

Mr. Cancela (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this open debate and to commend the presidency's continued commitment to an issue of such importance to the international community.

It is my honour to be present here representing the President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, Mr. Tabaré Vázquez, and to offer Uruguay's vision on the challenges and the commitments ahead of us in this area.

We recognize the contribution of the international community, and especially of the United Nations system, but we must acknowledge that the full implementation of the objectives set out under resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions has not yet been achieved. Those resolutions show clearly that the prevention and resolution of conflicts requires the inclusion of women playing an active role in all efforts to achieve lasting peace.

There is clear evidence that women are the most reliable spokespersons for the needs of local communities. They are the ones most trusted in the gathering of evidence and the reporting of information on sexual violence. They are key to the development of local economies through small and medium-sized enterprises, and there are many other examples of their importance in the rebuilding of conflict zones. Despite that, UN-Women notes that of all the peace agreements signed between 1990 and 2010, a mere 15 per cent contained references to women.

It has been 15 years since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), and women head 19 per cent of United Nations field missions; they constitute 3 per cent of military personnel and 10 per cent of police personnel in peacekeeping operations. Our major concern in citing those numbers is to underline the opportunities and capabilities that have been squandered through the lack of an intensive focus on the inclusion of women in the conflict-resolution process. In that respect, we would like to highlight in particular the Secretary-General's commitment to allocating at least 15 per cent of the cost of peacekeeping operations to women's empowerment and gender equality programmes.

Uruguay is seriously committed to the women and peace and security agenda. It will continue contributing to the implementation of the agenda and will step up its efforts. First, we will maintain an above-average percentage of women deployed in peacekeeping missions. Currently, 9 per cent of the Uruguayan troops deployed in peacekeeping missions are female staff. Secondly, we will continue the mandatory predeployment training of troops who will be engaged in preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and sexual abuse. Thirdly, we will continue to rigorously apply the zero-tolerance policy in cases of misconduct, particularly with regard to cases of sexual exploitation and abuse.

We believe that specific commitments such as those I have just mentioned, along with measures such as expressly including the gender dimension in the mandates of peacekeeping operations, providing normative, substantive and technical support for UN-Women in the effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), and focusing on the relevant recommendations of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, are prerequisites for making substantive advances in implementing the agenda being discussed today.

Finally, I would like to state that, if elected as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Uruguay will continue the work of promoting the women and peace and security agenda, based on the conviction that resolution 1325 (2000) continues to be extremely relevant and remains a substantive reference point on the path towards the achievement of international peace and security.