

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (spoke in French):

I would like first to thank the Russian presidency for having organized this annual debate on the topic of women and peace and security, which the Security Council and the international community continue to attach major importance, in accordance with its primary mission of conflict prevention and resolution.

The critical and multidimensional nature of this issue were both clearly evident in the briefings we have heard this morning. I warmly thank the briefers, His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon; Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN-Women; and Ms. Rita Lopidia, Executive Director of the EVE Organization for Women Development.

The Senegalese delegation also aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, to which Senegal belongs.

Insecurity in all its forms — social, political, economic and environmental — is an impediment to gender equality and to the empowerment of women. Whenever and wherever there is insecurity, women and girls are those primarily affected. However, as former Secretary-General Kofi Annan said, “women, who know the price of conflict so well, are also often better equipped than men to prevent or resolve it”.

But the specific life experiences of women in conflict, as well as their skills, are not sufficiently taken into account in reconciliation, reconstruction and peacebuilding processes, precisely because women and girls are often kept away from decision-making bodies. Last year, therefore, when we reviewed the 15 years since the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), the Security Council recognized the urgent need to effectively implement all its provisions at the international, regional, subregional and national levels.

As is known, Senegal was among the earliest African countries to enact legal standards for absolute parity between men and women for all its elected and semi-elected posts. At the same time, we have pushed for the adoption by the African Union of the same full gender parity within the governing bodies of the African Union Commission. Senegal is also the first African country to have successfully tested the powerful mechanism of the “situation room”, the crisis- management tool through which women deploy all their energy, all their commitment and their entire sense of responsibility in order to ensure that election processes are as free, transparent and peaceful as possible. Senegal has also taken the innovative approach of translating resolution 1325 (2000) into the main popular languages of Senegal in order to facilitate ownership of its contents by the population and to promote capacity- building for women, for therein lies the success of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

On another level, in Senegal, a sectoral strategy implemented by the Ministries of Defence and Security has led to the institutionalization of the gender approach in actions taken by the Senegalese defence and security forces. Senegal has also adopted the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual or gender-based violence, particularly in peacekeeping operations. Furthermore, Senegalese civil society organizations are very active when it comes to advocating for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), primarily by providing support for capacity-building for women and girls.

Senegal has expressed its national commitment in favour of resolution 1325 (2000) at the West African subregional level, at the African continental level and at the

international level. With respect to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Senegal has participated actively in the planning, organization and monitoring of periodic regional conferences where experiences with the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) are shared. At the first such conference, organized in September 2010 in Dakar, the ECOWAS

Regional Action Plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) was adopted.

It was pursuant to this regional action plan that Senegal drew up its own national action plan for implementing resolution 1325 (2000), which revolves around three pillars. The first pillar is prevention, which involves setting up monitoring structures to better detect and fight against all forms of violence against women. The second pillar is participation, favouring the involvement of women in the conflict- prevention, management and resolution mechanisms and in traditional governance bodies. The third pillar is assistance and restructuring, which are primarily aimed at protecting the physical and mental health of women, their economic empowerment, specific support for women from vulnerable groups, and the launching of programmes and structures that take into account the specific needs of women in conflict and post- conflict phases.

It is in this spirit that many efforts are currently being made in Africa, where the commitment of regional organizations clearly shows that peace is inextricably linked with gender equality. In this respect, we welcome regular holding of consultative meetings among the member States of the African Union to assess regional mechanisms for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The most recent of these meetings was held in Addis Ababa in December 2015 at the initiative of Mrs. Bineta Diop, African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, who is also the person who conceived, hosted and popularized the situation room I referred to earlier. We welcome her leadership and tireless efforts to guarantee the safety of women and children in countries affected by conflict in Africa.

Senegal also actively participates in other regional initiatives such as the intergenerational dialogues on peace and security involving women and girls. It is along the same lines that my country joined the wonderful Spanish initiative that my colleague Román Oyarzun Marchesi has so eloquently spoken about, namely, the establishment of the national focal point network for women, peace and security. The first meeting of that network took place on 23 September, with the participation of Senegal.

Despite these commendable efforts, much remains to be done because it is very clear that women and girls continue to suffer disproportionately in conflict zones and during conflict periods around the world. That is why, in the context of emerging challenges in terms of peace and security, it is urgent to invest further in national early-warning and rapid-response mechanisms in order to ensure the full participation women and civil-society organizations in peace processes. Similarly, we have to think about strengthening dialogue between women and national and regional authorities on women's rights and the involvement of women in peace and security processes. Accordingly, we must further encourage the holding of regional events on conflict before, during and after elections. It is also crucial to promote education focused on peace in order to create a true culture of peace in all States, while further sensitizing defence and security forces, legal practitioners and religious and traditional leaders on all the implications of resolution 1325 (2000).

In conclusion, I would like to point out that improving women's access to justice, the fight against impunity and the effective empowerment of women remain priority

objectives in terms of the full implementation of international, regional and national instruments to promote and protect women's rights, as resolution 1325 (2000) calls on us to do.

Last year, at the global leaders' summit meeting presided over by the Chinese President here in New York, at which Senegalese President Macky Sall participated, strong and encouraging commitments were made in favour of the full participation and better representation of women at all levels. The effort to fulfil these commitments will be the price we have to pay to achieve peaceful and inclusive societies by 2030.