

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania):

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union. Allow me to make the following additional points.

First, women's networks play an important early warning and preventive role. These include women's situation rooms in Africa, which the African Union (AU) has declared a best practice to prevent conflict; the Au initiative to build a dedicated roster of women mediators; and the creation of the Nordic Women's Mediators' Network. Existing good practices should be emulated and encouraged. We call on the United Nations to consider developing a dedicated roster of women mediators to reinforce inclusive, multi-track prevention and mediation processes, and on countries to submit more women mediator candidacies to United Nations rosters.

Secondly, women suffer disproportionately from the effects of armed violence in conflicts. They are killed, robbed, raped, trafficked and forced into prostitution at gunpoint. Women also bear the brunt of armed violence as single heads of households and caregivers. Their needs as ex-combatants and former child soldiers differ from those of their male counterparts.

The Arms Trade Treaty has had an important impact on highlighting the gender dimension of arms control and disarmament. As reflected in resolution 2220 (2015), my delegation urges further strengthening of the gender dimension in tackling the issue of small arms and light weapons. Ensuring women's full and meaningful participation in efforts to combat and eradicate the illicit transfer and misuse of small arms and light weapons must remain a priority. NATO and Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council guidelines on implementing resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, regarding small arms and light weapons and mine action is a good example in that respect. We also support the Secretary-General's call to strengthen gender-responsive approaches to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform, further integrating the gender dimension into relevant processes.

Thirdly, although human rights violations targeting women increasingly figure in sanctions regimes, only five of these, as noted in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/822), explicitly include as designation criteria acts involving sexual violence or violations targeting women. We stress the need to reinforce the gender expertise of relevant expert groups, further enhance sanctions regimes' cooperation with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and expand the designation criteria in sanctions regimes where sexual and gender-based crimes and specific attacks against women are persistently perpetrated.

Fourthly, communication can be a powerful tool for promoting the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. The ways in which women are depicted in the media can have a profound effect on societal attitudes, perceptions of gender roles, and the effective tackling of stereotypes that constrain and limit women's role and opportunities in all spheres of life.

However, according to the Global Media Monitoring Project 2015, women are the central focus of just 10 per cent of news stories, mostly as victims. Only 4 per cent of media stories clearly challenge gender stereotypes. Improving women's chances to have their side of the story told as media protagonists and media makers, through better education and access to information, media, literacy, social, organizational and communication skills should be part and parcel of all United Nations-led operations and programmes on the ground. This would, inter alia, allow us to better challenge constraining inhibitions, inspire courage, affirm the right of women to take the lead and

offer inspiring real-life role models to other women and girls who are still struggling to have their rights and human dignity taken into account.

Female journalists may offer particular insights into the plight of women in conflict zones by accessing women where access may not be possible to their male counterparts due to prevailing restrictions and social norms. Female journalists also produce more stories centered on women than their male counterparts. As such, they become important conduits for the women and peace and security agenda. But women journalists themselves often face serious risks as they seek to tell the stories of conflict and transformation. A shocking 70 per cent of women journalists killed worldwide are murdered. Besides physical attacks, intimidation, harassment and rape, they are subjected to aggressive targeted trolling and sexualized attacks online. Resolution 2222 (2015), adopted under Lithuanian presidency in May 2015, points to the specific risks faced by women journalists. These need to be adequately addressed, including through a much stronger focus on tackling impunity.

Finally, let me reiterate Lithuania's strong commitment to furthering the women and peace and security agenda through concrete action. We are currently renewing our resolution 1325 (2000) national action plan and enhancing relevant cooperation with our eastern partnership neighbours, including Ukraine, where Russia-sponsored war in the east of the country has severely affected women's personal safety and their human rights. Lithuania is taking steps to increase the involvement of women in peace operations in the civilian and military fields. Last year, a third of our personnel deployed to civilian missions abroad were women.

As a founding member of the women and peace and security national focal point network, Lithuania will continue to engage actively in its work as well as on the broader women and peace and security agenda.