

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia) *(spoke in French)*: We thank the French presidency for organizing today's open debate. We also thank the briefers for sharing their thoughts and perspectives on the question of women and peace and security.

(spoke in English)

Ethiopia welcomes the positive developments that have taken place over the years in advancing the women and peace and security agenda since the adoption of the Security Council's groundbreaking resolution 1325 (2000), particularly in ensuring the participation and representation of women in political processes. We also welcome the initiatives and measures taken by the Secretary-General and the broader United Nations system aimed at advancing the women and peace and security agenda through a renewed commitment to gender equality and women's representation and improving gender mainstreaming in United Nations planning, programming, resource mobilization and rapid deployment. We also welcome the work of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and her team of experts for their efforts to strengthen national capacities to address sexual violence.

We note with serious concern the challenges identified in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/861) in relation to the issues of gender inequality, of ensuring women's participation, and of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence, as well as the unprecedented increase in the number of women who participate in violent extremist and terrorist groups, including as foreign terrorist fighters. We also recognize that much more needs to be done to address sexual exploitation and abuse, based on substantiated evidence. Taking into account both the progress that has been made and the continuing challenges regarding the women and peace and security agenda, we would like to highlight a few points that focus on the best way to integrate an original approach into the broader women and peace and security discussion, based on our experience in Africa.

In the past few years Africa has registered significant progress in advancing the women and peace and security agenda, both at the continental and subregional levels. As indicated in the Secretary General's report, a number of African countries have adopted national action plans based on resolution 1325 (2000) and other subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security. The African Union, along with subregional organizations such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, has also adopted gender policies. In our view, those policies, coupled with other legal instruments, could provide a very good basis for coordination between the United Nations and the African Union in facilitating greater implementation and enhancing the advancement of the women and peace and security agenda in Africa.

Among other things, such coordination could focus on ensuring the active participation of women and women's groups in peace processes, conflict prevention and resolution and peacebuilding activities, as well as on promoting and protecting the human rights of women in conflict and post-conflict situations. One way of enhancing such cooperation could be through

missions such as the recent joint United Nations-African Union high-level solidarity mission to Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, led by the Deputy Secretary-General in July. Mechanisms to utilize the good offices of the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Women, Peace and Security could also be explored with the aim of advancing the women and peace and security agenda at the continental level.

We believe it is also important to further strengthen support in the African Union or at subregional levels for initiatives and frameworks such as those aimed at ensuring women's participation and leadership as observers or in advisory roles in peace processes, in mediation and election observer missions or in countering violent extremism. It is in that context that, while we welcome the focus of the next annual report of the Secretary-General on the quality of participation and representation of women in peace processes, we encourage the Secretary-General to include in the report regional approaches adopted by the United Nations to advance the women and peace and security agenda, with a particular focus on cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union.

I would like to conclude by emphasizing the importance of addressing systemic challenges to women's access to political and economic spaces in order to ensure prosperous and peaceful societies. That will require a renewed commitment to building partnerships with various stakeholders, particularly regional and subregional organizations, the States concerned, development agencies, civil-society organizations, women experts and groups and peace and security partners within the women and peace and security agenda. I would therefore like to affirm Ethiopia's commitment to working towards this objective.