

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in French*): Madam President, I wish to thank you for having convened this debate.

(spoke in Spanish)

Again, in my native language, I express my thanks to you, Madam.

When Spain was on the Security Council for two years, one of our major priorities was the women and peace and security agenda. However, now that we are no longer on the Security Council, I can state with assurance that one of Spain's highest priorities during the seventy-second and later sessions of the General Assembly will continue to be the women and peace and security agenda.

I believe that in order to make progress on this agenda and ensure its proper implementation, three things are necessary.

The first is leadership, the leadership of those around this table, the leadership of members of the General Assembly, and the leadership of our capitals.

Secondly, we need to strengthen the institutional architecture. This is something on which we are currently working in the United Nations, but we are very far from having reached our goal.

Thirdly, we need to move from the general to the specific by adopting national plans for the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. Spain has already adopted its second one.

I will now make four specific proposals that I have discussed with my very effective adviser, Victoria Ortega Gutiérrez, who is sitting behind me, who has been the very soul of Spain's work, so to speak, on this agenda item.

The first proposal touches on an issue that makes me the proudest of our tenure on the Council: the creation of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security, established under resolution 2242 (2015). The Group, which meets on a near-monthly basis and which is currently being presided over, in an outstanding manner, by Uruguay and Sweden, receives a tremendous amount of information from all peacekeeping operations. What I propose we do is that we rise to the challenge of moving from simple information-gathering to a process in which the members of the Council can translate what they have heard into specific actions aimed at making progress on this agenda.

The second proposal refers to the debates held here, in the Security Council Chamber. Spain, when it was a member of the Council, had suggested that in debates on country-specific situations, in that case on Liberia, civil society be invited to address issues related to women

and peace and security. We were able to achieve this, even though there was some resistance. I think that Sweden has taken up that baton. I wish to propose to the members of the Council that with respect to the participation of civil society in Security Council debates on a given country, members of civil society, when advisable because of circumstances, should be invited to describe the situation on the ground.

The third proposal relates to sanctions. The Security Council has a large number of sanctions committees, over which I was fortunate enough to preside. Those committees have so-called listing criteria. I believe that today, at a time when, unfortunately, violence in conflict is one of the major evils besetting humankind, a truly shameful one, we should consider making the perpetrators of sexual violence in conflict the potential subject of sanctions by the relevant committees. This would represent an important advance.

The fourth proposal relates to the Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network. I do not know if members will recall that it held its first meeting in Alicante, Spain, in which I had the good fortune to be able to participate along with a large number of delegations and high-level Secretariat staff. The second round was held recently in September, organized by Germany, Namibia and Spain. It really was very successful.

I shall now make two concrete proposals in this respect.

First, Germany has offered to host it in 2018, and Namibia in 2019. This covers some parts of the world, but I would really like a Latin American country to put forward its candidature to host the meeting in 2021, or perhaps an Asian country. I think it is important to ensure predictability in the holding of these important meetings.

The second proposal relates to the fact that the Network currently has 63 friends. It seems to me that given the importance of the women and peace and security agenda in the United Nations, 63 is a relatively low number. It is true that we began only in 2015, but I believe that we need to set slightly more aggressive benchmarks. I would be pleased if these 63 focal points increased to 80 in Germany. Let us break the barrier of 100 in Namibia, and let us after that achieve numbers that represent near-universality in terms of the Members of the United Nations.

I would say by way of conclusion that we are all following attentively the very complex process of United Nations reform, which I acknowledge can be difficult. My fear is that this reform process will affect the three fundamental pillars and that the women and peace and security agenda will not have the place it should in the new United Nations structure. All committed States must work to ensure that the remaining States and the Secretariat clearly understand the need to create a robust institutional architecture in the Organization so that we can continue making progress on this front.