



Security Council

Seventy-sixth year

8886th meeting

Thursday, 21 October 2021, 3 p.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Kimani (Kenya)

Members:

China	Ms. Yan Bingham
Estonia	Ms. Kesler
France	Ms. Lebbatenz
India	Mr. Mathur
Ireland	Ms. Byrne Nason
Mexico	Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu
Niger	Ms. Hima Moussa Dioula
Norway	Mr. Mundal
Russian Federation	Mr. Kuzmin
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ms. Andrews
Tunisia	Mr. Cherif
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Ghazi-Bouillon
United States of America	Ms. Krocker-Maus
Viet Nam	Mr. Phan

Agenda

Women and peace and security

Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2021/827)

Letter dated 13 October 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2021/875)

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter by the President of the Security Council addressed to Permanent Representatives of Security Council members dated 7 May 2020 (S/2020/372), which was agreed in light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, this official record of the Security Council will be supplemented by a compilation of annexes (S/2021/886) containing the statements submitted by interested non-members of the Council.



The meeting resumed at 3 p.m.

The President: I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Flashing lights on the collars of the microphones will prompt speakers to bring their remarks to a close after four minutes.

I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden.

Ms. Eneström (Sweden): I am delivering this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and my own country, Sweden.

The calls from civil society continue to be loud and clear. In recent months alone, we have heard, in this Chamber, women peacebuilders and human rights defenders from Afghanistan, Libya, Somalia, the Sudan, Syria, Yemen and others, describe the needs of their communities and ask for women's voices to count in all peace and security efforts. We also continue to hear that these actors are forced into a dilemma. They must choose whether to speak up, defend their rights and promote a better future for their societies or prioritize their own safety and survival. That is unacceptable and constitutes a threat — not only to the actors themselves, but to us all.

The Nordic countries thank Kenya, in particular, for focusing today's debate on women leaders at the grass-roots level. They are at the heart of the women and peace and security agenda and lead the way towards transformative change.

As we look ahead, the Nordic countries would like to stress several points.

First, local women and women civil society representatives need to directly inform peace and security efforts. Experiences from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali show that gender-balanced engagement teams have significantly improved the Mission's exchanges with local women and led to more inclusive dialogues. In our own region, field missions of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe are in close dialogue with women civil society actors to inform efforts. We need to further institutionalize such positive practices and link local initiatives to formal peace talks. Furthermore, women civil society briefers' recommendations to the Security Council and other decision-makers must be reflected in

outcomes, and briefers need to be updated on how their recommendations are taken forward. Promoting the role and impact of women also requires funding. The Nordic countries focus on long-term, flexible and core funding to advance the women and peace and security agenda, including through women's rights organizations and other civil society actors that work for gender equality.

Secondly, the inextricable link between participation and protection needs to be significantly strengthened. In that context, we welcome the recommendations in the open letter issued by the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security and signed by over 380 civil society organizations. We call on the United Nations and its Member States to adopt mechanisms for preventing and addressing reprisals against women civil society actors. However, an increased focus on protection cannot replace, or come at the expense of, the promotion of women's full, equal and meaningful participation. We need to promote participation, protection and prevention simultaneously.

Thirdly, we need to invest in what drives peace. The women and peace and security agenda plays a key role in expanding the way we define security, making it clear that a military understanding of security only captures one of numerous factors that make up human security. In addition to peace and political processes, we need to invest in socioeconomic welfare, human rights, gender equality, as well as disarmament, development, humanitarian assistance and climate action. We urge all actors, particularly the Security Council, to adopt this holistic approach. In this work, advice from relevant actors, including the Peacebuilding Commission, is essential. We also welcome that the Secretary-General puts a special emphasis on these aspects in his recent report on women and peace and security (S/2021/827).

As we take stock today, it is with a sense of frustration. Twenty-one years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), women are still asked to justify their inclusion in peace and security efforts. To help create the radical shift that is needed, women and girls need to be at the centre of security policy, as highlighted in the Secretary-General's *Our Common Agenda*. The Nordic countries are continuously utilizing systematic gender mainstreaming, investing in gender-responsive leadership and pushing forward with our comprehensive support for the women and peace and security agenda.

Before closing, we want to sincerely thank Kenya for enabling non-Security Council members to address

the Council in person at this open debate. We urge all Council members to do the same.

Finally, making the women and peace and security agenda a reality requires a systematic focus throughout the year. We warmly welcome the trio initiative by Ireland, Kenya and Mexico, as it is a decisive step towards making this agenda a given in all peace and security discussions. We hope to see more initiatives in future. Making this agenda a reality also takes targeted efforts, which brings me back to where I started — the women peacebuilders and human rights defenders. We need to invest in them and their recommendations. That is what truly drives peace. The Nordic countries stand ready to do our part.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Park Jang-ho (Korea): The Republic of Korea aligns itself with the joint statement made by the representatives of Canada, on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, and Australia, on behalf of the MIKTA countries, namely, Mexico, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Turkey and Australia.

It is of our great pleasure to attend the first in-person Security Council open debate since the outbreak of the coronavirus disease pandemic. My delegation would like to express our sincere appreciation to Kenya and the other Council members for taking note of the interest from the larger United Nations membership to participate in person in today's open debate and taking impeccable precautions to make possible safe participation in an inclusive debate.

I also wish to thank the Secretary-General and the newly appointed UN-Women Executive Director for their informative briefings. My delegation would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate her on her appointment.

This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the Republic of Korea's membership in the United Nations. Since our admission to the United Nations back in 1991, the Republic of Korea, along with other Member States, have witnessed a significant normative progress in peace, political and security decision-making processes. That includes the adoption of landmark resolution 1325 (2000) and its subsequent and related resolutions in this Chamber.

However, there is much to be done to address the heightened risk of sexual violence and gender inequality

around the globe. For example, as presented in the Secretary-General's report (S/2021/827), women in Afghanistan have been prevented not only from peace negotiations, but also from participation in public life. In other parts of the world, including in Myanmar and Belarus, women are attacked, tortured or detained for their participation in political protests. Under such circumstances, our endeavours and partnership to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace processes are all the more important. My delegation would like to reaffirm our commitment to participating in global efforts to implement the women and peace and security agenda.

In particular, the Republic of Korea has been a strong advocate of the survivor-centred approach in responding to conflict-related sexual violence. Later this year, as a part of an ongoing global campaign — the Action with Women and Peace initiative — the Republic of Korea will host the third international conference on conflict-related sexual violence in Seoul on 25 November. The theme of the conference will be "Strengthening women's roles and leadership in building and sustaining peace through the survivor-centred approach". It is our expectation that the conference will provide a platform to allow the voices of women and survivors of conflict-related sexual violence to resonate around the world.

During our term as an elected member of the Council back in 2013 and 2014, the Republic of Korea drew up its first national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) for the period from 2014 to 2017, while underscoring gender mainstreaming across the wide spectrum of Government policies. In addition, we have been actively engaged in Council discussions on encouraging women's participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, including deploying gender advisers in peacekeeping operation missions. It is a source of pride that, for many years, my delegation has made a meaningful contribution to this important discussion.

Advancing the role of women in peacekeeping remains significant. In line with the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy 2018-2028 of the Department of Peace Operations, the Republic of Korea will do its utmost to increase to 25 per cent the number of women participants in United Nations peace operations by 2028. As the host of this year's United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference, the Republic of Korea is determined to mainstream the women and peace and security agenda throughout the entire programme of the Ministerial

Conference. The Republic of Korea remains firmly committed to ensuring that the voices of women in peace operations are duly recognized, and will continue to contribute to the promotion of the women and peace and security agenda.

Back in August, the Republic of Korea brought 391 persons of merit from Afghanistan to Korea. More than half of them are women and girls. One of the Afghan girls who now resides in Korea said in a recent media interview that she was simply happy to be learning taekwondo in Korea with other girls and boys, and she likes the idea of having the freedom to choose the kind of life she wants.

When these persons of merit arrived in Korea, many believed that Korea had changed their lives. However, as it turns out, they are bringing changes to the Korean society, with their renewed sense of hope and fierce determination to pursue their dreams.

With that in mind, I again thank Kenya for hosting today's meaningful debate and look forward to the international community creating more opportunities for women and girls around the world, through our common efforts to implement the women and peace and security agenda.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United Arab Emirates.

Mrs. Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates): The United Arab Emirates, too, thanks Kenya for organizing this year's open debate on women and peace and security, and welcomes the Secretary-General's strong statement on the matter earlier today.

We align our statement with that delivered on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

We commend Ireland, Kenya and Mexico for spotlighting those important issues and for their trio presidency.

We also congratulate the new Executive Director of UN-Women, Ambassador Sima Bahous, and reiterate our support for the Organization's crucial efforts and for the critical recommendations she outlined in her briefing earlier today.

As she outlined, the intensification of such crises as traditional conflict, pandemics and climate change underscores the urgent need for strengthened investment in women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The coronavirus disease and new conflicts have added to the

overwhelming evidence that women are often impacted by crisis earliest and longest. That is particularly damaging because women's well-being is a barometer of the stability of their communities. Fostering the root causes of peace is therefore dependent on robust investment in women. Their experiences, needs and perspectives must inform the conception and execution of United Nations missions on the ground and in the boardroom.

In the past two decades, we have witnessed the evolution of the agenda's normative framework. It is now time to prioritize implementation with robust enforcement mechanisms. To that effect, the United Arab Emirates proposes the following recommendations, in line with the Secretary-General's focus on partnership, protection and participation.

First, including gender expertise in the planning and design of mission transitions is essential to their success and needs to be a key performance indicator for better accountability. All actors, leaders or technical experts who design and prepare for peace operations must be compelled to incorporate a range of perspectives, including from local women. Gender markers and gender advisers must become part of standard operating procedures to ensure sensitization and accountability.

Earlier this year, the United Arab Emirates launched the Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak Women, Peace and Security Centre of Excellence, which will provide that research, training and exchange of best practices to bolster the inclusive approaches to peace and security that we are looking for.

Secondly, the participation and inclusion of women throughout the conflict continuum cannot be haphazard or an afterthought. It must happen early, intentionally and consistently if peace operations and processes are to be responsive to women's needs. There are proven and diverse tools, from quotas to women's advisory boards, and each United Nations mission must utilize them against systematized performance indicators.

Member States and the United Nations itself must also play a part in it. While the numbers of women in leadership positions within the United Nations have increased, currently, only 8 of the 23 senior officials in the field are women. Partnership and funding will amplify all our efforts and turbocharge closing that gap. The United Arab Emirates is therefore proud to fund both UN-Women and the United Nations Department of

Political and Peacebuilding Affairs to enable systematic communication and engagement with local women in conflict resolution from the outset.

The women and peace and security agenda is multifaceted. Its success requires a collective effort by actors across all sectors, including more targeted and business-friendly galvanization of the private sector. Policy alignment and shared metrics in the nexus women and peace and security, climate change and humanitarian relief are especially urgent and the core focus for the United Arab Emirates, including in our candidacy for President of the twenty-eighth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2023. The five-year Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, developed under the Generation Equality Forum, is also key for implementing an intersectional approach. As both a board member and a signatory, the United Arab Emirates encourages all stakeholders to join.

Sadly, the singular ways conflict affects women are again in full view in the international community today. But we know that women are not only victimized by conflict; they are also true agents of peace. Indeed, the women and peace and security agenda is not a nice-to-have or box-ticking exercise for the Chamber or for many Council members. It is not incidental to the concerns of this organ; it is necessary for its core mandate. When we join the Council in January, the United Arab Emirates will continue supporting that unrivalled investment in peace, security and economic prosperity.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Ms. Joyini (South Africa): At the outset, I wish to congratulate Kenya for its leadership of the Security Council for the month of October.

