

Mr. Bhattarai (Nepal): Allow me to read out an abridged version of my statement.

First of all, I thank the French presidency of the Security Council for convening this annual debate on women and peace and security. I also thank the Secretary General for his comprehensive report (S/2017/861), and the briefers for their updates and insights.

From the days of the Council's inception and the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), in 2000, Nepal has been a proactive supporter of the cause of women and peace and security. I am pleased to inform the Council about how far Nepal has come. In 2011, Nepal adopted a national action plan to implement resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008). The Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction coordinates the plan's implementation, while its oversight is ensured by a high-level steering committee co-chaired by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Peace and Reconstruction, with members drawn from relevant ministries and civil society organizations.

Nepal has made explicit efforts to localize its national action plan, with localization guidelines in place since 2013. With the mandatory provision of 33 per cent women's representation in local peace committees, Nepal's national action plan has been an example of a transparent, inclusive and participatory process, with the close involvement of conflict victims and civil society organizations. This example has been well shared with countries in the region and outside. The success of the first national action plan has led us to the soon-to-be-adopted second national action plan, which focuses on sexual violence, particularly during conflict.

Eager to catch up with the global average of gender parity in current deployment, Nepal is committed to progressively attaining the United Nations goal of 15 per cent females in peacekeeping operations, and has employed inclusive policies to encourage more females to join the national security forces. In the spirit of moving from zero tolerance to zero cases, Nepal has endorsed the Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians and signed the Secretary-General's voluntary compact on preventing and addressing sexual exploitation and abuse. The United Nations policies on sexual exploitation and abuse and the protection of human rights are fully incorporated in the predeployment training courses for our peacekeepers.

Through its own experiences as a United Nations peacekeeping and civilian protection partner since 1958 and as the sixth largest troop- and police-contributing country on the one hand, and as a country emerging from its own armed conflict, on the other, Nepal has come to believe that women's increased role in the national context significantly complements the United Nations aspiration of women playing a greater role at the global level.

In Nepal's case, women's increased representation in legislative and Government bodies and State institutions since 2007 has directly contributed to fostering good governance and inclusive societies. The mandatory 33 per cent representation of women, guaranteed under the new constitution for both federal and provincial-level legislatures, will qualitatively enhance the empowerment and ownership of women in all walks of national life. Already, Nepal has seen women in the positions of Head of State, Speaker of the Legislature-Parliament and Chief

Justice of the Supreme Court at the same time. The National Women's Commission is now an independent and powerful constitutional body with an overall mandate to monitor and safeguard the rights and interests of women.

The recent local level elections, where women have secured nearly half of the leadership positions — beyond the constitutional guarantee of 40 per cent — is expected to generate further multiplier effects to ensure the maximum inclusion and participation of women in leadership positions, legislation, and governance. Moreover, there is a 33 per cent quota for certain positions in Government services, including in security forces. The gender responsive budget, introduced in 2006 has now reached over 35 per cent of the total budget.

In conclusion, Nepal believes that the meaningful engagement of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, as well as in sustaining peace and securing the implementation of Council resolutions, has greatly complemented our own efforts. Our national experience suggests that the peace process would not be complete without the full, equal and effective participation of women. As a country emerging from a successful domestic peace process, Nepal stands ready to share its experience and lessons learned through the constructive engagement of women in conflict prevention and resolution, as well as post-conflict restructuring and rebuilding — all gearing towards the timely achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.