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Provisional

President: Mrs. Chanda/Mrs. Baumann-Bresolin (Switzerland)

Members:

Algeria	Mr. Koudri
China	Ms. Xu Hui
Ecuador	Mr. Rojas Jacome
France	Mr. Wavrin
Guyana	Ms. Van Doimen
Japan	Mr. Ono
Malta	Ms. Micallef
Mozambique	Mr. Irachande Gouveia
Republic of Korea	Ms. Choi Seoyoon
Russian Federation	Mr. Kondratev
Sierra Leone	Mrs. Kamara-Joyner
Slovenia	Mrs. Blokar Drobič
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Ghazi-Bouillon
United States of America	Mr. Trager

Agenda

Women and peace and security

Women building peace in a changing environment

Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2024/671)

Letter dated 1 October 2024 from the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2024/709)

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The meeting resumed at 3.05 p.m.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Romania.

Ms. Tinca (Romania): Let me first congratulate Switzerland on the manner in which it is handling the work of the Council in this changing but also very challenging environment.

I would also like to extend my delegation's appreciation for the briefings that we heard this morning in the Chamber. They echo the most recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2024/671), whose conclusions are crystal clear: today's multidimensional security challenges have severely impacted decades of progress in women's rights. This is a wake-up call. We need to implement our common pledges in relation to the women and peace and security agenda and to reinforce our efforts to promote all rights of women and girls. The wake-up call is even more serious and more important today as we celebrate United Nations Day.

Unprecedented restrictions on women's and girls' education, freedom of movement and opinion and the right to work, such as those enforced by the Taliban in Afghanistan, are a stark reminder that we have not done enough. We must insist on sending a strong message that this type of backsliding cannot be tolerated in the twenty-first century. Moreover, experience shows that in places where women's rights are suppressed, other human rights are subsequently soon curtailed. But all conflicts around the world, including the war of aggression led by Russia against Ukraine, show the disproportionate impact that conflicts have on women and girls as targets and collateral victims.

Women must be meaningfully included at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions. Equally important are women's and girls' early engagement in multisectoral security issues and meaningful participation in peacemaking efforts as negotiators, mediators and decision-makers. That is where dedicated policies tailored to the women and peace and security agenda, such as national action plans, can bring significant contributions. Romania recently adopted its second national strategy and national action plan on women and peace and security on the basis of five mutually reinforcing objectives: the integration of a gender perspective in defence and security; increased and meaningful participation of women in peace and

mediation processes; the prevention of, and fight against, all forms of gender-based discrimination, harassment and sexual violence; the provision of assistance and recovery; and enhanced cooperation with civil society and relevant organizations in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. The action plan aims to harness the immense potential of women in building and maintaining peace.

Looking around the room and in the corridors of the United Nations, we see a more positive picture and find tangible proof that our efforts have yielded positive results in ensuring women's participation in diplomatic and political forums at the highest level. There are women ambassadors leading their countries in the Security Council's affairs. We need to use those examples to encourage women and girls to speak out on public affairs and actively pursue initiatives and adopt outlooks on all three pillars of the United Nations — peace and security, human rights and sustainable development.

We also need to make sure that women's voices are mainstreamed and that what is still the exception in women's rights becomes the norm. Last but not least, we should use the recently adopted Pact for the Future (General Assembly resolution 79/1) to take forward the women and peace and security agenda, while giving young and future generations the space to have their say on this chapter in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Ms. Levchenko (Ukraine): We thank Switzerland for calling this open debate and thank all briefers for their comprehensive presentations.

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

Since Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine began in 2014, and particularly since the full-scale invasion in February 2022, Ukraine has endured relentless and brutal attacks, violations of international law and egregious disregard for our territorial sovereignty. The Russian aggression has led to the destruction of critical infrastructure, caused untold humanitarian disaster and given rise to numerous war crimes under international humanitarian law.

Those crimes include, among others, wilful killing, the targeting of civilians, summary executions, enforced deportation, torture and the widespread perpetration of conflict-related sexual violence, which has targeted women, men, girls and boys alike. Those acts violate not only the Geneva Conventions but also the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations and customary international law. The United Nations General Assembly, in a series of resolutions, repeatedly condemned Russia's unlawful aggression and demanded the full withdrawal of Russian military forces from Ukraine's internationally recognized borders. Those resolutions reaffirm the territorial integrity of Ukraine and uphold the principle that acts of aggression must never be tolerated.

Ukraine's commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women remains unwavering, even amid such adversity. Our Government is actively implementing the second national action plan under resolution 1325 (2000), on the women and peace and security agenda. While our primary goal is peace and justice for Ukraine and our whole region, we also envision a future in which our recovery is gender-responsive and inclusive, ensuring that women and marginalized communities are integral to rebuilding a peaceful, stable Ukraine.

One of the key initiatives in that regard is the platform on gender mainstreaming and inclusive recovery, which coordinates the efforts of the Government, civil society and international partners. The platform ensures that women's voices are central to decision-making processes and that gender perspectives are integrated into every stage of our recovery. In addition, the International Alliance on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, launched at the 2024 Ukraine Recovery Conference in Berlin, has garnered a total commitment of €46 million for advancing those goals, demonstrating the global solidarity behind our recovery. We are grateful for the international military, diplomatic, economic and humanitarian support. Together, we are striving for the full de-occupation of our territories and the return of peace and justice. However, the journey towards peace cannot succeed if Russia is not held accountable for its crimes. International law is clear: those responsible for war crimes, crimes against humanity and violations of human rights must face justice. In that regard, we are working closely with international tribunals and judicial institutions so as to ensure accountability for the atrocities committed.

We continue to urge the Security Council to strengthen accountability mechanisms for war crimes, including conflict-related sexual violence, ensuring that the military and political actors responsible are prosecuted. It should integrate gender perspectives across all United Nations missions and programmes, including peacekeeping, humanitarian and development efforts, in accordance with resolution 1325 (2000). It should enhance technical and financial support for local initiatives aimed at empowering women in peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery. It should intensify monitoring and reporting mechanisms to ensure that all Member States are adhering to existing women and peace and security standards and carry out regular and formal consultations with civil society organizations. We call on the international community to increase sanctions against the Russian Federation. Furthermore, we urge the Secretary-General to include Russia in the list of shame given its widespread use of conflict-related sexual violence against civilians and prisoners of war.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Ms. Bräutigam (Germany): Germany aligns itself with the statements to be made on behalf of the European Union and the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

In the Pact for the Future (General Assembly resolution 79/1), we all agreed to accelerate the implementation of our commitments on women and peace and security, and we must do so quickly and effectively. It is neither knowledge or awareness that is missing — it is political will and implementation.

I would like to highlight the following five points in that regard.

First, reliable, flexible and sufficient funding for local, women-led organizations, women peacebuilders and women human rights defenders is essential but often lacking. We must finally equip them with the resources they need for their valuable work. Germany has been the largest donor to the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, which pursues precisely that: long-term, non-bureaucratic core funding to women-led organizations in conflict zones. Germany will make an additional \$6.5 million available to the Fund this year.

Secondly, without accountability, there can be no sustainable peace. Every survivor of conflict-related sexual violence must be granted access to justice and

essential services. That makes the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and her Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict more relevant than ever. Germany is committed to continuing its funding of the Team of Experts, and we call on all Member States to support their work as well. We will expand our work on accountability, including with regard to the principle of universal jurisdiction. As set out in resolution 2467 (2019), the Security Council's full toolkit must be implemented, including targeted sanctions.

Thirdly, resolution 2467 (2019) has — for the first time — addressed the situation of children born out of conflict-related rape. Just like their respective mothers, those children often face stigmatization and significant legal and administrative discrimination. We must improve their lives and raise awareness about their specific situation and needs. That is a task for all of us.