We thank Secretary-General Guterres for his remarks, and Ambassador Sima Bahous, Ms. Bineta Diop and Ms. Celia Umenza Velasco for their valuable briefings. We also thank the Secretary-General for his most recent report on women and peace and security (S/2021/827) during the twenty-first anniversary of the women and peace and security agenda.

Allow me to highlight the following key points.

For South Africa, women and peace and security remains one of the most transformative agendas as it recognizes the crucial role that women play in peace processes, peacebuilding, conflict prevention, mediation

and negotiations. Investing in the participation of local women in peacebuilding and peacekeeping settings can help address the barriers to women's participation in such processes. Equally important is funding and directing resources to women-led peacebuilding organizations on the ground. Gender equality should be an integral part of peace processes and agreements.

The onset of the coronavirus disease pandemic has also added a new layer of complexity to the women and peace and security discourse and has required all of us to build on how the international community prevents, addresses and responds to global health crises and their impact on the women and peace and security agenda. In responding to the challenges on the ground posed by the pandemic, as well as the opportunities it has presented for the women and peace and security agenda, the United Nations, Governments, regional organizations and the private sector must deepen partnerships. That would ensure that local gender expertise and gender analysis are mainstreamed into the planning and the implementation of transitions from peacekeeping to peacebuilding.

South Africa fully supports the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative, which underscores the importance of enhancing the women and peace and security agenda in peacekeeping operations. United Nations peace operation mandates can and do contribute to the implementation of women and peace and security commitments at all levels by increasing women's quotas, paying increased attention to the quality and contributions of women's participation, and addressing the challenges faced by women peacebuilders and peacekeepers.

Through its national action plan, South Africa has committed to and continues to intensify interventions geared at supporting and enhancing the role of women in peacebuilding processes. Those interventions contribute towards reducing the gap in women's underrepresentation in mediation, negotiations and leadership positions. We do that through local and regional peacebuilding initiatives, notably the capacity-building programmes for women and youth mediators, the Gertrude Shope Annual Dialogue Forum, the Gertrude Shope Women Mediators Network, the Women's Peace Table and the Charlotte Maxeke African Women's Economic Justice and Rights Initiative. All those initiatives are part of our national action plan and take forward the legacy and efforts of South African

female pioneers who focused on women's rights and emancipation.

Let me conclude by hailing African women peacebuilders. They are fierce and determined to be agents for change. They have the capacity and the capability. Additionally, there are solid instruments within the African Union to guide the work that needs to be done. Ms. Diop this morning touched on some of those frameworks. What is now needed is international solidarity, determination and commitment to ensuring their full participation in peace processes that affect their lives.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Namibia.

Mr. Gertze (Namibia): Namibia thanks you, Mr. President, for organizing this open debate on the issue of women and peace and security. We are encouraged, as always, by the overwhelming support for this open debate. We thank the Secretary-General and all the briefers for their invaluable input to this meeting this morning.

As the initiator of resolution 1325 (2000), Namibia has maintained a leadership role over the past 20 years. We solidified that role by launching an International Women's Peace Centre in Windhoek, on 31 October 2020, during the twentieth anniversary of the resolution. The Centre's objective is to be a centre of excellence that captures a unique niche of innovative distinction among institutions working with women and peace and security worldwide by taking on the challenge of further conceptualizing and operationalizing the concept of women's influence in peace processes. Further, the Centre's main functions will be general advocacy for the women and peace and security agenda on networking and partnerships and on capacity-building and training. In that regard, Namibia commits to elevating women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace processes.

Women's meaningful participation in peace processes and humanitarian action is particularly important as it is at the core of resolution 1325 (2000). For Namibia, some bold decisions over the past several years, including introducing a gender quota in national politics, has resulted in women taking up 47 per cent representation in the National Assembly today. We hope to extend that to women in the security sector via the programmes that the Peace Centre will work on.

The full, equal and meaningful participation of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations is crucial, and within the African context, Namibia remains a champion of the agenda, especially in our region via the Southern African Development Community and African Union mechanisms and through our troop contributions to peacekeeping missions.

Public health emergencies have a differentiated impact on women and men owing to gender roles and structural gender inequalities, which are often intensified in conflict-affected countries. The outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic proved no different. Despite the negative impacts of the pandemic, not only has COVID-19 provided an opportunity to build more peaceful, inclusive and just societies, it has also highlighted how critical the women and peace and security agenda is. The agenda provides an important perspective from which to understand and respond to conflict and instability. It recognizes the stratified impact of conflict on women and girls and places women at the centre of efforts to prevent its outbreak and achieve sustainable peace.

As we continue to grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic, we must not be distracted from the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse, nor must we allow impunity for violations of that policy. In the context of conflict, therefore, our call for action continues to be to ensure that as we focus on and bring all our energy to the battle against COVID-19, we maintain a clear lens on peacekeeping operations.

We should develop strategies to promote women's participation in decision-making, including engagement with national electoral systems and political parties to provide an equal playing field for women candidates. There is also a need to support leadership development for women and girls so that we assist them in cultivating their political potential and professional skills.

There is a need for an increased integration of gender in national planning and budgeting as part of our strategies to train national officials to execute plans and programme, and hence strengthen the abilities of women to advocate for decision-making positions and political leadership in general.

In addition, we should broaden the space for women's participation in peace processes, including by training women mediators and advocating gender equality measures, as critical to security policies and practices.

The increasing trajectory in military spending highlighted in the Secretary-General's report (S/2021/827) is of great concern. We must remember that the women and peace and security agenda is a means to an end, and that end is ensuring just and peaceful societies, as well as lasting peace. Increased military spending does not speak to that overall goal. We must make efforts at the national level to reverse that trend. As we celebrate the continued growth of the depth of the women and peace and security agenda, Namibia remains quick to caution that we must guard against an overburdened agenda, which runs the risk of losing its focus and value.

In conclusion, we would like to draw attention to the strong set of recommendations compiled by the Action for Peacekeeping initiative earlier this year, which speak directly to the challenges of barriers to women's participation in peacekeeping, and we call on all Member States and United Nations agencies to implement them.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ecuador.

Mr. Espinosa Cañizares (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I highlight Kenya's work during its presidency of the Security Council and its leadership in heeding the request of the majority of delegations to resume more inclusive and enhanced methods of participation. What better opportunity is there to do so than on the occasion of this open debate commemorating the twenty-first anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security?

In the 2020 review of the peacebuilding architecture, Ecuador contributed to the assessment of the situation of women in conflict contexts. We regret that during the pandemic, there has been an increase in domestic violence, conflict-related sexual violence, trafficking, harassment and exploitation. Simply facilitating women's participation in responses to the crises would promote social cohesion, development and the prevention of violence.

Although it has been proven that peace agreements facilitated or negotiated by women last longer — and, on that basis, the Council and the General Assembly have encouraged the greater participation of women at the local, regional and international levels — the percentage of women mediators remains low.

Similarly, although the number of women in peace operations may have increased slightly in the first quarter of 2021, their participation in peace processes remains drastically low, as we anticipated at the Arria Formula meeting of the Security Council on 8 March and as reflected in the statistics contained in the report of the Secretary-General issued in September (S/2021/827). How many more reports of the Secretary-General do we need to overcome that situation? How many more women and girls must lose their lives, whether in or outside of conflict situations?

Our achievements remain far more modest than the outstanding challenges we face. There is no time to lose; it is time to take action and make investments. For that reason, Ecuador appreciates the fact that the Secretary-General's report entitled *Our Common Agenda* focuses on security policies revolving around women and girls, based on conclusive observations of the connection between the equal participation of women in peacemaking activities and their effectiveness.

I would like to point out that Ecuador's Minister of Government, who is in charge of internal security, as well as the General Commander of the National Police, are both women. Furthermore, Ecuador is in the process of incorporating more women in United Nations peace missions, where we already have women observers. We are only 24 months away from the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; what better way to commemorate it than by working towards its effective implementation?

In that context, Ecuador reiterates its commitment to continuing to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as their participation in peacebuilding efforts and processes to enhance international security. The Peacebuilding Fund has supported institution-building activities in the border area between Ecuador and Colombia. The Secretary-General's report on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/75/735) reports that some 450 women on the Colombian-Ecuadorian border have helped to formulate community strategies to prevent gender-based violence. The Fund's contribution is valuable, but much more is needed.

Ecuador co-sponsored resolution 2538 (2020), in which we urge the Secretary-General to continue implementing the system-wide strategy on gender parity and the gender parity strategy for uniformed personnel.

Finally, Ecuador, which aspires to be elected to the Council for the period 2023-2024, will continue

to support the efforts of this principal organ in the development and implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Austria.

Mr. Marschik (Austria): Austria aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (EU), as well as the statement made by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security (see S/PV.8886). As a member of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, I commend Kenya for the efforts to return to a more open and inclusive format that characterized open debates prior to the pandemic. We also thank the briefers for sharing their perspectives and encourage them to keep up their important work.

Austria commends the Secretary-General for his strong commitment to the women and peace and security agenda and former UN-Women Executive Director, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, for spearheading the women and peace and security agenda. We look forward to continuing our cooperation with UN-Women under the new Executive Director, Ms. Sima Sami Bahous.

The Secretary-General's annual report (S/2021/827) paints a dark picture of the situation of women and girls in conflict-affected countries, as we also heard from the briefers earlier today. I am not going to repeat the examples cited by others. Given the recent developments in Afghanistan, we encourage the Secretary-General to provide a thorough analysis of the situation there in next year's report.

For immediate humanitarian relief for Afghanistan, Austria has committed €20 million, €5 million of which as direct support for Afghan women and girls administrated by the UN-Women country office.

Austria shares the Secretary-General's assessment that the women and peace and security agenda and human security are linked and that disarmament contributes directly to conflict prevention. Civilian harm caused by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, in violation of international humanitarian law, remains a grave concern. What we need is a strong political declaration on that issue.

As a supporter of the Generation Equality Form and a signatory of the Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, Austria has pledged

€11.4 million for the accelerated implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

The women and peace and security agenda is a whole-of-Government engagement that needs to be addressed within the triple nexus of humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peacebuilding. Women and peace and security is also a whole-of-society matter that needs the support of men, including at the highest leadership level, as agents for change and relies on civil society and local women peacebuilders and mediators to advance the women and peace and security agenda on a daily basis.

Among the many civil society partners that we support, Austria commends the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders for taking the women and peace and security agenda from the Security Council to the ground through localization programmes and national action plans. Of course, Austria will continue supporting UN-Women, the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund and its rapid response window on women's participation in local peace processes, such as in Afghanistan, Liberia, Mali and South Sudan.

Regarding the protection pillar, the Security Council should systematically include the women and peace and security agenda in all mandates of United Nations peacekeeping and political missions. Integrated data collection and analysis defining the vulnerabilities and needs of the civilian population are necessary to improve decision-making and enhance the focus of mission efforts. Pre-deployment and in-mission training should improve understanding of the women and peace and security agenda and the gender perspective.

Austria endeavours to increase the number of uniformed women in its peacekeeping and fosters the gender perspective among all deployed personnel. We have been deploying women as gender advisers to EU and NATO peace operations, as well as to United Nations peacekeeping operations as military observers, staff officers and parts of Austrian contingents and will do so in the future.

