

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

Statement by Mr. Cho Tae-yul, Permanent Mission of Republic of Korea to the United Nations.

At the outset, I would like to thank you, Madam President, for your presence here today and for convening this important debate. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and his Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, for their informative and insightful briefings. My special thanks also go to Ms. Saran Keita Diakit  for her statement on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.

The Security Council has achieved significant progress in combating conflict-related sexual violence over the past few years, including by adopting resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1960 (2010). While those documents reaffirm our strong commitment to ending sexual violence in conflict, this egregious crime remains a daunting challenge for the international community in many new and ongoing armed conflicts.

In that context, my delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on sexual violence in conflict (S/2013/149). It shows that sexual violence continues to occur in conflict and post-conflict situations throughout the world, and that in some cases such acts have become systematic and widespread. The report also reveals worrying emerging trends, such as the nexus between sexual violence and the illicit extraction of natural resources and the displacement of civilian populations. What is more worrying is that sexual violence is almost universally under-reported. Against that backdrop, my delegation would like to stress following key points.

First, we would like to underline the significance of the fight against impunity. We can never expect to eradicate sexual violence without ensuring that those responsible are systematically brought to justice. We strongly support the Secretary-General's recommendation in his report that the Council employ all the means at its disposal to address sexual violence in conflict, including referrals to the International Criminal Court and mandating international commissions of inquiry.

Ensuring accountability at the national level is equally important. However, it is regrettable that the lack of adequate national capacity to investigate and prosecute sexual violence remains one of the main impediments to ensuring accountability for such crimes. In that regard, my delegation would like to commend the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, established pursuant to resolution 1888 (2009). We further encourage the Team to focus its efforts on strengthening institutional safeguards against impunity at the national level.

Secondly, we need to be more systematic in incorporating the issue of conflict-related sexual violence into the work of the Security Council. The Council, for its part, should give due attention and consideration to sexual violence in authorizing and renewing the mandates of peacekeeping and special political missions through the inclusion of specific language on that issue. Furthermore, the deployment of women's protection advisers to United Nations missions should continue to be encouraged.

My delegation also believes that the adoption of targeted measures by the relevant Sanctions Committees against perpetrators of sexual violence crimes is another crucial means at the Council's disposal. It serves as a strong deterrent to conflict-related sexual violence by raising the stakes for perpetrators. We welcome the fact that the Democratic Republic of the Congo Sanctions Committee imposed measures on those responsible for committing sexual violence last year. My delegation would like to encourage other Sanctions Committees to similarly focus on sexual violence crimes.

The list of parties that are credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for patterns of rape and other forms of sexual violence in situations of armed conflicts, contained in the Secretary-General's report, could be a good basis for such action by the Council.

Thirdly, we need to pay more attention and care to victims and survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. Priority should be given to providing them with sustainable assistance, including medical, psychological, legal and other multisectoral services. Those services should be tailored to the specific needs of survivors. To that end, it is imperative to strengthen the capacities of the relevant national institutions and allocate adequate resources to the relevant programmes.

In that regard, we support the Secretary-General's recommendation to ensure that reparations awarded through judicial or administrative mechanisms be established and made available to victims of sexual violence in conflict. It is particularly important that post-conflict reconstruction processes strengthen overall systems for reparation, including the provision of adequate and timely resources.

As a member of the Group of Friends of resolution 1325 (2000), the Republic of Korea has been actively engaged in international efforts to combat conflict-related sexual violence. In that context, my delegation welcomes the timely adoption of the declaration on preventing sexual violence in conflict by the Foreign Ministers of the Group of Eight (G-8) last Thursday in London. As the ministers of the G-8 recognized in the declaration, efforts to address sexual violence in armed conflict should be consistent with resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the declaration highlights the importance of wider efforts to promote better implementation of the relevant resolutions.

To that end, the Korean Government is also working on a draft national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), with the involvement of all the relevant ministries and in close consultation with civil society. The plan is expected to include measures to combat conflict-related sexual violence and to provide assistance to the victims and survivors of sexual violence in conflicts.

Before concluding, my delegation would like to commend the tremendous efforts of Special Representative Bangura and her exemplary dedication to the fight against conflict-related sexual violence. We extend our full support for her mandate. The Republic of Korea will continue to be committed to implementing all resolutions to eradicate conflict-related sexual violence in cooperation with the international community.