

Mrs. Gregoire-Van-Haaren (Netherlands) (*spoke in French*): I thank the French presidency for organizing this important debate today.

(*spoke in English*)

The Kingdom of the Netherlands aligns itself fully with the statement of the European Union. We also fully support the statements made by the Permanent Representative of Italy and by the Permanent Representative of Canada as Chair of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

We also wish to thank the Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary-General for her briefing, and the Secretary-General for his report (S/2017/861) and leadership on this issue.

Nalia, Valérie, Angèle, Arlette, Josephine, Alice, Martine, Marie, Nicole and Natifa are names that deserve to be mentioned in the Council, because they are names that appeared in this month's report of Human Rights Watch on widespread sexual violence by armed groups in the Central African Republic. The report observes how, during nearly five years of conflict, those groups have used rape and sexual slavery as a tactic of war. As such, it provides us with both a gruesome reminder of how conflict affects women and a painful reminder of the acute relevance of resolution 1325 (2000) to this day. That reminder is painful because it reminds us that, eight resolutions down the road, we need to have a serious talk about the resolution's implementation.

Women are still not actively engaged in many peace processes, including those that are United Nations-led or assisted, and are therefore not recognized as the powerful agents of peace they are. If we truly want to practice what we preach, we must pressure parties to a peace process to include women, and not leave it as an afterthought, because those that have briefed the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security, or someone like Ms. Mina-Rojas, today are living proof of what the meaningful participation of women could do for peace processes. However, if they cannot, conflicts are often prolonged and women and girls bear the brunt. As the Secretary-General rightly observes in his report,

“Commitments become meaningful accomplishments, changing lives and transforming societies, only upon implementation” (S/2017/861, para. 6).

Today, I wish to emphasize three conditions that need to be met in order to make resolution 1325 (2000) become a reality.

It is good to remind ourselves, firstly, that gender mainstreaming is not a goal in itself, but rather an instrument — an instrument to achieve a transformative peace agenda. The meaningful and balanced participation of women and men has the potential to transform conflict prevention and peace processes. Resolution 1325 (2000) was adopted with that transformative intent.

We do not tick the box, let alone implement resolution 1325 (2000), by simply having women around the table; it is not simply about the numbers. We have to integrate a women's perspective and let the voice of women's organizations on the ground be heard at mediation tables through their substantive participation. If we do, there is a 35 per cent increase in the probability of a peace agreement lasting more than 15 years. That figure alone speaks for itself. In that respect, I welcome the meeting the visiting mission to the Sahel held with women's organizations in Mali. Ideally, in future missions, that would not be a separate session, but rather the voice of women would be integrated into the other meetings.

Secondly, in order to be implemented, resolution 1325 (2000) needs to be translated not just into United Nations languages, but into plans and activities. It needs to be operationalized and, equally important, funded. To date, 68 Members have devised their national action plans. While we applaud those Members that did so, the Kingdom of the Netherlands strongly calls on the remaining two-thirds of the United Nations membership to follow suit. The Kingdom of the Netherlands, moreover, is sadly one of just a handful that actually finance their national action plans. More funds should be made available if we are serious about making gender equality a practical reality.

Thirdly and lastly, in all of that, as the SecretaryGeneral also states to conclude in his report, the United Nations should "lead and inspire by example" (*ibid.*, para. 111) by including sufficiently strong language on women and peace and security in all of our mission's mandates; by systematically applying a gender lens in strategic reviews and analysing the power dimensions between women, men and youth in conflict dynamics; by consequently requesting troop-contributing countries to train all peacekeepers on gender and subsequently actually deploying women to the field; by showing zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse through transparency, accountability and careful victim care; and, as justly advocated by the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, by upgrading rather than downgrading the role of gender advisers in peacekeeping missions. We welcome efforts made by other troop-contributing countries to that effect, and we particularly support Canada's efforts to include gender as part of the discussions and pledges at the Vancouver Defence Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference next month.

In conclusion, the challenge and responsibility are upon us to integrate resolution 1325 (2000) into a transformative peace agenda — one that is operationalized and funded and on which the United Nations leads the way. Its implementation should enable the likes of Valérie, Alice and Nicole to lead the peace talks in their country. Let me finish by reiterating once again the support of the Kingdom of the Netherlands for resolution 1325 (2000), as well as our genuine commitment to its implementation.