

The President (spoke in Russian):

I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

Next year my country — and, we believe, others far from its borders — will mark the centenary of an event that has left a deep imprint on world history, the October Revolution. As we look back on it today, our assessments of its impact may be mixed, but one is indisputable — it enshrined the full equality for women in our country that has become firmly established on the global socioeconomic and political agenda. In a certain sense, the work the Security Council has been doing in the past 16 years is a continuation of that process, begun a century ago.

Since 2000, the Security Council has traditionally held an open debate on women and peace and security in the month of October. Sixteen years ago, our delegation wholeheartedly supported the Security Council's consideration of this agenda item. As Mr. Sergey Lavrov, the then Permanent Representative of Russia to the United Nations, noted at the Council's first meeting on the subject, women

“are an enormous strength and can provide invaluable assistance in reconciling belligerents and tending the wounds of war” (S/PV.4208, p. 21).

The annual debate in the Council always evokes great interest among delegations and presents a good opportunity for analysing progress in achieving the goals that have been set and how to increase the effectiveness of our efforts. In the years since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), much has been done to turn its provisions into concrete action aimed at improving the protection of women in armed conflicts and ensuring their full and effective participation in efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts.

The women and peace and security agenda has had increasing attention both from the Security Council and the United Nations system in general, as the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2016/822) testifies. While it is vital to ensure that the work begun continues, it is important to ensure that in developing complex approaches we do not end up neglecting the specifics of a given situation, and that the inclusion of gender perspectives in that work does not become an end in itself. The best results come when we avoid grandstanding and focus on specific returns. That fully applies to developing national action plans, which can be an effective tool for concerned States when they become involved in an armed conflict.

Where my country is concerned, we are not about to start preparing this type of national plan. Instead, work is under way in Russia on a document of a different kind — the Russian Federation's national strategy for action for women 2017 -2022. Its key areas of focus include increasing women's participation in political life and the decision-making process; improving their economic situation, including promoting entrepreneurship for women; creating conditions conducive to better women's health; preventing violence and protecting women from it; and overcoming stereotypes about men's and women's social roles.

We should point out that in our country women occupy a number of leading Government posts — the President of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly, Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Central Bank, the Ministers of Health and Education and a number of other responsible positions. Women also play a very significant part in the work of the State Duma. They make up 17 per cent — six of 36 officers — of Russian police contingents abroad.

We agree with the Secretary-General's recommendation on the need to strengthen the coordination of United Nations entities in order to accommodate gender

mainstreaming in the context of armed conflict. However, it is important to ensure that they avoid duplication and contradictory action and that their efforts are based on reliable sources of information. The programmes and projects produced by the Secretariat's experts should be submitted for intergovernmental discussion and follow-up approval. It is after all the States that play the lead role in implementing the women and peace and security agenda.

No less important is ensuring that the Security Council's work is focused on issues related to its mandate. Artificially connecting the entire gamut of gender issues to Council activity will lead to an imbalance from the point of view of system-wide coordination and create obstacles to effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The Council should focus its attention primarily on the situation of women in extremely serious, large-scale armed conflicts. That goal corresponds to the inclusion of a gender component in the Secretary-General's reports on specific country situations. Needless to say, that does not diminish the urgent task of combating threats women's lives and security caused by the barbarities of terrorist groups.

I would like to once again affirm our belief in the importance of ensuring that the international community gives proper attention to the situation of women in armed conflict and their participation in peacemaking. At the same time, of course, we should remember that there is no more reliable way to protect humankind, including women and children, from the horrors of war than resolving crisis situations as quickly as possible.

In conclusion, I am compelled to make one more observation. Not for the first time, today the representative of Ukraine strayed a long way beyond the confines of our discussion to touch on the general topic of the conflict in eastern Ukraine. That would not exist were it not for the fact that Kyiv took the route of armed suppression of the mood of protest that emerged in the country after the Government was overthrown with direct support from external forces. Ukrainian forces have been shelling residential areas of Donetsk and Luhansk for two years now, killing peaceful civilians, including women and children.

As far as the attitude of the Ukrainian authorities to women is concerned, I will simply cite a few facts from a recent report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. On 19 January 2015, some men in masks and camouflage arrested a woman in her home. For more than a week, they kept her in a basement in a Ukrainian Security Service building, where they beat and tortured her with electric shocks and burning plastic. They threatened to rape her daughter if she refused to confess. In another case, in June 2015, 10 armed men in masks and black uniforms arrested another woman. They put her in the basement of an unfinished building where they beat her head and body with their fists and a metal tube while threatening to rape and kill her. As of August, the woman was still in detention. Those are just two of the many examples that members can read about in the report.

I would like to add that the conflict in eastern Ukraine would have been resolved long ago had the Kyiv authorities not time and again tried to rewrite or tinker with the Minsk agreement reached a year and a half ago. There was a reference to Nadiya Savchenko in the statement by the representative of Ukraine. She returned to Russia, where she stated that Kyiv should apologize to the inhabitants of Donetsk and Luhansk. It is a pity that the Government has neither the humanity nor the political will to do so.