Fourthly, women are essential actors for peace. Yet they are too often sidelined, including in peacekeeping and the leadership of international organizations. It is high time for that to change. The Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations and the Network for Uniformed Women Peacekeepers are innovative ways to deliver results.

Finally, the climate crisis intensifies threats to peace and security around the world for women, girls and marginalized groups, who are disproportionately affected. Germany is partnering with the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund to drive the Women and Climate Security Initiative, which is investing in combined peacebuilding and climate action.

For Germany, the women and peace and security agenda is a key pillar of our feminist foreign and development policies. Around the world, countless women work courageously and tirelessly for peace, justice and human rights. It is not enough to stand in awe of their work — we must all do more to support, protect and champion them.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Colombia.

Ms. Tickner (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): One after another, the statements made in today's open debate confirm the critical state of the women and peace and security agenda. The number of conflicts has increased, military spending has broken historical

records, sexual violence in conflicts has increased and the progress made in various indicators of gender equality appears to have stagnated or regressed. At the same time, gender is being instrumentalized globally to deepen political polarization and restrict the rights of women and LGBTIQ+ persons. The systematic and normalized violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, as has been observed in the wars in Ukraine, Palestine and now Lebanon, has also eroded the credibility and legitimacy of the Organization and, in particular, the Security Council, which has proven incapable of curbing the barbarity that is taking place around us and that disproportionately affects women, young people and children.

The most recent report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2024/671) also paints a bleak picture regarding women's participation in peace negotiations. Women represent only 9.6 per cent of peace negotiators, 13.7 per cent of its mediators and 26.6 per cent of the signatories of completed ceasefires and agreements. And, if we exclude my country, Colombia, the number of women signatories drops to just 1.5 per cent. Our long history with war and the search for peace has taught us that without women, change is not possible. That is why strengthening their roles as peacemakers at all levels, from the local to the national and global levels, and in various official and unofficial spaces, is essential. At the same time, simply including women is not enough — their participation must guarantee a real and sustainable impact on decision-making and implementation regarding everything related to peace, as has happened at our negotiating tables and in the co-creation of our first national action plan on resolution 1325 (2000) and our feminist foreign policy. Both policies are to be issued within the next few days.

It is equally important that structural barriers such as the patriarchy and sexism, as well as other systems of oppression such as racism, be dismantled if we are to achieve a comprehensive transformation like the one proposed by the Government of Gustavo Petro Urrego and Francia Márquez in Colombia.

The twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), together with the 30-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, offer a crucial opportunity to redress the gaps and realize the potential of the women and peace and security agenda. The Security Council has undoubtedly fallen short in that area, thereby

reaffirming the urgency of its reform, including by strengthening all existing mechanisms to restrict and control the use of the veto.

It is time to recognize that the empowerment of women in their diversity is not only a matter of justice for the half of the world's population being left behind, but a proven path to prevent us from sliding further into the abyss.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mr. Fratini (Italy): I am honoured to speak at this open debate on behalf of Italy to share the Italian approach to implementing the women and peace and security agenda, based on our long-standing commitment to promoting the significant contribution of women and girls to sustainable peace and security. I am particularly proud to do so as my country's first male women and peace and security focal point.

Since the early 2000s, we have been working on all four pillars of the agenda, with a special emphasis on women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding and mediation efforts, including through the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, launched in 2017 with Italy's support. We have also placed special emphasis on the protection of women and girls — including girl children, in line with the children and armed conflict agenda — from all forms of gender-based violence in conflicts and crises.

Italy believes that it is paramount to further integrate gender perspectives in peacebuilding efforts, especially in the context of evolving global challenges such as climate change, food insecurity, migration flows, trafficking in human beings and the misuse of technology, including for technology-facilitated gender-based violence. That means ensuring a comprehensive, holistic and mainstreamed vision that duly considers the intersection of human rights, environment and security and where the involvement and active participation of women and girls is crucial to achieving inclusive peace.

Our action, both internally and at the international level, is based on fruitful interactions with women's civil society organizations, academia and other non-governmental partners throughout the political, security and development spheres. Italy has pursued that scope via the periodic adoption and implementation of its national action plans. Our fourth national action plan will be phasing out at the end of 2024. Preparation

of the fifth national action plan is under way — it will enter into force next year, in time for the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), and will prioritize two main components.

The first component is collaboration with local communities through grassroots involvement and by engaging local women in peacebuilding efforts so as to ensure that their voices and needs are heard, particularly in regions affected by, or at risk of, conflict.

The second component is the allocation of dedicated financial resources to support programmes framed and implemented by civil society organizations, academia and research centres in order to empower women in conflict-affected areas by providing training and opportunities for leadership in peacebuilding efforts.

Let me conclude by reiterating Italy's full support for the important work of the United Nations and of regional organizations and other multilateral and national initiatives, with a view to advancing the women and peace and security agenda and improving its operational impact on the ground. Ensuring the active involvement of women and girls in peace and security policies is a must in order to face current challenges and promote resilient societies across the world.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Ms. O'Neill (Canada): I am pleased to deliver two statements today, the second of which will be Canada's. The first is on behalf of 66 members of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, representing all five regional groups of the United Nations and the European Union.

Women and girls around the world are working with courage and determination in order to prevent and resolve conflict and to build and sustain peace. Yet they continue to be excluded from decision-making and targeted for discrimination and all forms of sexual and gender-based violence.

The Group of Friends therefore emphasizes five points.

First, we urge all Member States, the United Nations system and other stakeholders to protect and promote the human rights of all women and girls and to ensure women's full, equal, meaningful and safe participation and leadership in all aspects of peace and security. That has proven to ensure more robust and lasting peace. We

call for justice and accountability for any violations of the human rights of all women and girls. We also draw attention to the structural causes of gender inequality, such as stereotypes and negative social norms that perpetuate violence and conflict.

Secondly, we urge all actors to make women's participation the norm in peace processes at all stages and with the target of 50 per cent.

Thirdly, we encourage security sector institutions to undertake gender-responsive reforms and to remove barriers to women's participation and leadership at all levels.

Fourthly, we must do our utmost to support the courageous and independent voices of women human rights defenders, mediators, peacebuilders and advocates for gender equality and to promote safe, secure and enabling environments — both offline and online — for them to carry out their work. We need to champion their demands, amplify their voices, swiftly stand against attacks, intimidations and reprisals against them and support adequate, predictable and flexible funding so that they can carry out their work safely and independently.

Finally, we call for full respect for international law and for the effective prevention of and responses to all forms of sexual and gender-based violence and discrimination, both online and offline. We need to ensure survivors' access to essential services, including sexual and reproductive health services and mental health and psychosocial support.

It is also critical that we hold perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence to account. We encourage the Security Council to pursue the fight against impunity with all the means at its disposal and to incorporate and apply conflict-related sexual violence as a designation criterion in United Nations sanction regimes. We recognize the courageous leadership of women and girls calling for urgent action and accountability.

I will now share only a small portion of Canada's national statement.

This is a message inspired by wise women peacebuilders in our own country and around the world who remind us that, despite being surrounded by crises, dehumanization and attacks on this very work, we must not become suffocated by negativity. We must also give oxygen to progress and impacts.

In that spirit, here are just three examples.

The first is how young women around the world are engaging in the women and peace and security agenda, embracing its principles but also making it their own.

(spoke in French)

We see them mobilizing quickly and creatively, using digital tools in order to render that space more inclusive. They are building coalitions with invested allies, including young men and members of LGBTQI+ communities.

Another positive point regards the quality, not just the quantity, of national action plans.

