

**Mr. Joyini** (South Africa): My delegation wishes to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his statement, as well as to Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN-Women, for her insightful contributions, and to Ms. Yanar Mohammed, President of the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq.

This year marks the fifteenth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), which drew attention to the effects of armed conflict on women and girls. The adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) was highly significant because it gave impetus to South Africa's international commitments to gender equality. That resolution was the first to provide women with the space to participate and voice their opinion on peace and security issues.

Our own history has taught us about the influential role that women can play in a post-conflict setting. South African women represent a commanding constituency and have been at the forefront of driving reform, developing and advancing responsive policies and legislation across all sectors of Government and the private sector. Today, at the level of political decision-making, 42 per cent of South Africa's representatives in Parliament are women.

South Africa is also encouraged by the progress made at the African Union (AU) level and the commitment made there to gender mainstreaming, and we further commend the development and adoption of the AU Gender Training Manual for AU Peace Support Operations. There is no doubt that the empowerment of women will have a long, lasting and positive impact on the overall protection of vulnerable groups affected by conflicts. Allow me to outline five core areas that my delegation views as priorities.

First, my delegation reaffirms its commitment to the full and effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and the subsequent related resolutions as the building blocks for advancing the women and peace and security agenda. We would like to encourage the strengthening of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), given the complex and dynamic nature of conflict, which has changed the character of peacekeeping and peacebuilding practices.

Secondly, at the heart of the principles of resolution 1325 (2000) is the need to address sexual violence in conflict, which is an integral aspect of the overall women and peace and security agenda. Member States have the primary responsibility to put an end to impunity and to prosecute perpetrators responsible for crimes against humanity and war crimes, including those relating to sexual violence against women and girls. South Africa appreciates the active role and full participation by the Executive Director of UN-Women and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict in monitoring implementation. As stated before, my delegation would like to encourage the Security Council to develop a broader framework of prevention, for example by

explicitly referencing sexual violence in conflict in all relevant country- specific resolutions.

Thirdly, access to justice for women in conflict and post-conflict settings through conscious policies is essential to the building of fair, equitable and equal societies. Women suffer disproportionately from poverty, and the risks that they face are heightened in armed conflict and post-conflict settings. The legal framework to address issues of discrimination against women with respect to land ownership and other fields should be strengthened in line with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Access to development, economic opportunity, employment, education and health care is an essential component of gender-responsive peacebuilding.

Fourthly, it is also important to emphasize that women should be involved in every phase of the peace and security agenda, including being provided with a greater role in preventive diplomacy, formal peace processes and mediation. We believe that promoting the role of women in the mediation of conflict will strengthen the potential to find sustainable solutions to conflict that cover a wider range of interests, especially those of women and children, whose interests are not sufficiently reflected in outcomes. We therefore support the inclusion of a clear component stressing women's participation in the terms of reference of mediation and peacebuilding processes.

My fifth and last point is that good practices, challenges and lessons learned must be documented by all stakeholders. It is also of critical importance to secure State-level and political buy-in and commitment in the form of financial and human resources. The collection of statistics and data is pertinent to developing policies that are inclusive of women and responsive to women's needs. That will, no doubt, ensure contributions to the already existing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms with regard to resolution 1325 (2000). A mentoring and coaching mechanism for women must also be established as a support mechanism. Mentoring is critical in sharing experiences and therefore ensures that new recruits mature in the process.

While there is value in developing monitoring mechanisms for the Security Council to ensure the implementation of the provisions of resolution 1325 (2000) and other relevant resolutions, the greater participation of women in negotiation and peacemaking processes will allow for the greater incorporation of gender perspectives and the concerns of women, thereby contributing to the sustainability of peace and security efforts.