

Mr. Hahn Choonghee (Republic of Korea):

First of all, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's open debate on the critical issue of women and peace and security. Since the high-level review of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) last year, we have seen some meaningful progress in many areas. The Republic of Korea would like to take this opportunity to express its appreciation to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, his Special Envoys and UN-Women for their tireless dedication to those advances.

However, despite the progress we have achieved, we still face daunting challenges. There remains a wide gap between our expectations and the reality on the ground. Civilians, especially women and girls, continue to be caught up in armed conflicts around the world. Acts of sexual violence committed by non-State actors are particularly alarming. Bearing in mind our shared concerns, I would like to make a few observations, among others, on this important issue.

First, we must continue our efforts to integrate gender perspectives as we develop strategies for all stages of the conflict-resolution process. In that vein, we recognize the increased number of female mediators and delegates in peace agreement negotiations, which has led to an increase in the number of agreements with gender-specific provisions. In fact, seven out of 10 peace agreements signed in 2015 had such provisions.

We also encourage the ongoing efforts to increase the number of women among military and police personnel deployed to United Nations peacekeeping operations. The increased participation of women in the field, coupled with more gender advisers deployed to support related Secretariat efforts, will further promote a gender-responsive environment in peacekeeping. At the same time, it is also noteworthy that the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) met the target of allocating at least 15 per cent of its resources to projects designed to advance gender equality and the empower women.

Secondly, we need to further pursue accountability, which is key to the protection of women and girls in armed conflict. We commend the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, which has continued to assist many Governments in strengthening the capacity of national justice systems, including in the areas of criminal investigations, prosecution and reparations for survivors.

We also welcome the Secretary-General's appointment of a Special Coordinator on Improving United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, as well as the additional measures taken to strengthen accountability and assist victims. We believe that more determined actions need to be taken.

Thirdly, we would like to emphasize the indispensable role of national Governments in upholding the women and peace and security agenda. We welcome the fact that more countries are implementing national action plans, which contribute to strengthening national ability to implement the women and peace and security agenda by enhancing societal awareness of the issue. We must pay more attention to building the capacity and awareness of national Governments in conflict and post-conflict settings in order to pursue women's equality and active participation through an enhanced partnership with all stakeholders.

In conclusion, the Republic of Korea, as a strong supporter of this agenda, reaffirms its commitment to international efforts to accelerate the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.