

Mr. Delattre (France) (spoke in French):

I thank the Secretary-General for his statement and the Russian presidency for organizing today's debate on a subject that, since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) 16 years ago, has been a priority of the highest order for France in the Security Council. I also thank Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka for her statement and her commitment, and Ms. Rita Lopidia, for her statement and for her outstanding work as the head of EVE Organization for Women Development, South Sudan.

The promotion of women at the United Nations is not a marketing ploy or a public-relations operation. It is a fundamental issue in itself, and it is — let us make no mistake about this — a condition of the success and effectiveness of the United Nations. This is particularly true for the women and peace and security agenda, where we must fulfil our commitments and indeed make them operational.

Since the adoption of foundational resolution 1325 (2000), seven other resolutions have been adopted by the Security Council in the context of the women and peace and security agenda. This topic has emerged as a major element in the Council's work, in United Nations agencies and in peacekeeping operations. We have worked collectively to take greater account of the situation of women in conflict both to meet the specific threats to them and protect them and to ensure their full participation in peacebuilding.

The unanimous adoption of resolution 2242 (2015) one year ago marked the rebuilding of that agenda and the renewal of our joint commitment. The reform that began in 2015 is, above all, a political reform. Resolution 2242 (2015) highlights the need for States to ensure that women participate more actively in political processes, peace negotiations and conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms. States are responsible for ensuring that women's organizations are included in discussions on international peace and security, not only to hear their opinions but also and in particular to allow them to make a contribution to the discussions. It is also up to States to appoint more women to decision-making posts, in particular, within the competent conflict prevention and resolution structures. That same responsibility lies with the United Nations, as it appoints a greater number of women to posts as Special Envoys or High-level Experts to the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General. This is encouraging but the practice must become more widespread. During the first few years of the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, some perhaps viewed those appointments as symbolic but they should be seen as effective actions that were taken to promote international peace and security.

That leads me to the second aspect of the reform that began 2015, relating to operations. The increased participation of women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding is vital and relates both to the number of women who participate in peacekeeping operations and the level of their participation in all activities pertaining to peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Operational planning and the development of mandates must take those challenges into account at all stages of the crisis — at the start of conflicts to prevent risks, in particular by including women in decision-making processes and conflict prevention policies; and during conflicts to protect women from violence, in particular sexual violence and post-conflict, and to assist victims in rebuilding their lives and by enabling them to fully participate in rebuilding their country.

That would require close cooperation between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Department of Field Support and the Department of Political Affairs, on the one hand, and UN-Women, on the other. Much has already been done to take into

account the dimension of gender equality in peacekeeping operations. The mandates of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic have included the relevant elements of resolutions on women and peace and security. We must now go even further and streamline that approach in all peacekeeping operations mandates. France will continue to work towards that goal. Finally, the implementation of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security allows for the improved follow-up of such goals and a more systematic approach to equality between men and women, with regard to issues related to international peace and security. France will play an active part and continue to play its full role.

France has also set ambitious goals. At the national level, on 4 March 2015, we adopted a second national action plan for the period 2015-2018. That plan will be subject to a mid-term review by civil society over the next few weeks. In that regard, the French Government is determined to pursue those efforts on the basis on commitments made in 2015 within the framework of the high-level review. The French Government will concern to act with a view to gaining greater visibility for our national action plan and to enable a greater number of women to gain access to high ranking positions related to peace and stability, in particular, to cite just one example, with the goal of having 40 per cent of women at the helm of our diplomatic network by 2018.

At the regional and international levels, we continue to actively promote the women and peace and security agenda. Within the European Union, we implore other member States to systematically include in their common defence policies the protection of women in situations of conflict and the promotion of their role in crisis emergence. I have said that, at the United Nations, we work with a better understanding of the agenda within peacekeeping operations mandates. Within the Group of Seven, we encourage an ambitious implementation of the women and peace and security agenda with our country partners. Finally, no later than tomorrow, we are organizing in Paris a high-level conference on peacekeeping operations in French-speaking environments, which recalls the importance of that agenda.

At the same time, we remain committed on the ground, with more than 900 persons deployed in six peacekeeping operations, who receive training that includes human rights and gender equality within the context of peacekeeping operations. Above and beyond the strict framework of international peace and security, France remains fully committed to the United Nations on the vital issue of violence against women and, in that regard, along with the Netherlands, we will present the biannual General Assembly draft resolution on violence against women.

The holding of today's public debate and its success illustrates our common interest in promoting an agenda that is crucial to all of our work on peace and security. More than ever before, France would like to play a leading role in this area through its national public policies in the Security Council and in all international forums in which our country participates. The promotion of women at the United Nations is a daily struggle for us all.