

Mr. Al Musharakh (United Arab Emirates):

I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate on women and peace and security and for highlighting this priority issue. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your successful presidency of the Security Council this month. We join others in thanking the Executive Director of UN-Women, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, for her briefing and offer our continuing support to UN-Women in its role in advancing this agenda. We would like to reiterate her call for efforts to achieve gender parity in the United Nations. We look forward to working with the Secretary-General-designate on this critical agenda item.

In addition, we would like to thank Ms. Rita Lopidia for sharing her expertise on the important role of women in all phases of the peace process in South Sudan.

As a member of the Group of Friends on Women and Peace and Security, the United Arab Emirates would also like to endorse the Group's joint statement.

One year has passed since we marked the 15-year anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) and the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2242 (2015), co-sponsored by nearly 70 Member States. As a co-sponsor of the resolution and a strong advocate of the women and peace and security agenda, the United Arab Emirates is committed to building a strong framework for action to achieve the full implementation of the agenda.

In following up last year's commitments, the task at hand is a challenging one in view of the global threats to peace and security. Terrorism and extremism are real threats, and violations of women's rights, as well as sexual violence against women, are intrinsically linked with the strategic objectives and ideologies of extremist groups. United Nations-led investigations have uncovered the use of sexual and gender-based crimes by Da'esh and Boko Haram as tactics of those terrorist and extremist groups. We have all seen the widespread targeting of women and girls in conflict zones, which represents a fundamental push-back against women's rights. The scale and protracted nature of the forced displacement crisis are growing, with 12.4 million new cases of displacement driven by conflict and persecution in 2015 alone. That brings the total number of people in dire need of protection and assistance as a consequence of forced displacement to 65.2 million, 50 per cent of whom are women and girls.

We know that the global landscape is challenging, but the international community has made tangible gains in the past year, in partnership with United Nations. First, the women and peace and security national focal point network, spearheaded by Spain, will drive the coordination and implementation of the women and peace and security agenda at the national level. As a founding member of that network, the United Arab Emirates is committed to translating the women and peace and security agenda domestically.

Secondly, the League of Arab States and UN-Women hosted a ministerial conference in Cairo last month on women achieving peace and security in the Arab Region. That conference facilitated the implementation of the regional strategy and action plan on resolution 1325 (2000) and adopted a number of resolutions on financing and monitoring mechanisms in order to enhance accountability and ensure serious commitment to achieving the goals of the women and peace and security agenda.

Thirdly, the Security Council now hosts the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security, led by the United Kingdom and Spain, which focuses on country-

specific situations in order to mainstream gender considerations. But it is not enough to merely turn the tide. As an international community, and particularly at the United Nations, we are attempting to shift how the system operates in order to place greater focus on conflict prevention and sustaining peace at the policy level. That is something that we will continue to strive to achieve as an international player committed to the full realization of the women and peace and security agenda.

One of the founding principles of the United Arab Emirates is the full, meaningful and continually improving participation of women in every aspect of our society. In recognition of that core belief, the United Arab Emirates foreign policy strategy now includes women's empowerment and protection as priority themes. In recognition of the key role that UN-Women plays in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, the United Arab Emirates and UN-Women opened a UN-Women Liaison Office in Abu Dhabi just last week. The Office will enhance and strengthen collaboration to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls — a core part of any women and peace and security agenda in the region.

As a sponsor of resolution 2242 (2015), the United Arab Emirates recognizes the need to integrate gender analysis into the drivers of radicalization for women, while also considering the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on women's human rights and women's organizations. This requires a strong research base, so that our policies are data-driven and effective. The United Arab Emirates is contributing to that research base by supporting the UN-Women global programme on women and peace and security in order to promote conflict resilient societies through prevention efforts that facilitate women's participation, leadership and the protection of their rights. The global programme will further gender-sensitive research and data collection to reveal the drivers of extremist violence and the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on women's rights and women's organizations.

The United Arab Emirates is also committed to combating extremism through the Sawab Centre, an online messaging and engagement programme, developed in partnership with the United States, in support of the Global Coalition against Da'esh. Sawab uses direct online engagement to counter terrorist propaganda rapidly and effectively, including the messages used to recruit foreign fighters, raise funds for illicit activities and intimidate and terrorize local populations. In November 2015, Sawab launched a campaign entitled "Da'esh denies her dignity" to coincide with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. The campaign told the stories of five women who escaped Da'esh through video testimonials and visual depictions of their treatment. Two of those women are Yazidi and describe how they were treated as less than human, beaten, and sold in slave markets over and over again.

Resolution 2242 (2015) makes the critical link between the women and peace and security agenda and humanitarian action, recognizing the impact of forced displacement on women and girls, while emphasizing their roles as first-line responders and the necessity of engaging women in the design, delivery and implementation of humanitarian responses. The United Arab Emirates is doing its part to address the global humanitarian crisis, in which women, children and adolescents are often hit the first and hardest, and helped last, and 50 per cent of preventable maternal, under-five, and newborn deaths occur in humanitarian settings.

The United Arab Emirates continues to be a steadfast advocate of the Every Woman Every Child Everywhere platform. That platform recognizes the

disproportionate impact that humanitarian and fragile settings have on women, children and adolescents, and the role that women and young people play as front-line responders. They are not only key for the survival and well-being of children, families and communities, but also to build resilience and facilitate the transition from crises to development.

The women and peace and security agenda is key to achieving sustainable peace and driving operational effectiveness. With that in mind, I would like to make three recommendations.

First, we must bring women's participation and leadership to the core of peace and security efforts. Women are transformative agents of change. By removing obstacles and incentivizing the effective participation of women in peace and security, we can strengthen the sustainability and inclusiveness of our peace and security efforts. That includes increasing the leadership of women at senior decision-making levels here at the United Nations. Secondly, we must prioritize the protection of women's and girls' rights during and after conflict. Thirdly, we must address the humanitarian crisis with the understanding that women are best placed to advise and lead on humanitarian responses.

The United Arab Emirates is committed to prioritizing gender equality and women's empowerment in peace and security settings. We will continue to advocate for the full, effective, and meaningful participation of women in all aspects of leadership and decision-making, and working towards the full realization of the women and peace and security agenda.