Let me conclude by joining in the appeal for joint action against conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence. The widespread impunity for sexual violence committed in conflict is outrageous and we need more decisive action to sanction such crimes. Austria applauds the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Pramila Patten, for greater accountability, in

particular through closer collaboration with the International Criminal Court. We welcome the recent steps taken to bring perpetrators of sexual violence to justice.

Let us commit together to accelerate the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda over the next 20 years.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Guatemala.

Mr. Lam Padilla (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I express my appreciation to Her Excellency Ms. Raychelle Omamo, Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kenya, for convening this open debate. Our thanks are also extended to the briefers for their valuable insights.

The adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, was the culmination of a process that spanned two decades. States are well aware that, without the support of civil society, that would not have been possible. For that reason, we consider the participation of other actors concerned with the issue to be of vital importance. It allows for a comprehensive view of the situation at the local, national, regional and international levels, thereby enabling States to narrow gaps in the effective implementation of every one of the provisions of resolution 1325 (2000). That applies to conflict and post-conflict situations. Guatemala is of the view, that, with the 2016 adoption of the twin resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture (General Assembly resolution 70/262 and resolution 2282 (2016)), the General Assembly and the Security Council strengthened the provisions of resolution 1325 (2000) by recalling the important role of women as agents of change in supporting peace processes.

Landmark resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on the women and peace and security agenda reaffirm the important role that women play in conflict prevention and resolution, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, providing humanitarian responses and post-conflict reconstruction, and stresses the importance of their equal and full participation in every aspect of the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. It is incumbent on States and the Organization to ensure effective compliance with the provisions of the resolutions on the global women and peace and security agenda.

The 2020 report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/946) states that the women and peace and security agenda is one of the overarching priorities of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, which includes commitments to ensuring the full participation of women in political and peace processes. The systematic integration of the women and peace and security agenda in every stage of planning, implementation, analysis and reporting therefore reflects the greater representation of women in peacekeeping operations.

Guatemala concurs with that assertion and accords special priority to the participation of women in peacekeeping operations. According to data for our country from the Ministry of Defence, a total of 300 women have been deployed as both military and civilian personnel in various missions. Women in peacekeeping have demonstrated that they can perform in the same challenging circumstances as well as their male counterparts. It is an operational imperative that our countries recruit and retain women peacekeepers. Data show that they have had a positive impact on peacekeeping environments, including by supporting the role of women in peacebuilding and the protection of women's rights.

When we talk about the women and peace and security agenda, we must also raise the issue of the importance of national action plans, which were a critical result of resolution 1325 (2000). The national action plans are a valuable tool that enable States to realize their commitments in line with the agenda and civil society to support them in their implementation. They are practical documents that provide national stakeholders with an opportunity to identify priorities, determine responsibilities, allocate resources and initiate strategic actions within a defined time frame to implement policies and programmes that address the needs and priorities of countries currently affected by conflict and post-conflict situations. In the case of my country, our national action plan has decisively contributed to strengthening national legislation, mechanisms for women and the development of institutional initiatives that have led to internal changes in public management.

Guatemala reaffirms the importance of national ownership vis-à-vis this theme and its support for the women and peace and security agenda.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Afghanistan.

Mr. Isaczai (Afghanistan): Afghanistan aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

At outset, allow me to thank the Permanent Mission of Kenya for hosting today's open debate. I also thank all speakers for their solidarity and support for Afghan women and girls.

Since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), almost two decades ago, women in Afghanistan have made significant progress across a range of indicators but, sadly, this year's women and peace and security open debate comes on the heels of a new dark chapter for millions of Afghan women and girls, who are about to lose the gains they achieved with the support of the international community.

Prior to the illegal seizure of power by the Taliban, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan had demonstrated its full commitment to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). That began with the first constitutional Loya Jirga in 2002, when 220 women representatives out of 1,500 participated in the grand assembly in Kabul to draft a new Constitution after the overthrow of Taliban regime. Subsequently, Afghanistan was among the first countries in Asia to adopt a national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

The plan sought to increase the role of women in State-building and acknowledged the negative impact of conflict on women and girls in particular. The plan also envisaged the protection and promotion of the rights of women and their role in leadership and decision-making within all national institutions and at all levels of Government. For the first time in our history, female deputy ministers were appointed in security ministries.

More than 5,000 women served as police officers, while another 3,000 women were drafted into the Afghan National Army. Women played a significant role in the judiciary. A new decree in 2020 stipulated the appointment of women deputy governors in all of the country's 34 provinces and the establishment of the Office for the Prevention of Violence against Women. In 2019, the Government increased the involvement of women in peace efforts by launching the National Women's Consensus for Peace initiative and convening a consultative Loya Jirga for peace, with women constituting 30 per cent of the participants. Moreover, with demand for the inclusion of women in peace talks

growing, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan included four women in its negotiating team, while the Taliban continued to exclude women from theirs.

Afghanistan is facing the imminent risk of turning back in time — back to when international terrorist groups operated freely across our territory, millions were forced to flee, girls were banned from schools, women were second-class citizens and human rights were violated. Protecting Afghan women's rights will remain the litmus test for how serious the Council is about the women and peace and security agenda. I would like to repeat four concrete recommendations in that regard.

First, we must remain steadfast and united in our position to safeguard the progress made by women and girls in the past 20 years and protect their rights. Any compromise on girls' and women's rights in favour of political expediency would betray our collective efforts to promote the women and peace and security agenda and undermine the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). As I speak, thousands of brave women and girls are demonstrating on the streets of Kabul demanding access to employment and education. Today is the thirty-fourth day that Afghan girls have been denied access to secondary school. How long do we have to wait before those girls can return to school? How long?

Those women and girls in Afghanistan are pinning their hopes and dreams on this very Council and world body to help them recover their rights to work, travel and go to school. It would be morally reprehensible if we did nothing and let them down. In most conflict situations, women and girls are disproportionately affected by the negative impact and bear the brunt of the humanitarian crisis. It is therefore essential that the international community be deliberate in targeting vulnerable women to ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches them and involves Afghan women in humanitarian activities.

Thirdly, four decades of conflict in Afghanistan has damaged the social fabric of our country. It is time to begin a different conversation and invest in social healing and reconciliation. We must shun violence for good and socialize peace as an alternative and a means to settle our political differences. Afghan women can play a significant role in that process as a group predominantly affected by the conflict. The Taliban must know that it may have won the war but that it has yet to achieve peace.

Peace and stability can return to Afghanistan only when Afghans can establish a truly inclusive and representative Government that includes women as important stakeholders in peace and the future stability of the country. Our failure to achieve that would not only disenfranchise 50 per cent of our population but would risk plunging Afghanistan into another cycle of violence and instability for years to come.

Finally, I wish to thank the international community for its generous financial contributions and unwavering support to Afghan women.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Latvia.

Mr. Pildegovičs (Latvia): Latvia commends Kenya for convening this important open debate. I thank the briefers — Ms. Sima Sami Bahous, from UN-Women; Ms. Bineta Diop, from the African Union; and Ms. Celia Umenza Velasco, from the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security — for their leadership in advancing the women and peace and security agenda.

Latvia aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the European and the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

Latvia is a firm supporter of the women and peace and security agenda, which is a key element in the efforts to strengthen international peace. The call expressed by the Secretary-General in his report *Our Common Agenda* to place women and girls at the centre also fully applies to United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities. Broad and meaningful involvement by women is a prerequisite to resolve conflicts in a sustainable way and to build lasting peace.

Today the situation is particularly worrisome in Afghanistan, where women and girls risk losing their hard-earned rights over the past 20 years. It is the collective responsibility of the international community, and in particular of the Security Council, to prevent the looming scenario in which women would irreversibly lose equal access to education, employment and participation in decision-making. That will not only worsen the status of women and girls but also undermine prospects for the long-term stability and future development of Afghanistan.

The efforts to ensure women's role in peacekeeping and peacebuilding must be stepped up in all conflict and post-conflict situations. We support the commitment demonstrated in the Action for Peacekeeping Plus

initiative to streamline the gender perspective in all aspects of peacekeeping. It is important to facilitate an environment conducive to the broader participation of women in every position in peacekeeping missions. Furthermore, we should not only increase protection for peacekeepers against security threats but also maintain focus on accountability for peacekeepers, not least with respect to any form of sexual abuse and exploitation.

Latvia welcomes the efforts within the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) to strengthen the role of women in the post-conflict phase. The adoption of the PBC's gender strategy in 2016, as well as its action plan, constitutes an important step in that regard. We also welcome the fact that, for the third consecutive year, the Peacebuilding Fund has allocated 40 per cent of its annual investment to gender equality and women's empowerment. Latvia is determined to be a strong voice of the equal rights and full participation of women as a member of the PBC in 2022.

Latvia already contributes to facilitating the international debate on this topic. During this year's session of the Commission on the Status of Women, Latvia organized a side event on women's participation in the military and peacekeeping. The discussion aimed at encouraging women to reach their full potential as decision-makers and leaders in the military and peacekeeping. As an elected Member State of the Commission until 2025 and as a Vice-Chair of the Commission's Bureau for the next two sessions, Latvia is committed to continue playing an active role in shaping and re-enforcing global standards and policies for gender equality.

The efforts to include women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding begin at the national level. Latvia has demonstrated a strong track record in that regard. We have adopted and are implementing Latvia's national action plan on women and peace and security for the term 2020 to 2025. More than 15 per cent of military personnel in Latvia's national armed forces are women. Meanwhile, women make up 30 per cent of our State police.

It is important to note that women occupy positions at all levels and positions of the respective structures, from special forces operators to executive leadership roles. That was achieved by making military and police fully open to women and by acknowledging their integral role in the future of those structures. We

believe that is the approach that should be promoted at national, regional and international levels.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt): At the outset, I would like to thank Kenya for organizing this annual open debate on women and peace and security.

It is always important to recall the African role in bringing the women and peace and security to the Security Council. Egypt commends all the African efforts aimed at fully implementing the women and peace and security agenda in Africa. Last week, as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, I had the honour to organize an ambassadorial meeting on women, peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The Commission had a very rich discussion on how to enhance the leading role of women in peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts.

Egypt is currently developing its first national action plan on the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. In that regard, Egypt believes that adopting women and peace and security action plans is insufficient; adequate resources should be allocated to the implementation of such plans. Egypt further stresses the importance of providing assistance to African States, upon their request, to build capacities and implement ambitious action plans, especially for States suffering from armed conflict and those emerging from it.

The President of the Arab Republic of Egypt was one of the first leaders to join the Circle of Leadership initiative to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations operations. Raising awareness of sexual exploitation and abuse is an integral part of the comprehensive training received by Egyptian forces prior to their deployment to peacekeeping operations. Since the seventy-first session, Egypt has taken pride in championing General Assembly resolutions on United Nations action on sexual exploitation and abuse. The latest such resolution — 75/321, which adopted last month — promotes a system-wide approach to implementing and actualizing the zero-tolerance policy to eliminate such heinous acts.

It is also worth highlighting the particular importance of ensuring the effective contribution of women in peacemaking and peacebuilding. The Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development seeks to provide

a platform to discuss challenges and opportunities and formulate action-oriented recommendations to enhance African women peacebuilders' meaningful contributions in peacebuilding settings. The Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding and the Egypt National Council for Women continue to provide capacity-building training for Egyptian stakeholders and relevant officials from sisterly African Countries.

