

**Mr. Bessho (Japan):**

At the outset, I would like to join others in thanking today's briefers, Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka and Ms. Rita Lopidia, for their valuable insights on this important topic.

Allow me to begin with a quotation from Ms. Alaa Murabit, a Libyan female activist:

"I am an arms dealer in Libya, but my weapons reduce violence and last longer than a bullet."

Needless to say, the arms that Ms. Murabit promotes are not real weapons, but rather take the form of women's participation in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. I believe her words well illustrate why the Security Council has held annual debates on the issue of women and peace and security for more than 15 years. The issue of women's participation has real and tangible effects on the promotion of international peace and security.

We continue to witness a large number of conflicts around the world. According to the World Bank, 90 per cent of conflicts from 2000 to 2009 were relapses. It is against such a backdrop that securing women's participation in peace processes is vital for the success and sustainability of those processes. For example, in 2014 a peace agreement was reached in Mindanao, the Philippines, after 17 years of conflict, and another was recently reached in Colombia after half a century of civil war. It is noteworthy that in both of those recent cases one third of the negotiators at the table were women. Just like the case of Ms. Murabit in Libya, those examples illustrate that many female activists are seeking to bring peace to their countries — and they are succeeding.

The year 2015 was a landmark year for the women and peace and security agenda. The Security Council adopted resolution 2242 (2015), which was the eighth resolution on this agenda and which represents a steady accumulation of norms on the issue. We welcome the steady implementation of the resolution. Close to 70 countries have already announced their national commitments to implement it. We also welcome the establishment of the Informal Expert Group in accordance with the resolution. We appreciate the efforts that go beyond the resolution, such as the establishment of national focal points in approximately 50 countries to exchange best practices on the issue. Furthermore, the United Nations peacekeeping defence ministerial meeting that Japan co-hosted in London last month provided further momentum to women's participation in peacekeeping operations.

Those developments show that norms and commitments are already on the table. I believe that Council members should now implement their commitments to advance the agenda. Japan has been steadfast in implementing its own commitments announced last October. To that end, Japan began monitoring the implementation of its national action plan this year. Moreover, we have expressed readiness to support other countries in creating their own action plans.

First, Japan and UN-Women co-hosted an Asia-Pacific regional symposium in Bangkok in July, with the aim of sharing our experiences in the drafting and implementation of our national action plans. Similarly, Japan supported the UN-Women project for League of Arab State countries. By funding projects of UN-Women and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, led by Ms. Bangura, Japan aims to protect and empower displaced and migrant women in the Middle East and Africa. That issue requires immediate and constant attention from the Security Council in the world of today, as eloquently illustrated by our briefers.

Before concluding, I would like to state that Japan will once again host the World Assembly for Women — WAW! for short — in Tokyo in December, for the third consecutive year. Women and peace and security will be one of the main topics of discussion, and I look forward to sharing the outcomes with the Council.

Security Council members must stand united in promoting the agenda. Such a demonstration of unity would carry greater political weight and convey a stronger message to the world. During its tenure as a member of the Council, Japan will continue to work with other Council members and with the United Nations as a whole to promote the important agenda.