(spoke in English)

For many years, there were two broad types of national action plans: the first being those of countries that had recently experienced war and were focused largely inwards; and the second being those of countries whose focus was primarily outwards, with women and peace and security relating primarily to foreign policy and peacekeeping. Now a much greater proportion, including Canada's latest national action plan, include domestic and international issues and commitments. That is a reflection of the interconnectedness of security issues and of the progress towards the humility and self-reflection needed to acknowledge and address systemic barriers facing women within our own borders.

Finally, while women peacebuilders in civil society remain dramatically underresourced, there is growing recognition that, while the amount of funding matters, so too does its form. Peace is not a project. The most impactful funds are predictable, flexible, multi-year and, sometimes, fast. The result is more efficient and effective uses of public funds, more relevant responses to crises, more lives saved, more respect for dignity and, often, more trust — one of the scarcest currencies during conflict and crises.

The President *(spoke in French)*: I now give the floor to the representative of Norway.

Ms. Gilen (Norway): The world is in turmoil and the security situation for a record-high number of people is in jeopardy. Today's open debate is dedicated to women and peace and security and to women's meaningful participation and leadership in matters related to peace and security. That is a key element of Norway's efforts to promote peace and security, and it is at the heart of our own security policy.

In 2006, Norway became one of 110 Member States that define their priorities through national action plans for women and peace and security. My country's fifth action plan makes it clear that Norway's work on the women and peace and security agenda is to be intensified at both the national and international levels, and that Norway's national and international efforts are to be more closely linked.

Norway has a long tradition of facilitating peace processes and mediation when it is invited by parties to conflicts to do so. What we have noticed is that the space for women's participation and leadership in mediation is still very limited. In addition, few conflicts are being resolved peacefully, despite the Secretary-General's call to increase mediation efforts. The question is — what can we do about this alarming trend? And does it matter whether we support women's participation in that regard?

First, women are strategic experienced peacemakers, and research shows that inclusive processes lead to more sustainable outcomes. On the contrary, no research indicates that peace processes are more successful when they are negotiated exclusively by men.

Secondly, not as much attention is given to conflict prevention, in which women's contributions are crucial. Studies tell us that there are local women-led organizations on the front lines of conflicts zones contributing to de-escalation between communities and the prevention of full-fledged conflicts. It is also local organizations that provide the first response to humanitarian needs and stay behind when the international community leaves conflict areas. Those local organizations contribute to building social cohesion and resilience. In other words, we need to have an increased focus on prevention and support to local organizations, and the 1 per cent target allocation to local organizations, also highlighted in the Secretary-General's report (S/2024/671) is a start, but we need to go beyond that. Women also play a key role in preventive peacebuilding.

Thirdly, I want to highlight the intergenerational aspect of the women and peace and security agenda.

With the goal of achieving the steps just mentioned, I want to highlight the importance of cross-regional cooperation and support aimed at consolidating our progress and moving forward with an ambitious implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

In 2014, the Nordic countries took the decision to establish a Nordic network of women mediators. Since that time, the regional networks of women mediators have multiplied and joined together in the Global Alliance of Regional Women Mediators Networks. Those mediator networks represent a resource bank we all should use. The Global Alliance delivered its first briefing to the Security Council during today's open debate. We congratulate Switzerland and the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation for making that happen.

One thing we have learned from that global network is that the participation and inclusion challenges women face are cross-regional. We echo the words of the Secretary-General during his address to the General Assembly at its seventy-ninth session (see A/79/PV.7). We, too, were sorry to see that despite years of talk, gender inequality was on full display in the General Assembly Hall. Fewer than 10 per cent of the speakers during last month's general debate were women.

We are excited to now have regional networks to join forces in order to tackle those challenges together. We need to shift the narrative from sympathy and victimhood to one that highlights the strength, power and remarkable positive influence that women have in peacemaking — both in mediation processes and in preventive peacebuilding.

Finally, this week Norway, together with Japan, took over the co-chairing of the Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network. It is a truly multilateral network, fostering cooperation both across continents and between Governments and civil society. Over the past three years, the Network has been chaired by South Africa, Switzerland, Romania and the United States of America. We are humble and grateful for the trust and opportunity we have been given. Together we will find a path forward. Women and peace and security is not just an agenda by women or for women, it is an agenda for us all.

The President (*spoke in French*): I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than three 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 three minutes.

I now give the floor to the representative of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): I would like to express my gratitude to the Swiss presidency for convening this important open debate on women and peace and security. We believe that the meaningful participation of women in peace and security is a strategic imperative. Women bring unique perspectives and experiences to the table, and their involvement leads to a more sustainable and inclusive peace. Twenty-four years ago, we adopted groundbreaking resolution 1325 (2000), which acknowledged both the disproportionate impact of conflict on women and girls and their essential role in peacebuilding.

Yet despite the progress achieved, women remain largely excluded from formal peace processes, and their experiences and perspectives are often overlooked. To truly realize the transformative potential of the women and peace and security agenda, we must move beyond words and fully integrate its four pillars — participation, protection, prevention and relief and recovery — into our programmes and policies. The Security Council, Governments, regional organizations, United Nations agencies and civil society all play crucial roles in ensuring the full implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. Only through collective action and commitment can we achieve positive outcomes.

In my country, for example, gender equality is a cornerstone of our ambitious political and democratic reforms aimed at building a new Kazakhstan that is a just and equitable society where no one is left behind. Kazakhstan is committed to advancing the women and peace and security agenda through its first national action plan on resolution 1325 (2000). That comprehensive strategy, developed in collaboration with the United Nations and civil society, aims to increase women's participation in decision-making roles at all levels, deploy more women in United Nations peace operations and enhance gender-sensitive training for armed and security forces.

Kazakhstan is dedicated to successfully implementing its national plan with strong political will, the necessary resources and a robust monitoring and evaluation framework. We are working to strengthen the capacity of women peacebuilders and to promote their participation in regional and international peace processes. To foster collaboration, we have joined the multi-stakeholder Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action. We are also a founding member of the Central Asian Women Leaders' Caucus, dedicated to advancing women's roles in peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

Kazakhstan is a strong advocate for international efforts to combat violence against women. We are contributing financially to the United Nations-European Union (EU) Spotlight Initiative Regional Programme for Central Asia and Afghanistan, which aims to eliminate that scourge. We believe that addressing the root causes of conflict, including poverty and gender inequality, is essential for further advancing the women and peace and security agenda. Providing access to quality education for all, especially girls, is crucial in that regard. To that end, we are partnering with the EU and the United Nations Development Programme on a programme to provide educational opportunities for Afghan girls in our universities. We urge the international community to expand scholarship programmes for women and girls from conflict-affected countries.

In conclusion, Kazakhstan reaffirms its strong dedication to the women and peace and security agenda and to multilateral efforts to promote gender equality, peaceful societies and inclusive governance. We believe that, through collaboration, we can build a world in which women are empowered to fully participate in all aspects of life, contributing to a more peaceful and prosperous future for everyone.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Türkiye.

Mrs. Güven (Türkiye): I thank the Swiss presidency for convening today's important debate. I also thank the Deputy Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN-Women and the briefers.

The women and peace and security agenda is a critical tool for conflict prevention and resolution, as well as for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. We must not forget that women bear the brunt of conflicts. They are disproportionately affected by violence, displacement and instability and yet, their voices remain marginalized in the very processes aimed at resolving these crises. Women and girls in various parts of the world continue to suffer immensely as conflicts intensify. The situation in the Middle East, as well as in Ukraine, Afghanistan, the Sudan and other regions, indicates how the advances of the women and peace and security agenda can easily be rolled back.

