

Mr. Cho Tae-yul (Republic of Korea):

At the outset, I would like to join previous speakers in commending the President's initiative in convening today's important meeting.

Over the past 20 years, the international community has been proactively combating conflict-related sexual violence. The Security Council has achieved significant normative progress with the adoption of key resolutions, including resolution 2331 (2016). Moreover, since 2010, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict has efficiently coordinated international endeavours on the part of various bodies. It is also noteworthy that women's protection advisors deployed to peacekeeping and political missions have proven to be helpful in enhancing the effectiveness of monitoring and early warning on the ground.

Despite this important progress, however, the report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/249) shows that deplorable sexual violence continues to occur in conflicts and post-conflict situations. Moreover, the rise of violent extremism, as well as mass migration and the ongoing refugee crisis, adds to the gravity and complexity of this problem. Taking all of this into consideration, I would like to highlight the following four points.

First, prevention must be prioritized. It is well known that extremist groups, such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab are among the most egregious perpetrators that weaponize sexual violence for strategic gain and ideological dissemination. Therefore, it is fair to say that the eradication of extremist groups should be the first task in preventing grave sexual violence in conflict. Furthermore, given that sexual violence and exploitation are used to sustain these groups via both recruitment and revenue, we must spare no effort to eradicate terrorism as mandated by the relevant Security Council resolutions.

In the long term, special attention should be drawn to the Global Citizenship Education initiative. Tolerance and mutual understanding of a range of differences and diversity, including ethnicity, religion and others, can be a fundamental solution to preventing violent extremism at its roots. The prevention of sexual violence in conflict is also in line with the priority that the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) has placed on the role of women and youth in peacebuilding and sustaining peace. As the Chair of the PBC this year, I will make efforts to ensure that this issue be duly reflected in the PBC's work on women and youth.

Secondly, we need to end the culture of impunity. We often witness a lack of willingness and capacity of individual countries to hold perpetrators accountable. In this regard, I would like to commend the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict for its efforts to strengthen institutional safeguards against impunity at the national level. This is especially important as a lack of safeguards within national borders can often snowball into transnational issues in our deeply interconnected world. A case in point is the increased sexual violence and systematic trafficking in persons along migration and arms routes in the Mediterranean. In addition, when a particular country fails to hold perpetrators accountable, the international community should employ all available means to address sexual violence in

conflict, including referrals to the International Criminal Court, as recommended in the aforementioned report of the Secretary-General.

Thirdly, we have to stick to a survivor-centric approach towards victims. Priority should be given to helping the socioeconomic reintegration of victims by providing them with sustainable assistance, including medical, psychological, legal and other multisectoral services. And we also need to scale up attention paid to the risk of survivors being twice traumatized. If survivors are not fully accepted and reintegrated into communities and, instead suffer stigma, shame and suspicion, they have a much higher chance of being further marginalized or even susceptible to radicalization efforts.

Fourthly, we need to enhance the capacity of Governments to respond to sexual violence in conflict. Given that fragile and conflict-affected States often lack the capacity to address this crime, they need to be supported by the international community to build their own national capacities.

The Republic of Korea, for its part, has continued to take concrete initiatives to contribute to building the capacities of Governments, as well as of women and girls, in fragile and conflict-affected States. In particular, we have carried out official development assistance projects aimed at supporting the empowerment of women and gender equality. In 2015, we launched the Better Life for Girls initiative, which employs a gender-focused approach to empower girls in developing countries. We have also continuously supported gender-sensitive peacebuilding projects of various international organizations, such as UN-Women's Building Back Better project and the work of the United Nations Development Programme on gender and human rights.

Before closing, I would like to reiterate that the Republic of Korea is committed to working closely with the international community in order to eradicate sexual violence in conflict around the globe.