory laws and practices, strengthening the rule of law, ensuring equitable economic development and maintaining a space for civil society.

Women and girl refugees and internally displaced persons continue to be victims of violations of all sorts. Regional dialogues with refugee women, which are regularly organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, show that undocumented women and girls continue to suffer from the worst acts of gender-based discrimination, in particular in terms of access to health-care services, education and other social services. Women and girl refugees and internally displaced persons who are fleeing violence and fighting find themselves once again at risk of sexual exploitation, rape, prostitution and forced marriage, pregnancy and sterilization. Even worse, they are now auctioned and sold in slave markets.

Member States must comply with their international obligations and register the refugees who are present on their territory. That will ensure the empowerment of vulnerable women and their active participation in national and regional institutions for conflict prevention. In addition, it is important to allow broad participation by all internally displaced and refugee women in decision-making processes in order to not leave them simply in the hands of political organizations or criminal groups.

By way of conclusion, allow highlight the following observations.

Strong political will and the full commitment of Member States to the provisions of resolution 1325 (2000) will enable the active participation of women in national, regional

and international institutions for the prevention, protection and management of conflict situations.

The participation of women in peace efforts is a matter of gender equality and respect for universal human rights. It is crucial to achieving lasting peace, economic recovery, social cohesion and political credibility. Women should be encouraged to become further involved in issues of peace. Their contribution is necessary to establish lasting peace. They must be

involved at every stage of the efforts undertaken to restore the rule of law and rebuild societies through transitional justice. Their voice must be heard and their rights protected. We must eliminate stereotypes in order to guarantee the effective participation of women at all stages of the peace and decision-making processes.

Enhancing the empowerment of women allows them to meet their basic needs and reduce their working hours, and thus to have more time and space to become involved in the process of managing local conflicts. That will also contribute to strengthening social stability.