The humanitarian toll in Gaza is staggering, and women and girls have been gravely impacted. Thousands have either been displaced, starved or killed. Resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, requires more robust implementation and accountability in order

to address this imbalance. The absence of women's meaningful participation in peace processes remains a significant challenge to conflict resolution. We are pleased to see that the recently adopted Pact for the Future (General Assembly resolution 79/1) bears a designated action that underlines the political will of Member States to accelerate the implementation of their women and peace and security commitments.

Türkiye is among the leading countries actively promoting awareness of the importance of women's participation in peace processes. As the co-Chair of the Group of Friends of Mediation, we prioritize highlighting the role of women in mediation efforts. In that respect, Türkiye welcomes and endorses the Secretary-General's campaign for a common pledge to increase women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace processes by global mediation actors. That call is rooted in the principles of equality and non-discrimination enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. As a matter of fact, female Turkish diplomats have been playing an active role in Türkiye's previous and ongoing mediation efforts.

We consistently emphasize the importance of women's participation in peace processes at the annually organized Antalya Diplomacy Forum and Istanbul Mediation Conferences. Furthermore, at the annual Mediation for Peace Certificate Programmes, we underline the importance of the role of women in mediation.

To reverse the current negative trend regarding women's participation in peace processes, further initiatives could be undertaken by the United Nations, regional organizations and the Member States themselves. In that context, regular and transparent reporting mechanisms that track women's involvement in peace processes, conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction should be strengthened. All actors should also invest in capacity-building programmes for women, at all levels, in order to equip them with the tools needed to engage in peace negotiations effectively. Public campaigns, both at the grass-roots and international levels, can increase awareness and build broader support for women's inclusion in peacebuilding. My country will continue to advocate for the inclusion of women in peace processes at every opportunity.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Jordan.

Mr. Hmoud (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express Jordan's appreciation for

the international efforts aimed at promoting the women and peace and security agenda.

In Jordan, we firmly believe that women are not only partners in peacebuilding, but basic pillars without whom no successful peace process could be achieved. Empowering women, ensuring their active participation in decision-making and protecting them from all forms of violence and discrimination is the foundation upon which we are building a secure and stable future. As we approach the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), we reaffirm our commitment to achieving the goals of that agenda and to working with international partners to ensure that women are at the core of peacemaking and future-building processes.

Amid the discussions on the role of women in peacebuilding, we cannot ignore the tragic situation of Palestinian women and girls living under the yoke of Israeli occupation and aggression. Their rights are being violated and taken away daily and they are being deprived of the most basic elements of a decent life. From this rostrum, we reiterate our call on the international community to assume its full responsibility and take effective and urgent steps to protect those women and girls and to ensure access to their basic rights, primarily their right to live in dignity, security and peace.

We have a collective responsibility to strengthen political will and translate it into practical commitments to implement the framework of the women and peace and security agenda. All United Nations organs must establish effective policies that guarantee women's full and equal participation in all stages of decision-making. We must work to build a strong infrastructure that enables women to reach negotiating tables with confidence and security. We also must support all stakeholders that contribute to peacebuilding on the ground so as to ensure more sustainable and comprehensive results.

We call for supporting initiatives that enhance women's participation in multiple peace processes. We must also work to integrate women into both formal and informal peace processes. Women working on the front lines of conflicts must have a voice in formal negotiations. As Member States, we must make clear commitments to supporting those comprehensive processes.

Today, we are in dire need of new tools to confront the increasing challenges in our changing world. Despite the fact that technology provides promising opportunities, it also carries serious risks that pose a threat to the safe participation of women, especially amid online violence

and deliberate media defamation. In that context, we call for the development of digital platforms that ensure a safe environment that allows women to participate effectively in peacebuilding processes. We also urge Member States to invest in digital literacy programmes and cybersecurity initiatives in order to protect women from electronic threats and ensure their ongoing participation in peace efforts, without fear or restriction.

Jordan's commitment to the women and peace and security agenda is clearly reflected through the implementation of the first Jordanian national plan, which has made remarkable achievements in enhancing women's representation in the security sector. Since 2017, we have witnessed a significant increase in the number of women in the Public Security Directorate and the Jordanian Armed Forces. That reflects the ongoing efforts and strategic vision to achieve gender balance.

Jordanian women's participation in leadership positions has also increased and realized significant progress in United Nations peacekeeping missions. That shows Jordan's firm commitment to enhancing the role of women in vital areas. As part of those efforts, the Public Security Directorate and the Jordanian Armed Forces launched the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy 2021–2024, which enhances Jordan's position as a role model in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment in all areas.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that achieving the ambitious goals of the women and peace and security agenda requires our collective commitment and relentless efforts. The participation of women in peace processes is not just a choice but an urgent necessity to ensure a safe and sustainable future for all. The international community should therefore strengthen efforts to support women's rights and ensure their effective representation at all stages of decision-making.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

Ms. Moutchou (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, my delegation would like to thank the Swiss presidency of the Security Council for organizing this open debate of the utmost importance. I would also like to thank the briefers for the quality and relevance of their briefings.

Today's debate is timely as we prepare for next year's celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of historic and visionary resolution 1325 (2000). It is an ideal opportunity

to take stock of the progress and achievements made in implementing resolution 1325 (2000), as well as to identify the gaps and obstacles that remain and to reaffirm our shared commitment to the women and peace and security agenda.

Allow me to present an abridged version of the statement by the delegation of Morocco.

Women have demonstrated their resolute determination to work for lasting peace by engaging effectively in community efforts and local initiatives to support and promote peace and reconciliation, as they often seek alternative channels, non-confrontational methods and peaceful, inclusive solutions to resolve conflict, while focusing on collective well-being. They have also done so by bringing unique and critical perspectives as fundamentally primordial early-warning mechanisms activated within the family unit. Their ability to detect sources of tension and sensitivity to extremism and hate speech provide them with a sharp vision of the underlying threats to community security, which enables them to anticipate and react to the risks of conflict and positions them as key players in preventing violence and promoting dialogue. Despite those realities, women remain largely underrepresented in decision-making processes related to peace and security. We heard the statistics given by the briefers this morning in that regard. The inclusion of women in peace processes must therefore not be seen as a mere formality or an incidental moral requirement, but rather as a right and fundamental and strategic necessity.

By way of conclusion, allow me to highlight the following three observations, in the hope that the symbolism of United Nations Day — 24 October — will promote the advancement of the women and peace and security agenda.

First, the remaining obstacles to the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) can be overcome only through a firm political will and resolute commitment to full respect for women's fundamental rights.

Secondly, women must be recognized as equal partners in decision-making, mediation and conflict resolution processes.

Thirdly, women must be protected from the harmful effects of their active involvement in conflict resolution. Indeed, although they are often celebrated as heroines and can reach high positions, including in the military

ranks, they can also face scorn and condescension, including through new technologies, which have unfortunately become platforms for harassment and denigration, whereas the same tools can be used to provide opportunities to women and encourage their active participation in all areas, including conflict resolution and peace.

Finally, the Kingdom of Morocco, which has adopted and is implementing its women and peace and security action plan, is a member of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security and the Group of Friends for Gender Parity, and a signatory to almost all international human rights protection instruments, including soft law, fully honours its international commitments to promote and protect women's rights and strengthen their independence, and remains committed to working together with the international community to advance the full implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines.

Mrs. Lora-Santos (Philippines): Please allow me first to commend and congratulate the presidency of Switzerland for organizing this very important debate. I also thank the briefers for their insightful presentations.

We are on the eve of a crucial milestone for the women and peace and security agenda. Twenty-four years ago, the Security Council unanimously recognized the disproportionate and unique impact of conflict on women and their undervalued contributions to peace, security and recovery. Next year, we will be celebrating 25 years of our work.

