

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

Statement by Mr. Seruhere, Permanent Mission of United Republic of Tanzania to the United Nations.

We welcome this open debate of the Security Council on women and peace and security. We thank the Secretary- General for his briefing and for his annual report entitled “Sexual violence in conflict” (S/2013/149).

We also thank Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, for her presentation, as well as Ms. Saran Keïta Diakit .

The international community has made considerable strides since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). Through it and subsequent resolutions adopted by this body, the international community has committed itself to ending the pain and distress affecting women and girls who are subjected to sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations.

It is a matter of concern that, despite our determined efforts, women and girls continue to suffer from the abhorrent crimes perpetrated by armed groups and by national authorities whose duty is to shield civilians from harm.

Instead of diminishing, conflict-related sexual violence is on the rise, and it increasingly involves men and boys as perpetrators employ sexual violence as a tactic of war and as a punishment and interrogation technique.

Impunity of that nature is a great challenge to our collective resolve. It is in clear contempt of the values we have committed to uphold. We must do more at national, regional and international levels to end impunity, by demonstrating to perpetrators that such crimes will not go unpunished.

Perpetrators of sexual-based violence must be prosecuted and tried by competent national courts or tribunals. Where that is not feasible — as is often the case in conflict and most post-conflict situations — the States concerned should be willing to surrender suspects to international criminal courts and tribunals to face trial.

The international criminal justice system, despite its shortcomings, has had its merits, including offering an elaboration of sexual violence as capable of constituting a crime against humanity, a war crime and an act of genocide. The indictment of leaders of armed groups by the International Criminal Court (ICC) — such as those of Joseph Kony, Bosco Ntaganda, Sylvestre Mudacumura and others — is a step towards ending impunity, however moderate it is.

We encourage supporting and strengthening the ICC, with the view to broadening its reach and acceptability, for it has been of immense value to the international community. Needless to say, it is the only international criminal justice mechanism that we have at our disposal for fighting pervasive impunity. It deserves to be commended, not to be maligned.

While prosecution is critical in ending impunity, we must also continue to address its root causes. We must resolve conflicts by reconciling warring parties and encouraging dialogue, rather than by employing military solutions. If necessary, negative forces must be neutralized, demobilized and reintegrated into society.

The reconstruction of post-conflict countries must be undertaken in an inclusive manner so that the process is owned by all parties to a conflict. We have witnessed the consequences of excluding some

armed groups from disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform programmes.

We must do more to empower women and girls to participate in peace and security processes, as well as decision-making roles in conflict prevention and conflict resolution. We are encouraged by the increasing number of female military and police peacekeepers. The United Republic of Tanzania contributes more than 200 such courageous women to such missions. It is our goal to contribute more in the future, in the spirit of resolution 1325 (2000).

We must find effective ways to respond to the needs of the survivors of sexual violence. The United Nations Action multi-partner trust fund is pivotal in that regard. We encourage Member States and other partners to contribute to the fund.

Let me conclude by underscoring the unswerving commitment of the United Republic of Tanzania to ending violence against women, men and children wherever and by whosoever committed. We renew our commitment to the regional and international instruments to which we are parties in order to achieve that noble objective. We will continue to support the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict.