

Mrs. Malenga (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (spoke in French):

At the outset, Sir, I would like to begin by commending your country, the Russian Federation, on its accession to the presidency of the Security Council for this month, and to commend you on the great acumen with which you are conducting the Council's work in October. I would also like to pay well-deserved tribute to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, to whom my country is very grateful for his outstanding ongoing efforts to ensure that peace returns to my country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I also take this opportunity to thank Ms. Zainab Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, for her noteworthy commitments in fighting sexual violence in my country. I would also like to express gratitude to Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN-Women, for her support to the women of my country. I also thank Ms. Rita Lopidia Executive Director and Co-founder of EVE Organization for Women Development, for her enlightening briefing.

My country endorses the statement delivered by the observer of the African Union.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo, which has been affected by many years of armed conflict with very adverse consequences, in particular on women and children, is firmly committed to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. Adopted on 31 October 2000 — the first Council resolution to emphasize the fight against the impact of war — resolution 1325 (2000) called for promoting women's contributions to conflict resolution and to negotiations with a view to the maintenance of peace and security.

It was in 1966, 50 years ago now, that for the first time a woman was elevated to the rank of minister in my country. That was the beginning of a process of liberating Congolese women from the traditional yoke in order that they could participate in decision-making positions. That process culminated with the promulgation of the 2006 Constitution by the President of the Republic and Head of State, His Excellency Mr. Joseph Kabila Kabange.

This open debate gives us an opportunity to take stock of the progress made since our country endorsed resolution 1325 (2000). By way of example, I would mention the following achievements: the participation of women in all peace negotiations at national and international levels; the integration of the gender dimension in all areas of national life via the promulgation of a law on promoting and upholding women's right to equal representation and on guaranteeing a gender balance in our institutions; and reforms of the police and the armed forces, including the setting up of specialized units responsible for fighting sexual violence.

We have also reviewed our family code, which in the past had discriminated against women and young girls, in favour of giving rights to both. Our President recently promulgated the code. We are currently reviewing our national strategy against gender-based sexual violence, with the involvement of all the relevant stakeholders. We drafted and published a national action plan, adopted by the Government in October 2010, which we are reviewing at this time. Every year on 31 October, we evaluate the activities undertaken to implement the action plan — a day set aside to commemorate the resolution, with the collaboration of civil society and development partners. Finally, we have put in place a number of structural mechanisms — for example, setting up national, provincial and local steering committees and a permanent national secretariat — to facilitate the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in all 26 provinces of our country.

Notwithstanding that progress, the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) still faces major challenges, such as illiteracy, early marriage and inadequate human, material and financial resources. Aware of those difficulties, my Government, through its Ministry on Women, Family and Children, has made a strong commitment, with the support of technical and financial development partners, to bolster synergy among all stakeholders to effectively implement resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2242 (2015), which aim to increase women's prominence in the peace processes of our respective countries. The challenge is to promote the rights of women and young girls and to encourage all initiatives that will help to achieve the expected results set forth in resolution 1325 (2000).