The Philippines is pleased to have joined the international community in this important advocacy and to play a leading role in our region. The 2010 Philippine national action plan on women and peace and security was the first in Southeast Asia. We also played an important role in the establishment of the Women for Peace Registry of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2018 and the creation of the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security in 2022. More important, the Philippines has walked the talk and appointed a woman as the chief negotiator for the Government team in the peace process with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. The process was a success and led to the creation of the peaceful Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

We speak from experience as we join the Security Council today. Women make a difference at the peace table. Their full, equal and meaningful participation brings critical insights into the discussion since it is women that usually bear the burden of war and post-conflict recovery. Women's participation leads to gender-equality provisions in peace agreements. Women's leadership leads to lasting peace and wider acceptance and ownership by the people of peace agreements. When the peace agreement for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao needed to be introduced to the people, it was the women in the villages who took up the task of bringing it closer to the people for them to have ownership over the peace process. Therefore, with regard to the question of what initiatives can be taken to reverse the pushback on women's participation in peace processes, we recommend mainstreaming peacemaking, peacebuilding, mediation and conflict resolution in education and community action at local and all levels of Government; eliminating the barriers that cause indigenous and rural women from fully and safely participating in peace processes; and actively seeking the meaningful participation of women in communities affected by conflict.

Leadership must commit to financing the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. Funding models that provide long-term support for women peacebuilders must be pursued. In that regard, the Philippines welcomes the launch of the Secretary-General's common pledge to increase women's full, equal and meaningful engagement in peace processes. We fully endorse the pledge and will continue to take steps to promote and enhance the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in mediation efforts and peace processes.

The Philippines reaffirms its commitment to strengthening the women and peace and security agenda and will host the International Conference on Women, Peace and Security in Manila next week. We are taking stock of what we have achieved since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), and we would like to advance solutions to the persistent challenges to the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia.

Mr. Prabowo (Indonesia): I thank Switzerland for convening this meeting and the briefers for their valuable insights.

Landmark resolution 1325 (2000) marked a significant step forward in placing women at the heart of international peace and security, including ensuring women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace processes. While much progress has been made, profound challenges remain. Women and children continue to be at the highest risk in many emergency situations. That is very evident in Gaza, where women and girls comprise more than 70 per cent of civilian victims. They are primarily cared for by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Let me therefore start with a clear reminder that any attack against UNRWA is a direct attack against the women and peace and security agenda.

Allow me to highlight three points.

First, there is the need to walk the talk. The Secretary-General's report (A/2024/671) underscores many challenges — from unpredictable funding to the impunity of violence against women and children in conflict. We must strengthen our collective commitment to bridge the gap and translate it into concrete actions of gender-responsive policies. Indonesia is proud to have initiated resolution 2538 (2020), calling for greater action to foster the role of both uniformed and civilian women at all levels of peacekeeping.

Secondly, we need to invest in women's capabilities in peace processes. The data is clear: peace will be more sustainable when women are involved in the peace process. Capacity-building for women peace mediators is therefore key, along with supporting networks of women mediators to promote the development and deployment of skilled women mediators in all stages of peace processes. In that spirit, Indonesia is proud to have initiated the Southeast Asian Network of Women Peace Negotiators and Mediators in 2019. Indonesia also remains steadfast in supporting the rights of Afghan women, having convened the International Conference on Afghan Women's Education and developed capacity-building programmes focused on the inclusion of women's participation, among other initiatives.

Thirdly, we need to ensure an enabling environment for women in peace efforts. That includes ensuring the safety and security of women in peace processes and ensuring an inclusive environment for women peacekeepers. Indonesia sees that as of the utmost

importance, as 192 Indonesian women peacekeepers are currently serving in eight United Nations missions, 81 of them in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

The future of global peace and security will increasingly depend on the central role of women as agents of peace. Let us all lead by example.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Denmark.

Mr. Laursen (Denmark): I have the honour of delivering this statement on behalf of the five Nordic countries — Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Denmark.

Let me thank our briefers today, who have reminded us of the crucial role that women play in fostering peace and security worldwide.

The world today faces alarming levels of armed conflict, humanitarian crisis and human rights violations and abuses. We express our serious concern at the situation of women and girls in many places of the world, and the developments in Afghanistan, Myanmar, Gaza and the Sudan are particularly worrisome. In Afghanistan, women are not allowed to speak in public, let alone play a role in peace and security. In Myanmar, the military junta has systematically targeted the rights of women and LGBT+ persons since the coup in 2021. But the suffering of civilians, including women and girls, in those contexts is far from exceptional in the world today, as is clear from the Secretary-General's report (S/2024/671).

It is our collective responsibility to act decisively to ensure that generational gains in gender equality are not eroded further. Allow me to highlight three key areas that we believe are critical as we approach the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security.

First, we reaffirm the necessity of ensuring the full, equal and meaningful participation of women at all levels and stages of decision-making in peace and security matters. We call on the United Nations to support making the participation of women a standard requirement across all United Nations-supported peace processes and meetings and not only in processes that the United Nations leads or co-leads.

Secondly, women human rights defenders face unacceptable levels of violence, harassment and intimidation, both online and offline. We need stronger accountability mechanisms to protect women civil

society representatives and human rights defenders and to ensure that they can continue to inform peace and security policymaking without fear of reprisals.

Thirdly, conflict-related sexual violence remains a devastating reality and a tactic of war, disproportionately affecting women and girls. Last year, we saw a 50 per cent increase in verified cases of conflict-related sexual violence compared to the year before. We must hold perpetrators accountable for those heinous acts and stand united in ensuring justice and protection for survivors. We encourage renewed support for the mandate of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict in that regard. In addition, the Nordics reaffirm the right of every woman and girl to non-discriminatory access to life-saving services, in particular sexual and reproductive health services, not least in the context of conflict and humanitarian crises.

In conclusion, the challenges we face are profound, but they are not unsolvable. The Nordic countries remain fully committed to the realization of the women and peace and security agenda. Without gender equality, we will not achieve sustainable peace.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand.

Ms. Schwalger (New Zealand): I would like to thank Switzerland for convening today's important debate and the briefers and the Secretary-General for their unwavering commitment to advancing the women and peace and security agenda.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

We support the call to protect and promote the human rights of women and girls in all aspects of peace and security. It is disappointing — but perhaps not surprising — that there is a widening gap between the recognition of the importance of women's participation in protection and peace efforts and the reality on the ground. That is especially disappointing given the number and the scale of crises confronting the world in places such as Gaza, Lebanon, Israel, Ukraine, the Sudan and Myanmar, to mention only a few.

Now is not the time to shy away from supporting the participation of women and girls in the quest for peace, despite the more challenging security landscape and the negative global trends threatening women's rights more than ever before.

The evidence is clear: women's participation in peace and security efforts is vital. Clearly, more needs to be done to improve the implementation of policies and processes that address the situation. For our part, New Zealand remains committed to all United Nations-supported processes that require and ensure women's full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership at all stages and all levels of United Nations-led processes. That must be maintained to ensure that representation translates into meaningful participation.

New Zealand continues to implement the removal of barriers to women's participation in leadership in security sector institutions. For example, New Zealand has a female Minister of Defence for the first time, and the first woman was appointed as Chief of Army. Despite the success stories, New Zealand still has work to do to ensure that women at all levels are treated fairly and respectfully and are allowed to fulfil their potential in the careers of their choice. Gender bias still exists, and New Zealand is not immune from gender-based violence within its communities. We must be particularly vigilant to all forms of gender discrimination and bias.