Egypt is keen to stress the major importance of ensuring the necessary balance in implementing the four pillars of the agenda — prevention, protection, participation and relief and recovery — while ensuring national ownership and taking into consideration the cultural and societal specificities of the different countries in armed conflict or emerging from it. We also underscore the pivotal role that regional organizations, especially the African Union and the League of Arab States, can play in enhancing States' commitment to implement the women and peace and security agenda.

In conclusion, Egypt calls for renewed political and moral commitments to further support and empower women in armed conflict and post-conflict situations. Women are the fundamental agents for change during the transition period from conflict to development. Their empowerment is a must for a healthy and coherent society that aims to achieve sustainable peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

Mr. Kadiri (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, my delegation would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this open debate on an issue of the utmost importance for my country. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive briefing this morning. I also commend Ms. Sima Sami Bahous on her appointment as Executive Director of UN-Women. I thank her as well as Ms. Bineta Diop, African Union Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security, for their briefings.

The women and peace and security agenda conceived through resolution 1325 (2000) addresses multiple aspects related to both the need to protect women in conflict and post-conflict contexts and to better include them in peacekeeping and peacebuilding processes. The resolutions that followed resolution 1325 (2000) brought new dimensions to the concerns of the Security Council and a range of new ambitions and

objectives, including the deployment of women under the United Nations banner.

Morocco reiterates its full support for the United Nations women and peace and security agenda. The Kingdom of Morocco, as part of its irreversible choice in favour of a modern, democratic and inclusive society under the lofty vision of His Majesty Mohammed VI, has made gender equality and respect for the promotion and protection of women's rights a priority both in its national policies and in its diplomatic action. Within this framework, over the past 20 years, Morocco has launched several structural reforms aimed at anchoring the principle of gender equality in its legislative and legal system and in its development programmes and at making gender equality a concrete and effective reality with the adoption of a monitoring and evaluation system taking into account gender-sensitive indicators.

The presence of women in strategic peace operations enhances prevention, protection and recovery mechanisms for civilian populations, especially the most vulnerable groups, including children and women. It goes without saying that increasing the number of women deployed in military or police contingents in United Nations peace operations has a very positive impact on the implementation of these operations' mandates. The first time Moroccan military women participated in United Nations peace operations dates back to 1992, within the context of the United Nations Operation in Somalia. In 1999, Moroccan women also participated in the Kosovo Force within the framework of NATO.

On a humanitarian level, Moroccan women have participated in the numerous missions involving the deployment medical and surgical field hospitals, as part of humanitarian actions in which Morocco has participated or that it has initiated. Furthermore, Morocco fully supports the Secretary-General's Action for Peace and Action for Peace Plus initiatives, the Declaration of Joint Commitments by Member States and the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy 2018-2028 and is committed to contributing to their implementation. Accordingly, from 2018 to 2020, the Royal Armed Forces deployed 186 female military personnel to United Nations peace missions. Today, female personnel of the Royal Armed Forces are deployed in three United Nations missions, namely, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission

in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, where they hold various positions of responsibility.

The full and meaningful participation of women in peacebuilding is fundamental and indispensable for the sustainability of peace. Women's strength and resilience are particularly important in identifying options and pathways to overcome crises, find common ground and build trust within societies. The importance of women's participation in the peacebuilding process also lies in its increased focus on reconciliation, economic development, education and transitional justice — essential elements for sustainable peace. Women must therefore play a greater role in peacebuilding at all levels, with the involvement of all stakeholders.

Finally, I would like to conclude by highlighting a few elements that could strengthen women's participation in United Nations peacekeeping. First, training is crucial to advance the women and peace and security agenda. Secondly, operational readiness is paramount to successful deployment in peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions. Thirdly, diversification of deployment areas is extremely important to ensure the greater participation of women.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Bulgaria.

Ms. Stoeva (Bulgaria): Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union. We also align ourselves with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, which Bulgaria joined earlier this year.

At the outset, I would like to thank Kenya for organizing today's open debate and the briefers for advocating enhanced investments in women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding and promoting accelerated implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

Bulgaria welcomes the latest report on women and peace and security (S/2021/827) and its recommendations and commends the Secretary-General's efforts aimed at ensuring women's full, equal, effective and meaningful participation at all levels, including in the peace and security pillar. This year's report focuses on the

indispensable role of local women in peace processes, as well as the key contribution of civil society.

Bulgaria attaches great importance to the role of civil society organizations and recognizes their crucial role in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. Last year, Bulgaria adopted its first national action plan on women and peace and security — for the period 2020-2025 — which includes input from civil society organizations as part of an open consultation process. Allow me to also share that active-duty and reserve enlisted women in my country established the Bulgarian Armed Forces Women's Association, which is a non-governmental organization meant to promote and enhance women's social status in the Armed Forces as well as implement the women and peace and security agenda.

Bulgaria attaches great importance to women's full, equal and meaningful participation in all peace, political and security decision-making processes. We therefore condemn in the strongest terms reprisals and threats against women human rights defenders, women peacebuilders and women political leaders and activists. Women must play an integral role in peace and political transitions, conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts, and we urge the United Nations to ensure their meaningful participation in all processes under its management.

Bulgaria is integrating gender perspectives throughout its political and military structures, and the number of women in the Bulgarian Armed Forces is constantly increasing, as is Bulgarian women's participation in international missions and operations. Bulgaria contributes to international peace and security with military troops under the flags of the United Nations, NATO, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. In 2019, the share of active female military personnel in all missions and operations abroad was 11.1 per cent of the Bulgarian military services. Moreover, in 2020, the Bulgarian Armed Forces received a national distinction in the category of public organizations and institutions for significant achievements in the effective implementation of policies on gender equality.

The importance of prevention cannot be overstated, especially when it comes to sexual and gender-based violence, which can be addressed, including through the promotion and protection of human rights and gender equality. In the Bulgarian Armed Forces, strategies and

policies combating sexual harassment are supported by programmes and training on prevention. The issue of protection of survivors and the survivor-centred approach is still on the global agenda, especially survivor access to justice. In this regard, it is crucial to eliminate stigma and discrimination, while ensuring sexual and reproductive health and rights and other relevant services.

This year's report provides yet again evidence of the effectiveness of women's leadership at the highest levels. While Bulgaria recognizes the positive developments in certain conflict-affected countries described in the report, we are deeply concerned with the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan and the violations and limitations of women's rights. Bulgaria has committed to providing €100,000 to Afghanistan in official development aid. In this respect, we also recognize the need for the funding of the women and peace and security agenda, including women's grass-roots organizations and networks.

Lastly, I would like to assure the Security Council of Bulgaria's commitment to gender equality, the protection of women's rights and the promotion of the women and peace and security agenda.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Cyprus.

Ms. Ioannou (Cyprus): Thank you, Mr. President, for organizing today's debate. My statement will complement that of the European Union, to which we fully subscribe.

We have stressed before in this Chamber the importance of having meaningful participation by women in peace processes, not just to satisfy the criterion of egalitarian necessity but also in recognition of the fact that peace is more sustainable when it emanates from inclusive processes.

More important than participation quotas is the task of ensuring the qualitative contribution of women to the substantive issues under consideration in any given peace process. This can be achieved through the submission of concrete proposals elaborated by women regarding the constitutional set-up and legislation in a post-conflict environment, including but not limited to the gender dimension.

Such input should be enabled on two levels: the direct participation of women in all tracks of a peace process and through a mechanism that allows local

experts to submit ideas on specific questions. The United Nations can be instrumental in this respect through its involvement — and, indeed, its leadership — in peace processes and in its interaction with local actors, whose voice it can help harness. Furthermore, its ability to draw on successful paradigms in relevant State practice across its membership is another crucial contribution that the United Nations can make. In addition, peacekeeping operations can help to create the safe environment that is necessary for women to participate in peacemaking and peacebuilding. That is an element that could explicitly be included in their mandates.

Even if gender equality is enshrined in peace instruments, that is only the first step towards an equal status in a post-conflict society. With sexual violence still prevalent as a weapon of war and with such crimes continuing to be largely overlooked, nothing less than accountability and reparations for those crimes are needed to put a society on an egalitarian track. Gender-based violence should come with a very high price tag for its perpetrators, and no amnesties should be contemplated for those or any other kind of crimes against humanity. In that respect, the role of United Nations operations is key. Not only do their mandates encompass the protection of civilians but, in the event of atrocities, United Nations missions can, and should, be a source of fact-finding and evidence that enables national or international prosecution. It is also an element that should explicitly be included in the mandates of peacekeeping operations.

Lastly, addressing the culture of patriarchy that continues to afflict the security sector at both the international and the national levels is a priority. However, that will not single-handedly solve the deeply rooted problems in the area of women and peace and security, which are a manifestation of broader inequalities and cannot be tackled without a more general and comprehensive assault on the attitudes perpetuating them.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland would like to thank Kenya for organizing this open debate in an inclusive manner by achieving the return to the direct participation of all Member States in the Chamber. We would also like to congratulate both the United Nations and civil-society briefers for their valuable contributions. We congratulate Kenya,

together with Ireland and Mexico, on making women and peace and security a priority of their respective presidencies. Such leadership serves as a good example.

The battle for the individual rights of women is one of long standing. Those are the words of Eleanor Roosevelt, a great defender of human rights. The same applies to the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. Indeed, many disparities between the normative framework and the reality on the ground persist.

As the topic of today's open debate emphasizes, investing in women peacebuilders is essential to achieving this long-term task. We would like to highlight three areas in which Switzerland is making, and will continue to make, a particular contribution.

First, Switzerland is dedicated to bringing more women to the negotiating table. The full, equal and meaningful participation of women in political and peace processes is one of the key points of our foreign policy strategy. In Lebanon, for example, we are supporting a dialogue process between women from various political parties and women active in opposition movements. Likewise, in Switzerland, we recently launched a network of women mediators and peacebuilders. However, there is a need to better link local processes with multilateral engagement. We welcome the record number of women from civil society who briefed the Security Council last month. The Council should consider a more systematic follow-up to the briefers' recommendations.

Secondly, in 2022 South Africa and Switzerland will co-chair the Women and Peace and Security Focal Points Network. We will work towards the systematic implementation of existing tools, such as national action plans. In addition, Switzerland will also give priority to strengthening its activities in support of women's participation, cooperation with civil society and protection against sexual and gender-based violence. We are therefore also pleased to be a signatory to the Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action Compact.

The third area is the most innovative. We continue to invest in the link between women and peace and security and digitalization, taking into account the significant opportunities, as well as the many risks, that can arise. In particular, Switzerland supported a study on the challenges and opportunities of digitalization for women peacebuilders. The study was conducted by the

Global Network of Women Peacebuilders and the ICT for Peace Foundation, based in Geneva. In addition, this week we have just relaunched a digital application, together with the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. We are convinced that it will also benefit Council members.

As a candidate for the Security Council in 2023 and 2024, Switzerland will maintain and strengthen its commitment to implementing the women and peace and security agenda. We will work to be a positive force for peace and for innovation.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Malta.

Mrs. Frazier (Malta): Malta thanks Kenya for holding today's open debate on women and peace and security under the theme "Investing in women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding" and for returning to the open and inclusive format in keeping with open debates prior to the pandemic. We greatly welcome being back in the Chamber for this important discussion. We also thank the Secretary-General for his message and his report (S/2021/827), as well as the briefers for sharing their invaluable insights and experiences.

Malta aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the European Union and the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security. I would like to highlight the following points in my national capacity.

First, the Secretary-General's call, made a year ago, for a radical shift in the meaningful participation of women in our peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts still rings out loud and clear today. We must redouble our efforts to make its implementation a reality and to ensure that women are fully involved as equal partners in peace from the earliest stages of every political process.

