

Mr. Grant (Canada): I am pleased to speak first on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, an informal network of 51 interested Member States chaired by Canada, representing all five regional groups of the United Nations. I will then make brief remarks in my national capacity.

On the seventeenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the Group reaffirms its unwavering support for the Council's work on this important agenda. Despite an increasingly robust normative framework on women, peace, and security, we emphasize that real, tangible progress lies in implementation. In that regard, much remains to be done. We applaud the countries that have established or renewed national action plans in the past year. We reiterate that such plans must be coupled with sufficient resources to deliver results. Such implementation will also directly contribute to the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, agreed to by all Member States.

We wish to thank Spain for its initiative to establish the Women, Peace and Security National Focal Points Network and for organizing the first substantive meeting in Alicante and its follow-up in New York. We look forward to Germany and Namibia chairing the Focal Points Network in 2018 and 2019, respectively. Furthermore, we wish to highlight regional initiatives which can multiply efforts towards more effective implementation.

The Group welcomes the Secretary-General's leadership on conflict prevention and sustaining peace and notes that the effective implementation of the women and peace and security agenda directly contributes to these objectives. Indeed, we know that gender-based violence and the repression of women's human rights is correlated with the outbreak of conflict. We also know that women's participation has a positive impact on the credibility and durability of peace agreements. Therefore, it is all the more essential to include gender considerations and the meaningful participation of women in early warning, mediation and conflict resolution efforts, as well as the mainstreaming of gender-specific language and the human rights of women in peace agreements. A greater role for women also needs to be ensured in post-conflict peacebuilding and economic recovery.

This approach should also apply to the Security Council's work in preventing and addressing conflict. In this regard, we welcome the ongoing work undertaken by the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security to facilitate a more systematic approach to the Council's agenda, including in resolutions, statements, reporting and visits to the field, as well as regular input from civil society. Indeed, we recognize the importance of engaging with and supporting civil society in delivering real impact on this agenda.

The Group highlights the need to further the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda in United Nations peacekeeping, both in terms of women's participation and gender expertise and mainstreaming into doctrine and all planning documents. Women play an indispensable role in peacekeeping and their participation at all levels is key to the operational effectiveness of missions. We must therefore redouble efforts and engage in new and creative

thinking to resolve persistent gaps and structural barriers to female participation and leadership. Separately, peacekeeping operations need to be equipped with appropriate gender-responsive conflict analysis and expertise. We are deeply concerned that cutting, downgrading and underresourcing gender advisors and women protection advisors positions may cripple the ability of peace operations to fulfil these critical tasks.

We must also ensure that United Nations peacekeepers themselves are not part of the problem and condemn cases of sexual exploitation and abuse. We welcome recent initiatives by the Secretary-General, including the conclusion of the sexual exploitation and abuse voluntary compact with Member States, the establishment of a Circle of Leadership and the appointment of a sexual exploitation and abuse victims' rights advocate. Still much more needs to be done to tackle this scourge, ensure accountability and fundamentally reconfigure our collective approach to make it victim centred.

Unfortunately, sexual violence also remains prevalent in situations of armed conflict worldwide. The Group condemns in the strongest terms such acts, which constitute a grave violation and abuse of human rights and international humanitarian law, and raise barriers to the full achievement of gender equality, peace and development. To end impunity, perpetrators must be brought to justice, and victims and survivors must be assisted in a comprehensive manner in order to fully recover from these violations and be able to reintegrate in their societies.

We are also appalled by acts of sexual violence, including rape, child, early and forced marriage and enslavement, including those committed by terrorist groups, such as Da'esh. In this regard, we welcome the recent adoption of resolution 2379 (2017), on accountability for the acts committed by Da'esh in Iraq. It is our hope that this is the first step in a process to ensure more comprehensive accountability. We highlight the importance of including specific expertise on gender and sexual violence to ensure the documentation of sexual violence as part of these efforts, as well as a focus on reducing stigma associated with survivors of sexual violence in conflict.

Indeed, a gendered approach is critical to facing new and emerging challenges, such as violent extremism. We support the engagement of women's leadership and the incorporation of a gender lens into the development of strategies to prevent and address violent extremism, and recognize Women's Alliance for Security Leadership as a dynamic network of independent women-led organizations that are locally rooted and globally connected. Such an approach recognizes the role of women in developing resilience, the impact of violent extremism on women and the reality of women joining violent extremist groups. We also welcome the establishment of the Group of Friends of Preventing Violent Extremism, co-chaired by Jordan and Norway, which stresses the need for full participation of women and youth in efforts to prevent violent extremism.

To conclude the Group of Friends statement, we believe in the transformational potential of the women and peace and security agenda. We remain committed to working with the United Nations and all Member States for its full realization.

(spoke in French)

Allow me to make a few additional remarks in my national capacity.

There is no doubt that progress has been made in implementing the women and peace and security agenda, however, it has been slow and many challenges remain. We must consider doing things differently and we must challenge ourselves to move beyond incrementalism. Canada is committed to finding opportunities to create and support transformative solutions for gender equality in conflict situations. We will defend women's voices and human rights. We will challenge narratives that undermine women's ability to contribute, lead and shape solutions. We will collaborate with civil society, Member States and the United Nations to reinvigorate the implementation of this important agenda. Finally, we will continue to demonstrate our commitment to transparent and regular reporting on the progress made in the implementation of our national action plan on women and peace and security, which is currently being finalized, to ensure that we are making progress.

In the context of our feminist foreign policy, Canada is taking concrete actions to advance the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

(spoke in English)

We recognize that women are key actors in conflict prevention and resolution and peacebuilding. Peace and security is one of the cornerstones of Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy, which puts gender equality at the centre of international assistance programming. In support of this policy, Canada will dedicate \$150 million over five years to support local organizations that advance women's rights in developing and fragile States. Last year, Canada also provided \$1.5 million to the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, which supports women's organizations working on the front lines of conflict prevention and resolution. We strongly urge others to support this Fund to ensure that women's and girls' voices are heard.

We know that by failing to mainstream gender perspectives in peace operations, we will fail to effectively respond to the needs and interests of local women and girls. At the United Nations Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conference, which Canada will be pleased to host in Vancouver on November, mainstreaming gender into our discussions and reflections is of the utmost importance. We are challenging the panellists and participants to suggest and present innovative solutions to integrating gender perspectives in peacekeeping. Canada continues to demonstrate its commitment to supporting women's participation in peace operations. We are working to increase the proportion of Canadian women peacekeepers, including police officers

deployed to peace operations, and have been at the forefront of a United Nations training initiative aimed at increasing the number of women police officers deployed.

Canada is also a strong advocate for the full implementation of the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse. Our Prime Minister recently joined the Secretary-General's Circle of Leadership and signed the voluntary compact on eliminating sexual exploitation and abuse. We are also providing funding to the Office of the Special Coordinator on Improving the United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and to the Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, and we strongly encourage all Member States to do the same.

The question of accountability resonates strongly for Canada. Under our first national action plan, Canada submitted five annual progress reports on the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda in Parliament, which helped to take stock of the progress achieved and record lessons learned. The progress reports also allowed us to identify shortfalls and highlight emerging good practices, all of which have been useful in the development of the second action plan. We wish to thank civil society and national indigenous organizations, which provided invaluable input into this action plan, which will be launched shortly. We look forward to collaborating with our domestic and international partners in its implementation.