

**Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Council, April 2014, Security Council Chamber**  
*Statement by Mr. Cardì, Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations.*

Allow me to begin by thanking you, Madame President, for organizing today's open debate of the Security Council. I also wish to thank Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Zainab Bangura, for her work, as well as the Secretary-General for his report (S/2014/181) and the speakers for their important contributions to the discussion.

Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union and wishes to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

Two months ago, Italy released a revision of its national action plan on the women and peace and security agenda with a view to accelerating the implementation of the plan over the next three years. The revised plan not only reports on our progress but also shows the efforts made to adopt a more effective approach. The paradigm of our new national action plan towards the realization of that agenda is based on three concepts — coordination, integration and mainstreaming.

First, with respect to coordination and integration, our reference point at the national level is the Interministerial Committee on Human Rights, which coordinates within the various administrations all activities relating to women and peace and security issues. To facilitate communication and share information, we are also setting up a specific online roster of experts who will be made available to relevant civil society organizations and Government ministries. Lastly, our revised national action plan introduces a self-evaluation exercise, by which we are committed to a periodic self-monitoring of all initiatives. An assessment report will be issued by the end of the year.

Secondly, with regard to mainstreaming, for some years now, we have been mainstreaming gender-related issues into all socioeconomic initiatives, and at the international level we have definitively overcome the limitations of separate targeted gender-emancipation programmes. We are convinced that by using that cross-cutting approach we will be more effective in preventing all forms of violence.

We have promoted gender mainstreaming across the armed forces, in training programmes carried out by Centre of Excellence for Stability Police Units in Vicenza, and in our police force, and by establishing a specific gender-perspective unit at the Ministry of Defence. I would also like to state that close to eight percent of Italian peacekeepers are women, which is above the average ratio in peacekeeping operations.

Italy has been a strong advocate of initiatives on women and peace and security since the beginning, having been, *inter alia*, in 2010, the first country to call for the women and peace and security agenda to be introduced into the framework of the universal periodical review mechanism. In 2015, the Security Council will hold a high-level meeting to review the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). It will be a moment — the moment — where we will have to provide responses to the recommendations made and shape the way forward. For the sake of brevity, in that respect, I will make only two suggestions about weaknesses in implementing the agenda, where we think still more engagement is needed.

First, with respect to the lack of information, as the observer of the European Union has stated, we need to enhance data sharing, which can provide critical support for the advancement of the agenda by providing a clearer picture of the reality on the ground and subsequently by exerting political pressure where needed. Secondly, with respect to the lack of accountability and the persistent impunity of perpetrators, reversing the social dynamics so that we can move from the stigmatization of the victims to the criminalization of the perpetrators is an attainable goal. In that fight, the International Criminal Court has a unique role to play in complementing the efforts of national courts when they are unable or unwilling to bring perpetrators to justice. That is an aspect that we tend to overlook and which does not always clearly emerge in United Nations reporting.

In the firm belief that all of the elements of resolution 1325 (2000) must be systematically addressed in the work of the Security Council, Italy stands ready to act.

We cannot afford to let those issues fall off the United Nations agenda. Women and peace and security must continue to remain a political priority for the Security Council.