It is encouraging that women were included as delegates in all except just one United Nations co-led processes in 2020. However, that was not the case for the delegates of conflict parties. That percentage stood at 23 per cent, and it would have been much lower had it not been for the persistent measures supported by the United Nations. The further progress taken under the Secretary-General's leadership must be acknowledged. However, it is not a matter of crunching numbers; it is the reality. We must do more to ensure that all parties to peace processes include women and girls, in all their diversity, who are fully involved. We

must create the conditions on the ground that will be conducive to women's and girls' full, effective and meaningful participation. We need to identify and mitigate obstacles concerning women's and girls' rights and gender provisions in peace agreements at an early stage. Fully cognizant that time is not on our side, the question arises as to whether we should start a conversation about gender quotas in peace negotiations.

Secondly, we must ensure that the women and peace and security agenda also includes protection, prevention and relief and recovery. We cannot focus on women's and girls' participation while violence against peacebuilders, political leaders, activists and women human rights defenders prevails. As stated in the Secretary-General's report,

"[the] juxtaposition of violence targeting women and their rights, on the one hand, and their extreme marginalization and exclusion, on the other, still encapsulates the women and peace and security agenda in 2021." (S/2021/827, para. 4)

Women's and girls' safety and protection are of fundamental importance in order for them to contribute to the implementation of peace agreements in a meaningful manner. We must also have unfettered access to education and equal opportunities as mediators, peacebuilders and leaders. Malta is concerned that more than 11 million girls may not return to school after the coronavirus disease and that the disruptions to child-marriage prevention programmes could result in an additional 10 million child marriages.

My third point concerns peacekeeping operations and special political missions. We need to ensure that United Nations missions have the right internal gender policies and resources for their implementation. Regular training on gender aspects is also key. Special political missions should also have strong relationships with national women's organizations that can help to strengthen national ownership of those principles and ideas.

The fourth and final point is that the women and peace and security agenda is also about girls, boys and men. It is about girls because if they are not involved, they will not have the tools and skills to carry on the work of their predecessors when they grow to be women. Boys and men must also be part of the solution by addressing the drivers of patriarchy in society and the concomitant inequality and vulnerability.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Qatar.

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to welcome Her Excellency Ms. Raychelle Omamo, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kenya, who presided over our meeting this morning in the presence of the Secretary-General. We also thank the briefers for their statements.

We align ourselves with the statement made on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women in Afghanistan.

The women and peace and security agenda is part of the State of Qatar's priorities in the context of our comprehensive policies at the national and international levels, given our firm belief in the need to protect all the rights of women and achieve women's advancement as a fundamental partner in all phases of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. That is why we support ongoing international efforts, especially since 2000, to shed light on this important topic.

Given the importance of education as a key factor to promote the participation of women in achieving peace and sustainable development in their societies, the State of Qatar attaches special priority to women and girls, particularly in conflict situations, within targeted groups in its programmes to support education. I note that His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar, is committed to providing quality education to 1 million girls as part of our support to the Charlevoix Declaration on providing girls with education in times of crisis.

Next year, the State of Qatar will host the High-Level Global Conference on Youth-Inclusive Peace Processes, in cooperation with Finland, Colombia, the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and the Education Above All Foundation. The Conference will focus on the participation of young women in peace operations leading to wider participation by women in peacemaking.

As part of its effective role as a mediator to ensure dialogue for peace in Afghanistan, the State of Qatar included women in Afghan peace talks. As an international partner to Afghanistan, we sought to preserve the gains made by the Afghan people over the past decades, especially with regard to the gains achieved for women. We have stressed time and again the need for comprehensiveness and respect for the human rights of all, especially women, girls, children and minorities,

as well as the need to ensure the vital role of Afghan women in the development of Afghanistan. The State of Qatar is effectively coordinating with international partners in that regard. We underline the importance of women in Islamic sharia and have provided good examples of that happening in many Islamic countries, including the State of Qatar, in which women practice their rights in a full and constructive manner.

Women and girls are the most affected by the deterioration of humanitarian situations. That is why solidarity with Afghan women and lending them support is especially important. Consequently, the State of Qatar facilitated talks between the United Nations officials and the Kabul authorities leading to assurances to facilitate humanitarian aid and not to impede the work of humanitarian stakeholders. We are also working to continue opening educational institutions for girls there. In recent weeks, we have hosted thousands of refugees and given special attention to women and children.

The State of Qatar is also coordinating effectively with international partners, including the Group of Friends of Women in Afghanistan here in New York, in order to listen to the voice of Afghan women and protect their rights. We are currently participating in organizing a high-level event, in cooperation with the United Kingdom and Canada, on international cooperation to support women and girls in Afghanistan.

In conclusion, we stress the State of Qatar's commitment to continue to cooperate with all parties concerned with the women and peace and security agenda, while providing the necessary support to ensure its implementation on the ground. That will contribute to achieving sustainable peace and security all over the world.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Nepal.

Mr. Rai (Nepal): At the outset, I would like to thank the Kenyan presidency for organizing this ministerial open debate on women and peace and security. I also thank the Secretary-General and the other briefers for their comprehensive presentations and insights.

Nepal strongly supports the women and peace and security agenda. As a post-conflict country, Nepal has gone through the traumatic experience of the impact of conflict on women. In the years subsequent to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord in 2006,

Nepal has made a historic transformation in terms of ensuring women's participation in politics and public life.

Today the Constitution of Nepal guarantees women 33 per cent of the seats in the federal and provincial parliaments, 40 per cent representation in local Government, as well as alternating male/female positions at the highest levels — President and Vice-President and Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives. Similarly, Mayors or Deputy Mayors must be female. Furthermore, the Constitution stipulates the inclusion of women in all State structures.

In 2011, Nepal adopted a national action plan for the implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008), as the first country in South Asia and the second in Asia to do so. Increased participation by women in decision-making, the protection of women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence and ending impunity were the plan's top priorities.

We also prepared our second national action plan, in consultations with relevant stakeholders, including victims of conflict. The plan focuses on the issues of justice for conflict-affected women and girls, the improvement of their livelihoods and the security of women and children, in general.

As one of the largest and most responsible troop- and police-contributing countries, Nepal has increased the number of female peacekeepers. We strive to meet the United Nations target for female peacekeepers in military contingents, and we have already met other targets related to women peacekeepers. Our female peacekeepers have been utilizing their skills to engage with local communities and build trust to protect women and civilians on the ground. They are efficient in assisting the victims of gender-based violence, conducting capacity-building activities and gathering intelligence to protect women and girls. Above all, our female peacekeepers provide direct positive motivation to the local community to embrace women empowerment, girls' education and gender equality.

Women must be an integral part of conflict resolution, peacebuilding, peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction for sustained peace. We must devise inclusive and affirmative policies and programmes for mainstreaming and empowering women in order to ensure their rightful participation in governance.

Nepal is committed to the implementation of all four pillars of the women and peace and security agenda.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines.

Mr. Peñaranda (Philippines): We thank Kenya for its leadership as it convenes today's open debate. We also thank the Secretary-General and the briefers for their statements.

Women's full, equal, effective and meaningful participation in all stages of the peace process is crucial. Women have an indispensable role in the prevention and resolution of conflict and in peacebuilding and peacekeeping. Those views are embodied in resolution 1325 (2000), which the Philippines fully supported, and in subsequent relevant resolutions.

Since 1997, Filipino women have played a very significant role in mediation and the Mindanao peace process — whether as members of the Government negotiating panel, its secretariat or technical working groups.

The Philippines is the first country in Asia to adopt a national action plan on women and peace and security. A product of constructive engagement between the Government and civil society, the plan maximized the gains of decades of gender mainstreaming work in the country. It enabled national Government agencies and local Government units to identify women and peace and security interventions to be integrated into their regular plans, budgets and accomplishment reports, as required by the country's landmark law, the Magna Carta of Women. The current plan provides a framework for promoting women's rights and leadership roles in peacebuilding, peacekeeping and peace negotiations.

Women were instrumental in putting to rest the decades-long conflict between the Philippine Government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. The Government panel was led by a woman — the first female chief negotiator in the world to sign a peace accord with a rebel group.

In the light of the coronavirus disease pandemic, the Philippine Defence Department seeks to increase the financing of the women and peace and security agenda, while recognizing that the pandemic exacerbates gender inequality in conflict-affected, post-conflict and humanitarian crisis contexts. Women and girls face a higher incidence of gender-based violence and more difficulties in accessing basic goods and services.

The Philippine National Police is mandated by law to prioritize the recruitment and training of women. The police force reserves at least 10 per cent of its annual recruitment, training and education quota for women, and has established more than 2,000 women and children protection desks nationwide, manned by trained women investigators.

In the region, the Philippines supports the work of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in mainstreaming the women and peace and security agenda into its work. The ASEAN Women for Peace Registry, a compendium of women leaders in ASEAN with expertise in various aspects of peace processes, including as negotiators, mediators, facilitators, researchers and others, is a good practice that can be shared with other organizations. The ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation, ASEAN's research arm, can also share best practices and lessons on gender and conflict.

The Philippines reiterates its call for increasing the participation of women in uniformed roles and for integrating gender perspectives into all aspects of peacekeeping. We support the increasing deployment of women peacekeepers at all levels and in leadership positions.

We are committed to further engaging with the United Nations and other partners, in advancing the women and peace and security agenda.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Luxembourg.

Mr. Maes (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): Luxembourg thanks the Kenyan presidency of the Security Council for convening today's in-person open debate on women and peace and security, which has allowed representatives of countries that are not members of the Council to participate.

We also thank all participants who have contributed to the debate by sharing their experiences. We also thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive annual report (S/2021/827).

Luxembourg fully aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the European Union and the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

Last year, we celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), which was a key milestone for the protection and promotion of the

rights of women and girls across the world, in particular in armed conflict. However, much remains to be done. The current situation in Afghanistan demonstrates the fragility of women's rights. Protecting their rights means protecting the rights of the entire society.

Now, more than ever before, it is our duty to translate our long-standing commitments into action. The various situations on the Security Council agenda demonstrate that it is crucial to include women at all levels of peace processes and peacekeeping. It is a prerequisite for conflict resolution and lasting peace.

According to a global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), the participation of women increases by 35 per cent the likelihood of concluding a peace agreement that lasts 15 years. The international community must therefore redouble its efforts to ensure that these agents of peace can finally play their role.

The women and peace and security agenda must be fully integrated into all our work, be it within the Security Council mandate, budget negotiations, regional organizations, through national policies or local initiatives. As underscored in the report of the Secretary-General, greater support should be provided to local organizations that promote women's rights.

In line with its feminist foreign policy, Luxembourg continues to implement its national action plan on women and peace and security 2018-2023, in cooperation with civil society organizations. Our action plan takes a holistic approach and focuses on areas, such as diplomacy and defence, development cooperation, as well as key cross-cutting areas, including health, education and climate change, to ensure the lasting empowerment of women. We will continue funding projects and initiatives aimed at combating sexual and gender-based violence and impunity, in particular through a gender-based strategy, as we provide official development assistance.

This year, Luxembourg's army established a committee on women, whose objective is to develop specific proposals to promote integration and the recruitment of women into our army. We also encourage and support the participation of women in civilian crisis management missions. On 6 April, Luxembourg deployed a woman police officer to the European Union Police Mission in the Palestinian territories. She works primarily on a project that supports women officers in the Palestinian police force.

