

Mr. Khoshroo (Islamic Republic of Iran):

Allow me to begin by thanking the Uruguayan presidency for convening this open debate. I would like also to express my gratitude to the briefers for their valuable inputs in this debate.

Women are a key resource for promoting peace and stability. Resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security focuses on the specific impact of armed conflict on women and the positive role they can play in conflict prevention and strengthening peace, stability and security at local, regional and international levels.

Unfortunately, the current crisis, especially in the Middle East, has taken abhorrent forms and constitutes unprecedented challenges to the stability in our region. Women are among the main victims grappling with the scourge of violent extremism and terrorism. The spread of violent extremism, inspired by takfiri ideology, which has no respect for women, threatens the life and rights of women and girls. They have suffered the most and have been targeted for systematic sexual exploitation and slavery, rape and other forms of sexual violence by extremists and terrorist groups.

Iran strongly condemns the barbaric acts of the terrorist and violent extremist groups, such as Da'esh and its offshoot, Boko Haram, as well as indiscriminate attacks against civilians, including women and children. In an environment filled with hate, intimidation, xenophobic attitudes, racial profiling and discrimination based on race, religion, ethnicity, country of origin and language, women easily fall victim to sexual violence and abuse. Therefore, their opportunities for academic, economic, political and social progress are gravely curtailed by these intimidating mind sets and situations.

In some regions, particularly the Middle East, destructive factors such as foreign intervention, military invasion, as well as foreign occupation, have contributed considerably to the collapse of families. As a result, women and children are bearing the brunt of menaces that not only destroy their present, but expose them to long-lasting miseries that will remain for generations. Under such circumstances, there will be little room for women's empowerment and development.

The impact of sanctions on gender-responsive policies and budgeting within respective countries is another significant aspect. Sanctions, as a form of collective punishment, flagrantly and indiscriminately violate the basic human rights of all citizens, particularly women. The systematic violations of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including Palestinian women, under brutal occupation by the Israeli regime and the illegal blockade on the Gaza Strip constitute massive deprivation of Palestinian civilians and women of their rights.

It is unfortunate that women and girls make up a disproportionate number of the victims of air strikes in Yemen. As confirmed reports indicate, the unjustified invasion of Yemen by a Saudi-led coalition has led to the death of more than 10,000 people and the injury of more than 17,000 civilians, including at least 1,677 women and 2,260 children.

In closing, let me stress that my delegation believes that organizing such a debate in the Council should not undermine the work of the most relevant bodies for consideration of women-related issues in the United Nations system, namely, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council, as well as the General Assembly.