

Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Council, April 17th 2013, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Osorio, Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations.

Allow me, first of all, to congratulate Rwanda on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April. I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Rwanda, Ms. Louise Mushikiwabo, for their presentations. This is also an opportunity to express our greeting of solidarity with Rwanda, which this month marks the nineteenth anniversary of the genocide. I also want to mention our particular recognition of the work that Ms. Bangura has been doing and of the progress in implementing the provisions of resolution 1960 (2010).

Colombia supports the work of the Security Council, which complements the results achieved on the basis of various international agreements, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Those agreements and various forums and conferences recognize and promote the human rights of women. However, we deplore the fact that situations continue to occur in different parts of the world.

With regard to the Secretary-General's report on sexual violence in conflict (S/2013/149), which we are considering today, I would like to recall that, in accordance to resolution 1960 (2010), information collected on sexual violence should be timely, accurate, reliable and impartial. Colombia believes that, in order for our authorities to take the appropriate preventive and corrective measures, the kind of information contained in the report must be more accurate.

We are surprised that some examples of the situation in Colombia mentioned in the report do not include sufficient information on the incidents that took place. While for Colombia it is critical to fight all forms of sexual violence against women, children and young people, we underscore that it is of great concern that the report speaks generically about increasing the pressure on perpetrators of sexual violence in conflict, including the individuals, parties and States named in the reports.

I would like to give a clear explanation here. It should be understood that, in making that call, the report of the Secretary-General is referring to the situations listed in the annex to the report, that is, those situations that are under consideration by both the Security Council and the Sanctions Committees established in connection with such situations, in accordance with the provisions of the paragraph 3 of resolution 1960 (2010). That would mean acting in accordance with the mandates set out and endeavouring to establish clear distinctions among those situations and the situations mentioned in the body of the report that are not on the Security Council's agenda.

We reiterate our position on the possible establishment of talks with State and non-State parties to obtain commitments. Such talks should always respect national laws and policies. Allow me therefore to reiterate that Colombia's policy is that any dialogue between the United Nations and illegal armed groups operating in the country can take place only with the Government's prior and explicit consent. The Colombian State attaches the greatest importance to the prevention, investigation and prosecution of sexual violence in armed conflict. It is therefore willing to address that complex problem. We have launched a number of public policies. We have taken specific steps to protect the rights of victims of sexual violence in armed conflict, such as Act No. 1257 of 2008, on the prevention and punishment of acts of violence and discrimination against women, Act No. 1146 of 2007, on the prevention of sexual violence and the comprehensive care of sexually abused children and adolescents, and Decree No. 552 of 2012, which established the intersectoral commission for the prevention of recruitment and use of children, adolescents and young people by illegal organized

groups.

With regard to the justice sector and the armed forces, as the report indicates, Colombia has adopted a zero-tolerance policy. It is supplemented by a manual and protocol that serve as a guide for members of the armed forces in addressing sexual violence that may occur as a result of armed conflict. That document is widely disseminated among members of the armed forces.

As can be seen, and as the Secretary-General underscores in his report, Colombia has varying policies and guarantees that mark a breakthrough in the State's efforts to address that complex problem comprehensively and consistently. Also, work is under way, in coordination with the United Nations, the Presidential High Commissioner for Women's Equality and 22 Colombian State agencies, to outline additional preventing measures, in line with the experience in the field and international standards.

The establishment of provisions for monitoring, analysing and reporting on sexual violence in conflict situations should seek primarily, on the basis of accurate, impartial objective and verifiable information, to promote the adoption of measures to prevent sexual violence in conflict situations and to provide effective responses for the benefit of victims. In that regard, it is imperative to assist

States in developing and implementing early-warning mechanisms and procedures to facilitate the reporting, collection and verification of data. To the same end, the various agencies of the United Nations must continue to strengthen coordination, decrease duplication of effort and build a coherent approach in the field in order to assist the Security Council in its consideration of appropriate measures.