Last week, Luxembourg had the honour of being elected for the first time to the Human Rights Council for the period 2022 to 2024. Gender equality is a priority we shall seek to promote and strengthen. Members can count on us in the important fight to promote women's rights.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Ishikane (Japan): I would like to express my appreciation to the Republic of Kenya for convening today's important debate on women and peace and security.

Japan supports the Secretary-General's call for a radical shift in the meaningful participation of women in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts, and is willing to share insights gained through its support to United Nations activities and others. The Government of Japan has supported the activities of the United Nations Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, Somalia and Iraq. Its activities aim to strengthen national institutions and the judicial response to conflict-related sexual violence, as well as to enhance access to justice for victims and survivors. Japan believes that those efforts provide an enabling environment for local women to be empowered without fear, and restore their dignity so that they can take full ownership of peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts in their nations.

Last week, based on their work in the Central African Republic, members of the Team of Experts shared with Member States the difficulties they encountered and success stories at a briefing organized by my Mission. They experienced major challenges in ensuring the access of victims and survivors to justice, attributed to remoteness, stigmatization, lack of awareness and the slow judicial process. The recent diagnostic report of the Team of Experts also found that challenges in the system are the result of the absence of measures benefiting victims and witnesses, gaps in the national legal framework and limited technical and operational capacity in investigations, prosecution and education.

To respond to those long-standing challenges, the project of the Team of Experts focused on building capacity in the law enforcement sector — investigators, prosecutors and judges — in close collaboration with local authorities, to achieve high specialization and expertise in judicial response. That resulted in bringing

more cases to justice and enabled women and girls to participate in the peace process with less fear. That example shows how the United Nations can bring about tangible results with its expertise through institution-building and collaborative partnerships on the ground.

Under the Group of Seven's Women, Peace and Security Partnership Initiative, Japan partnered with UN-Women to promote women's participation in national reconciliation and peacebuilding in Sri Lanka. The project has three major components: raising awareness, supporting the Sri Lankan Government's policy planning and providing entrepreneurship facilities to women. The project provided opportunities to women and girls to directly participate in the process of building peace, recovery and rebuilding communities after a 26-year-long conflict.

Through bilateral means, Japan also supports developing countries' efforts to improve women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. In particular, the Japan International Cooperation Agency has been engaged in projects to empower local women's organizations in that area.

While the nature of the projects I have mentioned differs from one to another, the key to their success is the same: ensuring the effective participation of the host Government and its people. I hope that this meeting will contribute to strengthening coordination, networks and partnerships for promoting the women and peace and security agenda.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Sri Lanka.

Mr. Pieris (Sri Lanka): May I thank the Republic of Kenya for arranging this initiative.

Sri Lanka is deeply concerned that, despite global policy developments and commitments to support women, there remain significant structural barriers and lack of access for them to be fully represented at all levels of decision-making, including in peace processes. We appreciate that the United Nations, as the primary international body vested with the responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, is committed to increasing the number of civilian and uniformed women in peacekeeping at all levels and in all positions, including senior leadership positions.

The United Nations understands gender equality as a goal to ensure equal rights, the responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. The strategy to achieve gender equality is gender mainstreaming, which entails bringing the perceptions, experiences, knowledge and interests of women and men to bear on policy-making planning and decision-making.

Sri Lanka has made a positive contribution to global peacekeeping efforts, and the valour and professionalism of Sri Lankan Blue Helmets are widely appreciated.

As we seek to invest in women peacekeeping and peacebuilding, it is essential to better understand and address the problems they face in participating in peacekeeping, particularly the cultural and social aspects. We need assistance to continue advocacy to encourage women's participation in peacekeeping operations, with developing countries provided with resources, training materials and the sharing of best practices for the recruitment and deployment of uniformed women.

It is our considered view that women who are already involved in informal peace processes need to be included in formal peace processes in order to establish meaningful gender equality and peace, and that many women's understandings of peacebuilding are far broader and more holistic than those of the United Nations or others traditionally used.

The Commission on the Status of Women acknowledges the growth in civil war, armed conflict and terrorism with a concomitant abuse of the human rights of women and girls by State and non-State actors. The changing nature of conflict means that most wars are fought internally, often rooted in unresolved historical bitterness relating to ethnic conflicts or disputes — or diamonds, drugs or minerals. The protagonists are not necessarily soldiers, but political ideologues, warlords, drug dealers, State actors, disenfranchised youth and young children.

In that process, we must, I believe, examine the rationale of traditional views that are often expressed justifying the participation of women in peacekeeping based on the foundation that women are more empathetic, approachable and peaceful than men; that they are better positioned to relate to women and children and deal with issues such as sexual violence; and that women contribute soft skills to missions. Are

those not, I ask, notions discriminatory in themselves? Does such thinking not place the burden on women?

If we are to truly make progress, we must, first of all, change our mindset and sincerely treat women and men on equal terms in all walks of life. I ask the question: is it then surprising that, although women are active in community peacebuilding, they are almost completely absent from political negotiating tables? Their exclusion from peace tables is notable; the examples a matter of a disappointing record. Should not women then, as a must, be present at negotiating tables? The answer simply is “yes” — first, because women are affected by conflict and, therefore, by peace agreements; secondly, and related to the first point, women's inclusion in all stages of peace processes is crucial for inclusive social justice; and finally, the presence of women makes a difference in the sorts of issues generally brought to formal peace processes. One sees that inhibitive constraints on woman's involvement in decision-making are enormous in all regions, but are particularly acute in conflict areas. While entire communities suffer disastrous consequences of armed conflict, women and girls are affected specifically because of their subordinate position. A peace settlement is not merely about ending a war, but also about establishing the conditions for a new, just polity.

My second point is that woman's absence from negotiating tables minimizes the possibility of inclusive, just politics arising in post-conflict times. It has been observed that woman's relative absence from negotiating tables is significant, because, when they are present or participating in less formal negotiations, they tend to induce different issues and frequently women adopt different approaches to conflict resolution.

I will conclude by referring to what authors of the article “Women Waging War”, published in *Foreign Policy* magazine in the May-June 2001 issue, very pithily wrote: “Allowing men who plan wars to plan peace is a bad habit.” They suggest that, while men come to the negotiating table directly from the war room or the battlefield, women generally come from family care and civilian activism. I ask, finally, is that not food for thought?

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

Ms. Squeff (Argentina) (spoke in Spanish): I would like to begin by thanking the delegation of Kenya for organizing this open debate and for the particular

emphasis put on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) to make genuine progress on this agenda. Furthermore, I would like to express our thanks for the briefings made by the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN-Women and the Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security of the African Union Commission.

In the context of the twenty-first anniversary at the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) and commemorating the twenty-sixth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Argentina reaffirms its commitment to the development and implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. Achieving gender equality and the comprehensive empowerment of women and girls across their full diversity and the mainstreaming of gender issues in the peace and security agenda are sine qua non conditions to effectively prevent conflicts and build lasting peace. In that context, we must step up our efforts to increase the representation, participation and leadership of women in all conflict-prevention and peacebuilding processes and at all levels of decision-making.

Argentina understands that there must be even greater coordination to implement the women and peace and security agenda. That means not only implementing the relevant Security Council resolutions, but also the recommendations of other relevant bodies. In order to support women's participation in peace processes, our country deems that it would be helpful to see greater participation from local networks of women mediators with a gender perspective, crucially because that preventative mechanism, which has been successfully applied in various regions of the world and which Argentina itself promoted in the southern cone of South America, seeks to tackle the structural roots that give rise to conflicts or violence before their symptoms are manifested.

Argentina has continued to work intensively on the women and peace and security agenda during the 12 months since the previous open debate (see S/2020/1084). We are currently finalizing the administrative process to launch our second national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

At the domestic level, the Ministry of Defence has developed a comprehensive gender policy plan for the period 2021 to 2023, which includes measures to increase the number of women in peacekeeping

missions. Within that framework, the percentage of women in predeployment training at the Peace Operations Training Centre of the Argentine National Gendarmerie rose to 35 per cent of the total during 2021. Likewise, we highlight that 50 per cent of Training Centre instructors in matters related to peace operations are women.

All of those concrete actions taken to implement resolution 1325 (2000) are in addition to Argentina's ongoing efforts at the international level, such as, for example, promoting the inclusion of the issue of women and peace and security in the regional agenda, particularly within the Southern Common Market.

In conclusion, although we recognize much has been done in improving the participation of women in peace processes, much remains to be done. It is essential to rethink the strategies adopted in order to obtain better results. Argentina reiterates its profound commitment to the women and peace and security agenda and will continue to work towards its full implementation at the national, regional and international levels.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Slovenia.

Mr. Malovrh (Slovenia): Slovenia aligns itself with the statements delivered by the observer of the European Union and the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security (see S/PV.8886) and would like to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

We thank the Secretary-General for his annual report (S/2021/827). We welcome in particular intensified efforts to implement commitments under the women and peace and security agenda and to increase the number of women heads and deputy heads of peace operations, peacekeepers and mediators. The equal and meaningful participation of women must be at the centre of peace-related activities and decision-making processes.

Slovenia's commitment to the women and peace and security agenda is reflected in our Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men for the period 2021 to 2030. The document reaffirms the women and peace and security agenda as one of the priority areas of both Slovenian foreign and gender equality policy.

In November 2018, Slovenia adopted its second national action plan on women and peace and security.

We have established the Centre for Education and Training for Participation in Peacekeeping Operations and Missions, which also provides specific training on women and peace and security.

Slovenia regularly deploys women as uniformed personnel to peacekeeping operations and missions, including in senior roles and positions. Women have been deployed to international operations and missions since the first Slovenian contingent of a multinational peacekeeping force in 1997. Women currently hold several leading positions in functional areas of the Slovenian armed forces, including command of tactical units and contingents abroad. Twenty per cent of Slovenian police officers who took part in international peacekeeping missions last year were women. In addition, the first woman to command a United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon contingent came from Slovenia. The percentage of women from the Slovenian armed forces deployed to international operations and missions stood at 10 per cent last year.

Slovenia expresses great concern about the deterioration in the situation and the status of women and girls in Afghanistan. The free and equal participation of women in Afghan society, respect for human rights and access to health services, employment and education are essential. Slovenia reaffirms its full support for all initiatives directed at maintaining the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan.

Finally, we can achieve tangible results only by working together. We have to act resolutely to halt the pushback and regression in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda and build on the results already achieved. Slovenia stands ready to do its part.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Rwanda.

Mrs. Rugwabiza (Rwanda): I thank Kenya for convening this important debate, highlighting the urgency to invest in women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his remarks and the various briefers for their insightful statements.

The focus of today's debate on investing in local women in countries hosting peacekeeping operations and special political missions to accelerate the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda is close to Rwanda's own experience. As one

of the top troop- and police-contributing countries to United Nations peacekeeping, Rwanda considers the protection of civilians, in particular the most vulnerable—namely, women and children—in conflict to be at the core of United Nations peacekeeping and the benchmark of effective peacekeeping. We place high value on understanding the local context and considering the needs, concerns and perceptions of populations that we are responsible for protecting. That includes women, youth, internally displaced persons and refugees, to mention but a few.

As we reflect on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), let it not escape us that the resolution does not only address how women and girls are disproportionately impacted by violent conflict; it also stresses the critical role that women play in peace and reconciliation processes. Rwanda has prioritized the contribution of women in all stages of peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

The Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission, which is mandated to ensure that all demobilized ex-combatants are socially and economically reintegrated into their communities, uses a distinctively gender-sensitive approach. An example to highlight is that, in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, when the country faced insurgencies resulting from the instability in the Great Lakes region, the Government empowered local ownership of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes, from their conceptualization to their implementation. Through various initiatives, women acted as envoys and key enablers in mobilizing former combatants who had joined Rwanda in rebuilding.