In conclusion, New Zealand is resolute and insists on the meaningful inclusion of the voices of women and girls in United Nations peace processes. The Secretary-General has reiterated his commitment to advancing the women and peace and security agenda, and New Zealand remains a steadfast supporter of resolution 1325 (2000) and the Security Council's work to fully implement the women and peace and security agenda.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Costa Rica.

Ms. Chan Valverde (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): This year's annual debate offers us a golden opportunity to reflect on the continued relevance of resolution 1325 (2000), acknowledge the challenges we still face in implementing it and assess the progress achieved and the gaps that remain.

In that connection, allow me to make three points.

First, although the women and peace and security agenda was developed for conflict and post-conflict contexts, its fundamental principles are also relevant in peacetime. Costa Rica has consistently advocated for a broader approach and has underlined the need to acknowledge women's agency and incorporate their views throughout the spectrum of peace, including post-conflict situations. Moreover, women's voices

are too often sidelined in discussions on security. For example, in multilateral negotiations on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control — in which women still make up only one third of participants on average — we Member States must take deliberate and decisive action to dismantle those barriers in order to ensure women's full, effective and meaningful participation in discussions that directly affect them. Discussions that are more inclusive will also lead to solutions that are more effective.

Secondly, none of the resolutions on women and peace and security adequately address digital matters, including issues such as cyberspace and related technologies and their implications for the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. The online environment has disproportionately exposed women to violence and abuse. Women — be they politicians, human rights defenders or ordinary users — face online harassment and threats that can escalate to physical attacks. Costa Rica urges the Council to make cyberspace and digital technologies the subject of a subsequent open debate on the women and peace and security agenda. In that vein, we call for the Secretary-General's annual report on the subject to address cyberspace and digital technologies, including the gender dimensions and the impacts of cyberevents.

Thirdly, online and offline forms of violence are deeply intertwined and mutually reinforcing. Protecting women and girls from gender-based violence that is enabled by technology must therefore become a central component of the women and peace and security agenda and must be integrated as a priority into national and regional action plans for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Such a shift will require States to rethink how they address issues that have traditionally been regarded as domestic concerns, such as the human impact of technology-enabled violence, instead of concentrating solely on external security threats. Costa Rica has consistently championed a holistic approach to resolution 1325 (2000). We have also acknowledged the interdependence of the women and peace and security agenda's four pillars. To neglect one undermines the whole.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Ms. Ronner-Grubačić.

Ms. Ronner-Grubačić: I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Türkiye, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine,

the Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia, as well as Monaco and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

I want to start by thanking the briefers, in particular, Ms. Nu and Justice Owuor, for their interventions today.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2024/671) is indeed a sobering read. The 50 per cent increase in the number of women and girls living in conflict-affected areas highlights the urgent need for action. The women and peace and security agenda must be consistently implemented and the human rights of women and girls must be respected and protected.

The EU finances and actively supports women's participation and leadership for peace. We strive to increase the number of women mediators and political representatives, including within our own structures, and we support women insider mediators in several countries. We welcome the common pledge to increase women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace processes, as it aligns with those efforts. Women's participation, both within and outside of formal peace agreements, is vital. Yet, we all must do more to reduce institutional barriers faced by local women's organizations — a key step towards women's participation in peacebuilding.

In the light of next year's anniversary, our commitments and related implementation efforts must surpass those made 25 years ago. We need to ensure women's involvement in all peace processes. Equally important is their leadership in all other political efforts to address conflict, including in formal and informal processes, whether at the local, regional or international levels. That is a core principle of the women and peace and security agenda and cannot be compromised.

Along with the United Nations, all of us must lead by example, ensuring that women are always included in critical political processes, especially in contexts such as Afghanistan, in which women's human rights and fundamental freedoms are severely disregarded and violated. Ensuring safe participation is critical. Creating an enabling environment requires addressing violations proactively. Safety must never be used as an excuse for exclusion. Instead, it is a call to action for stronger protective measures to allow women to take their rightful place in decision-making. That also applies when leveraging new technologies to enhance women's participation, while recognizing that the root

of harassment and gender-based disinformation lies not in technology but in a broader culture of misogyny, impunity and negative social norms.

I would like to conclude by expressing the EU's deep appreciation and respect for the tireless and immensely vital work of women leaders, civil society actors, peacebuilders and human rights defenders. We will continue supporting their work and call on others to do so too.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Croatia.

Mr. Ćurić Hrvatinčić (Croatia): I thank the Swiss presidency for organizing the debate and the distinguished briefers for sharing their valuable insights.

Croatia aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the European Union and the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

Building on the newly adopted Pact for the Future (General Assembly resolution 79/1), today's debate is an opportunity to identify the most important commitments we can act on now to accelerate the advancement of the women and peace and security agenda.

The current global proliferation of insecurity, along with existing inequalities and discriminatory social norms, limit women's full, equal, meaningful and safe participation. Women are disproportionately exposed to sexual and gender-based violence, which is too often facilitated by the technology that has become an integral part of our lives. Those intersecting challenges require a comprehensive approach that is supported by efficient and supportive legal instruments at both the national and international levels. Strengthening accountability mechanisms to provide justice for victims should remain our priority, and we should continue to support innovative survivor-centred approaches to conflict-related sexual violence. In ensuring respect for international law, we should maintain the global focus on the existing tools and instruments that prioritize women's technical expertise and full-fledged participation in peace negotiations. Ahead of the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), Croatia's priority is to further strengthen its national framework and develop our next-generation third national action plan for the period 2025 to 2029.

I would also like to underline the important role that the Peacebuilding Commission can have in supporting fragile States as they transition towards peace, including through support for civil society and

women's organizations at the local level. We therefore invite all Member States to support the financing of the Peacebuilding Fund and its dedicated initiatives for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Bulgaria.

Mrs. Beshkova (Bulgaria): Bulgaria aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the European Union and the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

First, I would like to thank Switzerland for convening this debate and the briefers for their insightful remarks. We reaffirm our commitment to the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. As highlighted by the report of the Secretary-General (S/2024/671), we are witnessing a deeply concerning regression in the implementation of the women and peace and security framework. In 2023 alone, more than 170 armed conflicts were recorded, placing 612 million women and girls at risk and leaving them vulnerable to violence, poverty and insecurity. The proportion of women killed in armed conflicts has doubled, and conflict-related sexual violence has surged by 50 per cent.

Bulgaria remains troubled by the underrepresentation of women in peace processes. Evidence consistently shows that peace agreements with women signatories are more likely to be implemented and to last longer. Yet only 26 per cent of peace agreements in 2023 included references to women or gender issues, highlighting an alarming trend. We must reverse that trend and ensure that women, especially from conflict-affected areas, are equal decision-makers at the negotiation table and not merely observers. Moreover, we recognize the double-edged nature of new technologies. While they hold the potential to amplify women's voices, they are also being weaponized to target and silence women leaders and activists. My country, Bulgaria, calls for stronger safeguards to protect women from online harassment and disinformation campaigns, which threaten their participation in public and political life.

To bridge the gap between commitments and action, we must ensure that peace negotiations include women and youth peacebuilders from the very start. It is also vital to invest in women's leadership and ensure sustained, flexible and predictable funding for women-led peace initiatives. Currently, funding for women's organizations

in conflict-affected settings remains alarmingly low, representing just 0.3 per cent of bilateral aid. That must change if we are serious about sustaining peace.

In preparation for the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), Bulgaria has committed to strengthening and expanding its national action plan on women and peace and security beyond 2025, ensuring that it is inclusive, well-funded and aligned with international best practices. To sustain our women and peace and security priorities beyond that anniversary, we will further institutionalize our agenda through long-term partnerships with civil society and by embedding women and peace and security into our defence, foreign policy and development strategies.

