

**Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (spoke in Arabic):**

I would like to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for holding this important debate. We also extend our thanks to Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and to all of the briefers for their valuable contributions.

This year's report (S/2017/249) of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence was issued after the adoption, last December, of resolution 2331 (2016), the first Security Council resolution on human trafficking in situations of armed conflict. That report condemns all of the aims of human trafficking, including sexual exploitation, which in most cases are being pursued by extremist terrorist groups that seek to terrorize civilians and/or generate revenue by enslaving women and girls, in particular those belonging to ethnic or racial minorities, and by selling those women like goods at the market. In that connection, Egypt would like to make the following points.

First, it is crucial that the reports of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence respect the limits and duration of the mandates assigned by the Council in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Secondly, we support the efforts aimed at promoting the contributions of women in decision-making and political processes through investments in training and capacity-building programmes, as well as the documentation and spread of information on the contributions that women are able to make in peacekeeping operations. Since 2009, Egypt has made political and military contributions through our female staff deployed on mission in the Sudan and Western Sahara, as well as in the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur.

Thirdly, it is important to bear sexual violence in mind in the national training of peacekeeping staff. In that regard, the regional centre in Cairo has worked to promote the resolution of conflict and the maintenance of peace in Africa, in coordination with the Egyptian Defence Ministry. The centre addresses the fight against sexual violence in conflict in meetings for Egyptian personnel prior to their deployment to United Nations peacekeeping forces. Since that element was included in the training curriculum, 3,600 staff of all ranks have been trained. The centre has also organized 12 basic courses on the concept of gender in peacekeeping and peacebuilding. These sessions have been offered to some 3,600 military, police and civilian staff.

Fourthly, we welcome the measures taken by the United Nations to address sexual violence in armed conflict, including an increase in the number of women protection advisers in the field. It is essential that we consolidate and build on national institutional capacities and launch the United Nations initiative to combat sexual violence.

Fifthly, we are committed to the Secretary-General's policy of zero tolerance for crimes of sexual exploitation. We are pursuing our work with the Security Council and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to end all violence against women in peacekeeping operations. We also expect the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General to pursue the efforts of his or her predecessor in the context of the Special Representative's mandate to

resolve issues of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by United Nations or other forces deployed under the United Nations flag.

Sixthly, we welcome the work of the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, particularly with respect to strengthening the capacity of States in armed conflict or in the post-conflict period in criminal investigations, military justice, the preparation of witnesses and the provision of compensation to victims. It is also important to pool international efforts to assist religious and national leaders in raising the awareness of communities of the need to reject stereotypes and to fight the stigmatization of victims of sexual violence, thereby ensuring that the terrorists and extremists will lose the ideological battle and fail in their attempts to legitimize rape from a religious point of view. We know the role played by religious leaders against fatwas issued by terrorist organizations against the status of women in conflict areas.

Finally, the reports of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence must respect their mandates established by the relevant Security Council resolutions in order to achieve the stated goals. Egypt reaffirms the importance of deepening the understanding of States of the phenomenon of sexual violence as a tactic of war and terrorism in order to officially recognize that the victims of sexual violence are indeed victims and the need for an anti-terrorism strategy and to provide the necessary reparations to those victims.