On the conflict prevention pillar, Rwanda has similarly engaged the experiences of women at the grass-roots level and dedicated resources to gender-responsive security sector reform, with a focus on fighting gender-based violence and institutionalizing access to justice at the local level through judicial access points. Currently, Rwandan women represent 50 per cent of community mediators and 48 per cent of legal advocates. In order to address gender-based violence, we have established what we call Isange one-stop centres, which provide free comprehensive services to survivors of gender-based violence, including legal, medical and psychosocial support, all in one place.

Rwanda believes that addressing the challenges faced in enhancing the role of women in the peace

agenda will require building effective partnerships with different stakeholders, including peacekeeping host nations, the private sector and regional and international entities. This month, Rwanda joined the Steering Committee of the Elsie Initiative Fund for Uniformed Women in Peace Operations. We very much look forward to working with all those involved to foster partnerships with national and regional stakeholders to meaningfully increase the participation of women in all United Nations peace operations.

We know — and have sufficient evidence — that a major differentiating factor between women being victims of violence in armed conflict or being peace actors instead is their meaningful involvement in the full spectrum of peace at all levels. Let us all work together to make that happen and hold one another accountable on the basis of robust data and performance evaluation.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Poland.

Mr. Szczerski (Poland): At the outset, I would like to thank Kenya for organizing this important open debate. I would also like to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General for his valuable report (S/2021/827) and thank all the briefers for their insightful interventions.

After almost 21 years since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, with the new challenges and threats facing stability and lasting peace, we believe that just accelerating the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda is no longer a sufficient postulate. The multidimensional nature of conflicts and the scale of their possible consequences for societies require strong commitment and decisive action to make a meaningful change in the approach to the women and peace and security agenda. Such actions should go hand in hand with greater promotion and protection of women and girls' rights.

Poland centres its efforts on activities to increase the number of women in uniformed services — the army, the police, the border guard and the customs service. The number of women in those organizations corresponds to the potential of their involvement in peacekeeping missions. In that spirit, Poland actively promotes policies that address the potential barriers that women face in the process of recruitment and their participation with regard to the scope of their engagement in peace operations.

One of the most evident dire aspects of conflicts is the increasing number of cases of conflict-related sexual violence against women and children. Poland has committed itself at international forums to introduce measures that will ensure accountability for the perpetrators for such acts and strengthen prevention efforts that fight against impunity for peacekeepers who commit sexual exploitation and abuse. The protection of the most vulnerable groups, such as women and children, remains one of the priorities of Poland's Human Rights Council membership for the term from 2020 to 2022.

The protection of women and girls from conflict-related sexual violence and providing assistance to the victims of violence is also one of the priorities of Polish humanitarian aid and development assistance. We are pursuing those objectives with the support of UN-Women, the United Nations Population Fund and UNICEF and through bilateral cooperation in that sphere, providing protection and health care as well as creating a conducive environment for the empowerment of women and girls, among other goals.

Particularly serious challenges in terms of safeguarding women's and girls' rights and freedoms have arisen with regard to recent political developments in Afghanistan. Ensuring continuous access to education for girls is critical in that regard. We cannot allow the reversal of the hard-won gains involving the recognition of women's rights and their protection, as well as their full equal and meaningful participation in all spheres of life. As a member of the Group of Friends of Women in Afghanistan, Poland stands ready to support all initiatives within the European Union-United Nations framework aimed at safeguarding the achievements of the past two decades in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

Peacekeepers play a central role in delivering and enabling transitions and preparing the ground for peacebuilding actors. If our objective is to achieve sustainable peace, women must be engaged in all stages of the peace process, including mediation, formal negotiations and post-conflict recovery and reconciliation. That is why it is so important that considerations involving the women and peace and security agenda be mainstreamed into the implementation of mission mandates.

In that spirit, Poland strongly supports recently adopted resolution 2594 (2021), on United Nations

transitions, and hopes that it will translate into more inclusive action on the ground. Poland also endorses the work of the Peacebuilding Fund and its strategy for 2024, with its emphasis on the role of women and youth.

Lastly, we call for establishing a women and peace and security coordination mechanism among peace, humanitarian and development actors and host authorities. The creation of a common framework or set of tools for concrete work and progress on the ground, as well as the regular exchange of expertise, experiences and lessons learned, could be useful in that regard.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Portugal.

Mr. Duarte Lopes (Portugal): It is good to be back in the Chamber in person.

I will make some complementary remarks to the intervention made by the observer of the European Union.

Portugal commends the Kenyan presidency of the Security Council for convening this open debate.

The long-term stabilization of societies emerging from conflict presupposes women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace processes. That was recognized by resolution 1325 (2000), which underlined the importance of including women in ceasefire and peace processes, as well as decision-making and policymaking. As the Secretary-General pointed out in his 2020 report (S/2020/946), women's organizations and networks have proven to be essential leaders in emergencies and indispensable to maintaining social cohesion and preventing conflicts. However, women have remained mostly absent throughout conflict cycles. The radical shift called for by the Secretary-General is therefore urgently needed.

Women in several countries are already actively engaged in the prevention of conflicts, as well as peacekeeping, peacebuilding and mediation efforts. But a more purposeful and ambitious approach should be put in place by the United Nations system as a whole. To that end, the priorities laid out in resolution 2594 (2021) should be swiftly followed through on, including the need to ensure that comprehensive gender analysis and technical gender expertise are embedded in all stages of planning, implementation and the review of operations.

Portugal supports the Action for Peacekeeping initiative. Precedence should be given to investments in community-based local women's networks and the promotion of women's leadership in conflict prevention, resolution and mediation. Especially important are grass-roots women's groups, in particular those mobilizing for peace and the promotion of human rights, such as the Spotlight initiative, of which Portugal has been a supporter since 2019.

As the concept note (S/2021/875, annex) rightly points out, the proportion of women in military and police components has significantly increased in recent years. Portugal is among the Member States that have contributed to that positive outcome. In addition, my country has translated the women and peace and security agenda into three successive national action plans for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

In conclusion, through incremental but firm steps, the United Nations and its States Members can help women help their communities and, in doing so, reinforce global peace and security.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Dominican Republic.

Mr. Blanco Conde (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am also very pleased to be here once again in the Security Council Chamber. We are grateful for the convening of this open debate and thank the briefers for their valuable contributions.

During its membership of the Council, the Dominican Republic joined in efforts to defend and advance the women and peace and security agenda, including in its assumption, together with Germany, of the co-chairmanship of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security. We remain committed to strengthening the Council's normative framework in this area, in which, unfortunately, progress has been persistently jeopardized by the glaring reality that gender inequalities in peacebuilding continue and women remain unacceptably excluded.

We firmly believe that women must play a broad and crucial central role in conflict prevention and resolution and peacekeeping. In that regard, we reiterate that no process must be implemented if it is to the detriment of women's rights or young people. No peace process will be credible — much less sustainable — without the full, equal and meaningful participation of women.

The gender perspective and the protection of women and girls' human rights must not be addressed as an isolated or circumstantial issue. It must be at the forefront of the deliberations of the Security Council and must be addressed in a cross-cutting and coherent manner, including in the renewal of the mandates of peacekeeping missions. We therefore commend the Secretary-General's decision to focus his 2022 report on this theme to make women's rights one of the most visible and identifiable indicators in the work of the United Nations in the area of peace and security. In order to translate those aspirations into reality, States must invest in girls and women and ensure that women participate in public life. It comes as no surprise to us that the women account for only 23 per cent of the public administration in countries in conflict.

Factors such as climate change intensify conflicts, as in the case of the Lake Chad region and the Sahel, where women and girls are disproportionately affected by food insecurity, poverty, armed conflict, violent extremism, gender discrimination and sexual violence. How long will women's bodies remain a battlefield? Conflict-related sexual violence is a recurring, invisible phenomenon with high levels of underreporting. It is regrettable and concerning that none of the ceasefire agreements reached between 2018 and 2020 included gender-based provisions or provisions relating to the prohibition of sexual violence.

Like gender-based violence, hate speech and disinformation are being widely used to repress women's views, but what is more worrisome is that, on many occasions, the choice has been made simply to look the other way. Civil society and women human rights defenders, as well as their physical space, must be protected and supported by the Council so that they can carry out their critical work without fear of reprisal.

Financial and human resources should be increased and allotted to the gender component of peacekeeping operations. Initiatives undertaken by Governments to incorporate gender equality into security sector reform are a crucial part of that work. This is an issue that my country's Ministry of Defence has assumed with a great sense of responsibility.

In closing, despite the progress that has been made, the challenges and difficulties are still enormous and much remains to be done. We need to move from rhetoric to action and ensure the effective implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Costa Rica.

Ms. Chan Valverde (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): For the past 21 years, we have come to the Council to commemorate the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), which has yet to fulfil its promise. It is not lack of interest or capacity that is holding women back from the full participation envisioned by the resolution; it is discrimination, pure and simple. Discrimination lies at the heart of every issue faced by women, regardless of our identity or status. It operates in all spheres of our lives and is by no means accidental; discrimination is indeed both political and systemic.

Addressing the problem of women's inclusion in political and peace processes must be about more than making physical space for us or making sure that there are enough women in the room. It must be about democratizing and reframing our discourse around women and girls and transforming these spaces so that they are truly capable of honouring our different roles, experiences and contributions to society. On that note, allow me to stress three points,

First, while the emphasis of the women and peace and security agenda is rightly on the participation of women and girls, it falls short in its framing of gender. The resolutions under the women and peace and security umbrella define gender in a binary sense, ignoring the vulnerability of trans and gender-non-conforming people and individuals of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and sex characteristics. The binary framework is especially concerning because we know that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people are at particular risk throughout the conflict cycle. It is crucial to incorporate a broader understanding of gender into the agendas of women and men alike. Such an understanding should take into account disaggregated data on the full gender spectrum in order to better understand the gendered impacts of conflict and weapons, including small arms and light weapons, cyberoperations, landmines and more.

Secondly, Costa Rica welcomes the Secretary-General's most recent report on women and peace and security (S/2021/827) and the recognition that attention to excessive levels of global military spending has been lacking in women, peace and security normative frameworks, both globally and nationally. In fact, disarmament and demilitarization have been almost entirely absent from debates on this issue and from

national action plans. It is with a sense of urgency that we must bring these two issues to the table and to consider how gender norms, including militarized masculinities, impact conflict and armed violence, as well as the production, manufacture, acquisition, possession and use of deadly weapons.

Thirdly, none of the resolutions on women and peace and security explicitly mentions widows or widowhood. However, these resolutions can serve as a framework for integrating the specific needs of diverse women — including armed-violence widows — in needs analysis and recovery. Far from being helpless victims, widows have also been at the forefront in calling for the cessation of fighting, addressing root causes of violence and conflict, and building sustainable peace. This is recognized in the resolution introduced by the Group of African States in the Third Committee. This acknowledgement should be echoed in the walls of the Council.

In conclusion, it is important to reinforce that the four pillars of the women and peace and security agenda are not optional. They represent binding commitments. But Costa Rica strongly believes that it is the prevention pillar that needs the most attention and the most work. It is our duty to implement a robust prevention agenda both for armed violence and armed conflict and for gender discrimination, at both the national and the international levels.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein.

