

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security (Sexual Violence)

23rd February 2012, Security Council Chamber

Statement by H.E. Mrs. Morgan, Representative of the Mexican Permanent Mission to the UN.

Mrs. Morgan (Mexico) (spoke in Spanish): We would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the way in which you are conducting the work of the Security Council this month. We are grateful for the convening of this important meeting and for the briefing given by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Margot Wallström. We commend the committed way in which she has undertaken her mandate. We would also like to thank Mr. Harvé Ladsous and Ms. Amina Megheirbi for their statements.

One of the main challenges confronting the international community with regard to sexual violence in armed conflicts is to bring those responsible to justice in order to put an end to the culture of impunity. To that end, the Security Council must take robust measures against all those who are involved in committing those deplorable acts, in a manner consistent with international law. Given the scope and the impact of this type of crime, the Security Council must use every measure available to it, such as the adoption of sanctions targeting those who are responsible.

Likewise, as mentioned by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2012/33), the Security Council has the capacity to refer cases to the International Criminal Court and to mandate international investigation commissions.

We support the recommendation of the Secretary General that sexual violence be included in the definition of acts that are prohibited under ceasefire agreements and peace and reconciliation processes. To date, only a few such agreements address this issue. If it is not addressed in an integrated way, there is a risk that sexual violence will continue to be used as a weapon of war.

At the national level, we must have effective national legislative frameworks that prevent sexual violence, eradicate impunity and provide for educational and awareness-raising programmes to prevent the stigmatization of victims. As we all know, this is one of the root causes of impunity.

My delegation would like to reiterate the importance that access be provided to health care, to psychosocial support, to legal assistance and to socio-economic reintegration services for victims. My delegation would like to stress that although peacekeeping operations can help avoid this scourge, what is most important is that national institutional capacities be developed, under the principle of national ownership, in order to prevent this crime in the medium and long term.

We are encouraged that the Group of Experts, with a mandate designed to reinforce the rule of law and the capacity of national systems, has already undertaken some working visits. My delegation appeals for the Group to continue to establish synergies between existing United Nations agencies and mechanisms that have experience in this matter.

It is important to recognize that other mechanisms and mandates exist that also deal with the question of sexual violence, something that unfortunately arises in varied contexts. In order to achieve tangible results, there must be no duplication. The Security Council and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General must focus on those cases within their mandates. That does not imply that they cannot enhance cooperation with other human-rights mechanisms that exist.

We are concerned that the report recognizes the fact that the Security Council still has to appeal for the deployment of advisers on the protection of women as a part of peacekeeping operations and special political missions. When resolution 1888 (2009), which was adopted by consensus in 2009, already includes the appointment of such advisers under mission mandates.

We welcome the development of training modules for staff, and we reiterate the need to increase the number of women on the ground. Such a measure would foster greater confidence among women in the host population and also provide more reliable information.

Combating sexual violence in armed conflicts is a long road, and it requires considerable stamina. The international community now has an institutional toolbox that can deal with the worst situations of sexual violence that are under consideration on the agenda of the Security Council.

We must ensure the continuous strengthening of this framework, being careful that each one of its parts is in accordance with its responsibilities and mandates. That includes peacekeeping operations, special political missions, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and other agencies of the United Nations involved in the matter, according to their respective competencies.