

Ms. Flores Herrera (Panama): I have the honour of speaking today on behalf of the members of the Human Security Network, a cross-regional network made up of Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, Norway, Slovenia, Switzerland, Thailand, South Africa as an observer, and my own country, Panama. The Human Security Network is an informal group of States that promotes the integration of a human security approach into policies and programmes at the regional, national and international levels.

Seventeen years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) and two years after the global review of its implementation, this open debate is needed to focus on the concrete implementation of the normative framework. Through the adoption of resolution 2242 (2015), the Security Council once again reaffirmed its commitment to the agenda and to the need to coordinate responses and accelerate implementation. We particularly welcome the work of the Council's Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security as an important tool to ensure that the agenda receives adequate attention in the Council's work. The Human Security Network calls upon Member States, United Nations entities and regional and subregional organizations to support other Member States in their efforts to implement resolution 1325 (2000) and all subsequent resolutions.

There is a need for greater recognition and support of women's full and effective participation in all stages of conflict resolution and post-conflict reconciliation processes, so that peace agreements can be more effective. Women can, and must, play a key role in conflict prevention and resolution and in the construction and decision-making of sustainable peace processes. We welcome the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security programmes that have supported women as agents of change in achieving and sustaining peace. We call for greater application of the human security approach to advance inclusive prevention and peacebuilding efforts. Since our debate last year (see S/PV.7793), a number of important developments and events have taken place within the United Nations that have helped ensure the advancement of this important agenda.

First, we welcome the Secretary-General's commitment and his strategy on gender parity to reach 50/50. We also welcome the launch of Spotlight — a European Union-United Nations initiative aimed at combating violence against women by supporting women's empowerment.

Secondly, the High-level Political Forum thematic review of Sustainable Development Goal 5, on achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, saw the integration of the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We welcome that ongoing process.

Thirdly, the recent high-level meeting on the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons and the adoption of the political declaration demonstrated a renewed commitment to the protection of victims of forced labour, sexual servitude and other forms of exploitation and abuse, which target the weakest and most vulnerable — women and girls, but also boys. We

cannot turn a blind eye to the violence exerted by extremist groups, which infringe upon the rights, dignity and integrity of their lives.

The Network expresses its profound concern about the impact of forced displacement on women and girls. Addressing that matter calls for the involvement of women in the design and implementation of humanitarian action and early recovery measures. That should also take into account the increasing need for sustained donor support to host countries and communities, so that they can appropriately support women's resilience. Doing so will strengthen the humanitarian development nexus and improve coordination with peacebuilding and the protection of human rights.

We also call for greater efforts to promote and respect the human rights of women and girls, as well as to strengthen all efforts to effectively address gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence. For too long sexual violence has been committed on a systematic and widespread scale as crimes against humanity and it has been used as a weapon of war. Women and girls are today targets of sexual and gender-based violence at an alarming rate.

We stress the importance of fighting impunity and ensuring accountability under national or international jurisdictions. In that regard, we welcome the Secretary General's initiative of convening a high-level meeting on combating sexual exploitation and abuse, which served as a visible demonstration of the solidarity of the international community in condemning and combating that scourge, while placing the rights and dignity of victims at the forefront of collective efforts.

In conclusion, women's empowerment and meaningful participation are a cornerstone of any prevention and protection response. The economic, political and social empowerment of women and girls reduces their vulnerability and enhances their ability to protect themselves and exercise their rights. We must ensure that women's and girls' interests are fully respected and systematically integrated into all peace processes.