Ms. Oehri (Liechtenstein): I thank you, Sir, for convening this important open debate on women and peace and security. Liechtenstein thanks your delegation in particular for bringing the membership back to the Security Council Chamber for the first truly open debate since the beginning of the coronavirus disease pandemic. We hope that this meeting will set a precedent for the return of the wider United Nations membership in a safe manner to this Chamber, in the true spirit of multilateralism.

Women's full, equal and meaningful participation in all stages of conflict prevention and resolution has been a key pillar of the women and peace and security agenda since its inception in 2000. Resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions acknowledge gender-responsive approaches to sustaining peace and women's crucial role as agents of change. For instance, resolution

2594 (2021), adopted in September, recognizes the role of women and girls in peacekeeping transitions.

In many parts of the world, women have brought political change and contributed to sustainable peace as peacekeepers, mediators, lawyers, journalists and human rights defenders, among others. Women's participation in peace talks has increased the probability of peace agreements lasting two years by 20 per cent, and those lasting 15 years by 35 per cent. Yet women remain largely underrepresented, such as in United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities, and their contribution is often overlooked and understudied.

The relationship between the women and peace and security agenda and respect for international humanitarian law is one area that deserves further research, especially given the increasing erosion of respect for that body of law in recent times. To this end, and in light of the twentieth anniversary of the women and peace and security agenda, Liechtenstein has launched a research project with the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security to better understand the effects of the presence of women in armed forces on respect for international humanitarian law. The recently launched study "Women in Uniform" shows how the changing gender make-up of the military affects its operations and culture, which can also have an impact on compliance with international humanitarian law.

We remain deeply concerned about the situation of women and girls in conflict, such as in Yemen, Myanmar and the Tigray region of Ethiopia. We note in particular the precarious situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, who have fought with great courage and resolve for their rights and freedoms. Their hard-won gains are now under serious threat, and the Security Council has an obligation to ensure that these gains are not reversed. Liechtenstein calls for the respect and protection of all human rights, including women's and girls' rights to free expression and movement, quality education and employment. Liechtenstein calls on those who are effectively in control to comply with their obligations under international human rights law and relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2593 (2021).

That resolution encourages all parties to seek an inclusive, negotiated political settlement with the full, equal and meaningful participation of women that responds to the desire of Afghans and adheres to the rule of law. Peace cannot be built by imposing a

patriarchal society on women and girls. Any backsliding on women's political participation would be disastrous for Afghanistan's future and its prospects for peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia.

Mr. Aidid (Malaysia): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's important open debate in the pre-pandemic format on women and peace and security with an emphasis on women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Malaysia would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his remarks and briefers for their briefings.

Malaysia remains convinced that women's participation is key to the success and longevity of peace processes. As an elected member of the Security Council in 2000, Malaysia supported the first and landmark resolution on the topic, resolution 1325 (2000). We also co-sponsored resolution 2538 (2020) on women in peacekeeping, in 2020, in line with our commitment to the women and peace and security agenda and the Action for Peacekeeping initiative.

Malaysia continues to support efforts aimed at enhancing the performance of peacekeeping operations through supporting the full participation of women in peace processes and making peacekeeping more responsive to gender. In this regard, Malaysia has recently deployed to Lebanon its largest number of women peacekeepers serving under the United Nations banner, a deployment consisting of 85 female personnel. We are convinced that their participation will contribute to promoting inclusiveness towards sustainable peace and development.

At the same time, Malaysia supports efforts to continuously update peacekeeping training programmes so as to meet new challenges, including to equip women peacekeepers with necessary skills, tools and equipment at the operational and strategic levels. We also believe that peacekeeping missions and peace operations must be adequately supported to respond to and prevent incidences of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict areas. In this context, Malaysian peacekeepers are continually trained, including in areas of prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, in their predeployment training programme.

Malaysia also calls for greater efforts and initiatives by Member States, United Nations entities and civil society organizations in building capacity and

advancing the women and peace and security agenda at the national, regional and international levels. We continue to support UN-Women, including through consistent financial contributions in support of women's meaningful participation and the integration of gender perspectives in peace and security processes.

At the regional level, Malaysia is committed to working closely with other States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in advancing the women and peace and security agenda. In 2017, ASEAN adopted the Joint Statement on Promoting Women, Peace and Security in ASEAN at the thirty-first ASEAN summit. This commitment was subsequently reaffirmed by the Joint Statement of ASEAN Foreign Ministers, in 2019. In September 2020, ASEAN held a Ministerial Dialogue on strengthening women's role in achieving sustainable peace and security and reiterated our determination to enhance the role of women in conflict prevention and resolution, post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation. The Ministerial Dialogue also expanded the network of women in peace and security in Southeast Asia. At present, ASEAN is finalizing its regional plan of action on women, peace and security. In the area of peacekeeping, the ASEAN women military and law enforcement officers have made a positive impact through their active participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations globally.

Sustainable peace, gender equality and inclusive institutions are at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this regard, Malaysia remains committed to advancing the women and peace and security agenda and ensuring the full mainstreaming of women in all areas of peace and security thank you.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria.

Ms. Ighil (Algeria): At the outset, I would like to congratulate Kenya for its leadership in the presidency of the Security Council for this month, and I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's debate on women and peace and security. I also thank the briefers for their insightful briefings.

As we hold this debate amid our recovery efforts from an unprecedented pandemic that brought to light deep-seated disparities that especially affect women and girls and pose severe threats in conflict zones, it is due time to take stock of what we have achieved since the inception of the women and peace and security

agenda in order to strengthen our commitment to the full and effective participation of women in United Nations-led peace processes. In this regard, the past 20 years have seen greater attention being given to the role and representation of women in United Nations peace operations. Increasingly robust mandates on women, peace and security have been adopted with a greater understanding of the need to use gender expertise and analysis.

The proportion of women in military and police components has begun to increase at a faster rate in recent years, reaffirming the broad agreement that prospects for successful peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities are better where women have greater levels of empowerment. However, despite this significant progress, it is clear that more efforts are needed to place women's participation and leadership at the core of conflict-prevention and peace-settlement efforts.

Against this backdrop and building upon our commitment to the empowerment of women, Algeria endeavours to promote the role of women as key actors for peace at both the national and regional levels. Indeed, as part of its implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), Algeria has adopted a national action plan that will serve as a road map to define the country's priorities in the promotion of the role of women in peace processes. This action plan was elaborated by a multisectoral and multidisciplinary committee composed of representatives of civil society, thereby ensuring an inclusive and grass-roots approach.

Within the League of Arab States, Algeria led the establishment of the Emergency Committee for the Protection of Women in Armed Conflict, which enabled the creation of an institution dedicated to peace in connection with the Arab Women's Committee. An Algerian woman ambassador has been appointed to be part of the "Mediators for Peace" mechanism set up by the Committee in February 2020.

At the level of the African continent, the role of women, who are the main victims of conflicts, crises and forced displacement, remains major. In this regard, Algeria has always advocated the strengthening of the participation of women in peace processes and conflict management within the African Union (AU). Accordingly, Algeria hosted the first General Assembly of the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation, FemWise-Africa, which aims at institutionalizing the place and role of women

in peace negotiations. These meetings helped shape the debate on the importance of developing strategies to accelerate women's action in peacebuilding efforts and stimulate dialogue among AU member States in order to develop guidelines for gender-sensitive actions in conflicts and post-conflict recovery processes.

My delegation believes that the success of our common endeavour lies in the political will to empower women and strengthen their ability to be at the centre of the peacebuilding architecture. Two areas of action should be considered in that regard.

First, we should reinforce the participation of women in conflict resolution and peacekeeping operations. In that regard, we should provide the necessary training for mediators and envoys who participate in mediation and ceasefire negotiations and in achieving peace and preventive diplomacy. We should ensure that peace agreements include provisions to strengthen the role of women in conflict resolution, as was the case with the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali emanating from the Algiers process.

Secondly, we should reinforce dialogue and engagement with the relevant stakeholders, such as regional and national organizations and civil society members that deal with peace, security and development, in order to better understand the role of women in a wide range of mediation and conflict-prevention activities, especially in Africa.

Let me conclude by stressing that, more than 20 years after the establishment of the women and peace and security agenda, the responsibility for its implementation falls to us. As part of the international community, we should strengthen our joint action to meet the challenges faced by women and give the United Nations the proper means to put women at the centre of peace efforts worldwide. We can deliver on the peace agenda only if we recentre the role of women as a key element in achieving progress. Algeria is fully dedicated to that common goal.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Bahrain.

Mr. Alrowaiei (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the delegation of the Republic of Kenya for holding this annual open debate on women and peace and security under the theme "Investing in women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding" to shed light on women's contribution and their role

in all phases of peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding. I also thank the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, and all the briefers for their valuable briefings. I sincerely congratulate Ms. Sima Bahous, Executive Director of UN-Women, on assuming that international important position. I wish her success.

The women and peace and security agenda is a main priority of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative that was developed by the Secretary-General and supported by the Kingdom of Bahrain. This topic has received growing attention in the past 20 years, especially since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), which stresses the need for equal participation of women and men at all levels, especially in decision-making, and including women in peacebuilding and peacekeeping operations during crises and conflicts facing humankind.

The Kingdom of Bahrain is keen to support all genuine endeavours, especially those made during difficult circumstances that the world is witnessing today. We have noble goals of achieving an additional paradigm shift to support the participation of women in various peace operations and opening new horizons for women in an equal and effective way in the development sphere.

Under the leadership of the King of the Kingdom of Bahrain, His Majesty Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, women are a top national priority, where they contribute to maintaining the highest levels of social security, ensuring the participation of women in all fields. Under the leadership of His Royal Highness Crown Prince and Prime Minister Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Government is making ongoing efforts to develop the necessary projects, programmes and plans so as to include women as active members in comprehensive development processes.

This year the Kingdom of Bahrain celebrates the twentieth anniversary of the Supreme Council for Women, presided over by Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka Bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, spouse of His Majesty the King. The Supreme Council for Women is a national structure that contributes to the advancement of Bahraini women. It promotes their effective role in building families and society, while advancing comprehensive development based on the integrated foundations of justice and equal partnership.

The Supreme Council for Women is keen to effectively participate in all efforts of relevant regional and international bodies, including enhancing the role of Bahraini women in their contribution to achieving international peace and security, by ensuring their presence in different regional and international forums.

The joint work for granting the second edition of the Princess Sabeeka Bint Ibrahim Al-Khalifa Global Award for Women's Empowerment has started. UN-Women, with the cooperation with the Supreme Council for Women in the Kingdom of Bahrain, is now accepting nominations for the award, which seeks to show the efforts and contribution of Governments, businesses and civil society organizations, as well as accomplished experts, towards empowering women and girls around the world. The main focus of the award, which was first launched in 2018, is to encourage and recognize national efforts in all countries to enable women and establish a global forum to publicly express appreciation for achievements by institutions and individuals in empowering women. The focus is also on the impact of including women in development processes at the institutional and the country levels.

The award also represents a message to the world from the Kingdom of Bahrain about the great importance of the role of women in development leading to stability and comprehensive peace.

In conclusion, we, in the Kingdom of Bahrain, stress our support for all international efforts towards the advancement and progress of women in achieving gender equality at the development and humanitarian levels so as to promote their participation as active partners in security, peace and sustainable justice.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

Before concluding, I would like to once again thank all the participants who joined us today. I would also like to thank the Member States and regional groups that to date have submitted written statements on the subject of today's discussion. Statements that are received by the end of today will form part of the compilation of statements from this meeting, and we look forward to receiving more.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.