Bulgaria stands ready to contribute to collective efforts aimed at strengthening the women and peace and security agenda and fully realizing the spirit of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2250 (2015) and the newly achieved consensus around the Pact for the Future (General Assembly resolution 79/1). We call on Member States to renew their political will and to take concrete steps to reverse the negative trends outlined in the report of the Secretary-General.

In conclusion, I would like to restate Bulgaria's conviction that the future of peace depends on the empowerment, protection and inclusion of women.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Abushahab (United Arab Emirates): I congratulate Switzerland on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month and thank President Amherd for presiding over this important meeting. I am grateful to Secretary-General Guterres for his report (S/2024/671) and to Deputy Secretary-General Mohammed for her presentation. I also thank Executive Director Bahous for her briefing and commend her continued leadership in the empowerment and protection of women and girls around the world. We listened carefully to this morning's briefers.

Women and girls disproportionately bear the brunt of war, from conflict-related sexual violence and increased vulnerability in forced displacement to heightened risks of food and water insecurity and economic hardship. That is more than a fact — it is a sobering reminder of the gendered impact of war. Yet time and again, those same women and girls play an essential role in conflict resolution and post-conflict settings as agents of change

and enablers of peace. We must all fully commit to leveraging the unique roles and perspectives that women bring as peacebuilders in an ever-evolving environment. In order to achieve that, the United Arab Emirates would like to offer three recommendations.

First, the Security Council must take greater initiative to increase its engagement with women and girls in conflict contexts. For instance, Council field visits with a gender lens can be a powerful tool for doing so. Last year, the United Arab Emirates and Switzerland, as co-Chairs of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security, organized a trip to South Sudan to understand the recommendations and needs of women and girls in the region and better inform the Council's work. Such trips represent an important avenue for direct engagement between the multilateral system and women on the ground.

Secondly, we must ensure women's safe participation in peace processes, both offline and online. Emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, offer a powerful tool for inclusive peacebuilding. For example, they can facilitate engagement with women and girls in even the most remote locations. To support that, we must ensure that women and girls are protected and are safe and secure from the threats of online intolerance, misinformation, hate speech and gender discrimination. An inclusive digital space, in which women and girls are able to fully participate and utilize the opportunities provided by emerging technologies, will be of benefit to us all.

Thirdly, if we are to durably resolve conflicts, we must commit to supporting women's participation at the negotiating table. That requires their inclusion in mediation efforts, humanitarian action and the protection of civilians. The international community must leverage its influence to drive and develop gender-responsive initiatives that integrate and promote the perspectives and needs of women and girls in conflict. That is why the United Arab Emirates is leading an initiative to amplify Sudanese women's perspectives in the format of the Aligned for Advancing Lifesaving and Peace in Sudan group and to ensure that all its tracks are gender-responsive.

Each and every day, the catastrophic war on Gaza claims the lives of many women and girls. We are losing a generation of peacemakers. We need an immediate and permanent ceasefire to extinguish the flames of that conflict, which has already engulfed Lebanon and

risks a further conflagration. We need a political horizon towards which to navigate. Any effort at achieving the two-State solution must include the participation of Palestinian and Israeli women.

With the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) ahead of us, a course of inaction is untenable. It is time that we engage women as the agents of peace they are, because an investment in the full, equal and meaningful participation and inclusion of women and girls is an investment in our collective security, stability and resilience.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Ms. Malefane (South Africa): We extend our appreciation to Switzerland for continuing the legacy of hosting a high-level annual open debate on women and peace and security. This open debate not only amplifies the women and peace and security agenda but also crucially allows for continuous monitoring and evaluation of its implementation. Of note is the recognition by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2024/671) that insufficient progress has been made on the women and peace and security agenda in the past year. That is unfortunate, and it calls for us to recommit to accelerating the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, particularly on the eve of the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000). In that regard, South Africa would like to highlight four pertinent issues.

First, we note that political will is the essential requirement for us to ensure a level field for both women and men in peace processes. We must build collective solidarity that is inclusive of women and men, expressed both in deeds and words. The manifestation of that unity is vital for the attainment of women's empowerment and gender equality in general.

Secondly, as recognized in the Secretary-General's report, one of the impediments to the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda is the lack of financial resources. We need to adequately invest in peace and security activities in order for us to address the apparent regress in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. Given the current global environment, in which a plethora of demands are competing for dwindling resources, we need to be innovative in mobilizing funding for the women and peace and security agenda at the national, regional and international levels. There is an urgent need to explore

alternative sources of funding other than Government-led financing. We have recognized that without inclusive peace processes, peace is much more difficult to attain. Let us support that recognition with the resources it requires.

Thirdly, South Africa has always stressed the need for a focus on conflict prevention. Consequently, we support a greater role for women in peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts. Therefore, South Africa will continue to advocate for more support for the women and peace and security agenda in peacebuilding, and for appropriate financing and funding to continue to support women-led peacebuilding organizations and gender-responsive projects.

Fourthly, South Africa reiterates its support for strategic interventions, such as the use of quotas, targets and benchmarks, to advance the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace processes. To that end, we would like to welcome the Secretary-General's common pledge to increase women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace processes, which was launched today. We align ourselves with the vision espoused in that pledge, which seeks to advance a greater number of women to lead and participate in mediation processes. It also complements the efforts of South Africa in building the capacity of women mediators.

Our annual mediation and negotiation training courses for local and African women and the launch of the Gertrude Shope Women Mediators Network earlier this year are a testament of South Africa's contribution towards creating equal opportunities for women in mediation processes. In conclusion, we encourage all stakeholders to continue working together to drive forward the women and peace and security agenda in support of the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace processes and all aspects of society.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Poland.

Mr. Miarka (Poland): Poland aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Ambassador for Gender and Diversity of the European Union and the statement delivered by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

I would like to start by thanking Switzerland for convening today's debate and by saying that we would appreciate it if all international organizations that requested to take part were able to do so.

As the Vice-President of the Bureau of the UN-Women Executive Board, I am disappointed that despite the international community's repeated pledges to ensure women's participation in peace processes, the Secretary-General's report (S/2024/671) warns that progress made over decades is vanishing before our eyes. As we approach the twenty-fifth anniversary of the landmark resolution 1325 (2000), Poland believes that the call to accelerate the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda is no longer enough. The inclusion of women in peace processes must no longer be debated — it must be enforced. Our policy decisions must be driven by recommendations put forward by women's civil society organizations, including women peacebuilders, mediator networks and young women leaders working on the ground.

From the briefers today, we have heard the call to increase support for the broader and safer participation of women who work to prevent conflict, respond to crises and build peace in their communities. That is why Poland, for the first time this year, has proudly contributed to the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund. As a current member of the Peacebuilding Commission, Poland is firm in its belief that lasting peace and security require the full, equal and meaningful participation of women at every stage of peace processes and at all levels. Inclusivity is not an aspiration — it is the foundation of resilient societies and a peaceful future.

The impact of conflict on civilians, including women and girls, is devastating and cannot be overlooked. The appalling surge in United Nations-verified cases of conflict-related sexual violence highlights the urgent need for action. In that critical context, Poland fully supports Special Representative Pramila Patten and commends her leadership in the fight against conflict-related sexual violence, as we mark the fifteenth anniversary of her mandate.

We stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine, who continue to endure the consequences of Russia's illegal and unjustified aggression. We are outraged by the sexual violence perpetrated by Russian forces, as documented by the United Nations. Those crimes are not isolated incidents — they are part of a broader pattern of violence targeting civilians, in this context particularly women and girls, in a deliberate effort to break the social fabric of Ukraine. The psychological and physical toll on those women is immeasurable, yet their resilience is undeniable. As the Executive Director of UN-Women highlighted in her briefing earlier

today, despite the trauma, many of them continue to lead their communities, organize humanitarian efforts and engage in peacebuilding, all while facing ongoing violence. Their courage reflects the unyielding spirit of the Ukrainian people. However, their bravery alone is not enough. The international community has a duty to ensure that Ukrainian women and girls not only survive the war but are empowered to lead the rebuilding of their country. Their perspectives must guide the recovery process, ensuring it is inclusive and responsive to the needs of all Ukrainians.

Finally, I would like to reiterate that we cannot stand idly by as the women and girls of Afghanistan are systematically stripped of their fundamental rights. They have been ruthlessly denied access to education, employment and public life, enduring some of the most severe and oppressive restrictions in the world. Their situation today stands in stark contrast to the previous two decades, in which the NATO-led international stabilization presence fostered a conducive environment for women's rights to be exercised. The international community today must ensure that the women and girls of Afghanistan are not forgotten and that their voices continue to be heard and acted upon — no matter how hard those in power try to silence them.

The defence of women's and girls' rights is a collective responsibility, and we all must act with urgency. Poland is ready to do its part.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): As we celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 1325 (2000), which inaugurated the women and peace and security agenda, we find ourselves facing a real dilemma against the backdrop of ever-worsening crises and military conflicts. We are also facing a rollback in the efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts through peaceful means.

There is no doubt that women bear the brunt of the consequences and that they are the most affected by those conflicts, subjected as they are to various forms of violations and violence, including sexual violence, forced displacement and loss of livelihood. Furthermore, women bear the various psychological burdens associated with the loss of their families and the family breakdown caused by those situations.

Conflicts have worsened considerably over the past year, perhaps the most intensive and violent year, leading to the erosion of all regional and international efforts to implement the women and peace and security agenda. A clear indication of that is the brutal attack that Israel has been waging on the Gaza Strip for more than a year now, with more than 31,000 casualties among women, children and the elderly. The Israeli attacks have expanded to the south of Lebanon, including attacks on civilians, in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, undeterred and with no accountability.

The situation in the Sudan is no better, as the armed conflict has gone on for more than a year, and prospects for a peaceful settlement have receded. Women and girls are being subjected to various forms of violence, displaced and deprived of a safe environment. According to periodic reports, non-State armed militia are brutally perpetrating those crimes.

Egypt believes that the participation of women as active agents in peacemaking is pivotal, and their effective participation contributes to conflict prevention, peace processes, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, reconstruction and development. Egypt was guided by that vision when drafting its first national action plan on women and peace and security, which we are preparing to launch officially in the near future. In preparing the plan, we conducted consultations with multiple parties from different segments of society, partners and civil society organizations. The priorities of the action plan include ensuring women's active participation and the exercise of their role as agents of change, while also integrating the gender dimension into peacekeeping, peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery efforts.

Egypt stresses the importance of adhering to a zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and sexual violence in peacekeeping operations. In that regard, we point out that empowering women and creating a safe and open space for their participation in public life serve as a safeguard to preventing the outbreak of conflicts, which, in turn, contributes to societal cohesion and the sustainability of social peace.

In conclusion, Egypt welcomes and joins the Secretary-General's initiative to launch a pledge to operationalize the women and peace and security agenda at the regional and international levels in order to ensure the fulfilment of our common commitments in that field and to ensure the sustainability of peace, the achievement

of development goals and respect for, and the protection of, human rights. We thank Switzerland for holding this important open debate, and we also thank the briefers.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Burundi.

Mr. Maniratanga (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): Burundi would like to pay tribute to Switzerland's excellent leadership as President of the Security Council during the month of October.

Burundi believes that the role of women in peacebuilding is of the utmost importance in the current context, in which more than 120 armed conflicts are raging. For Burundi, as for the international community, resolution 1325 (2000) marked a turning point, as it recognized the essential role of women in building peace and security. Therefore, Burundi welcomes resolution 1325 (2000) and reaffirms its commitment to ensuring that women, who are often the first to be affected by conflicts, are indispensable actors in peace efforts, both at the level of United Nations peace missions and at the national level.

Burundi's commitment takes tangible form thanks to the involvement of more than 15,000 Burundian women who are working on conflict prevention and resolution. Even Burundi's ombudsman institution is headed by a woman. Those women travel the length and breadth of our country, mobilizing women in the provinces and communes and creating a dynamic movement for peace. They play a vital role in conflict prevention and resolution by facilitating community dialogue and supporting women's socioeconomic recovery. Those women are also represented in large numbers on the councils of notables in all the hills of the country, thereby playing a key role in strengthening social cohesion.

Seeking to link peace and development, Burundi has also set up an investment bank for women, facilitating access to credit for low-income women in order to support their economic initiatives. That is in line with our vision of empowering women and their central role in sustainable development. Burundi's commitment to making women real agents of peace is also demonstrated by the measures taken to ensure their participation in United Nations peace missions. In that respect, drawing on its rich experience in complex peacekeeping missions in the Central African Republic, Haiti, Somalia and elsewhere, Burundi has a battalion made up mainly of

women and two units staffed entirely by women police officers, who are well trained and ready to be deployed wherever the need arises.

Finally, Burundi would like to stress that the inclusion of women in political processes and in mediation is not only beneficial but necessary, as women always bring valuable perspectives to the table, fostering inclusive dialogues and contributing to more sustainable peace agreements. In that context, it must be recognized that women involved in mediation and conflict prevention play a multifaceted role. Women build bridges between the different parties, strengthen trust and use innovative approaches to resolve conflicts. Their ability to address the day-to-day impacts of conflict and to include the voices of vulnerable groups is essential to building a lasting and genuine peace.

However, despite that contribution, which cannot be denied, women remain underrepresented in the operational framework for peacemaking and in formal mediation missions. For Burundi, resolution 1325 (2000) must be implemented domestically through concrete actions. The international community must overcome the challenges to women's representation at all levels of conflict prevention and peaceful conflict resolution if it is to have any hope of achieving greater success in peace processes and of laying the foundations for a more solid and inclusive peace and a peaceful and just future for all.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Czechia.

Mrs. Hindlsová (Czechia): Czechia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union (EU) and the statement delivered on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

I would like to thank Switzerland for organizing today's important open debate and the briefers for their presentations.

The Secretary-General's report (S/2024/671) presents alarming insights. It underscores the ongoing global backlash against women's rights and the dramatic increase in the number of women killed in armed conflicts and in cases of conflict-related sexual violence. Women's participation in peace negotiations, mediation and conflict resolution remains low; therefore, the implementation of the principles of the women and peace and security agenda must remain our priority.

Promoting and protecting the human rights of women and girls and gender equality are fundamental to achieving peace and stability. We call on all Member States to take action to stop the recent pushback against hard-earned progress on the human rights of women and girls and to take all the steps necessary to protect and uphold those rights, including in conflict and post-conflict settings. We must redouble our efforts to prevent and respond to all forms of sexual and gender-based violence, both online and offline, and to bring perpetrators to justice. In order to do so effectively, we must partner with civil society, support human rights defenders and women peacebuilders and ensure a safe environment for their work.

In the Pact for the Future (General Assembly resolution 79/1), Member States highlighted the need to accelerate the delivery on the commitments undertaken under the women and peace and security agenda. Next year's commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) will be a unique opportunity to move the agenda forward and address challenges in its implementation, including the need for adequate resourcing of its four pillars. Achieving gender equality remains a key priority of Czech foreign policy. We have consistently implemented our women and peace and security national action plan since 2017, with Czech women acting as a crucial driving force and an indispensable source of knowledge. We are currently preparing the third edition of the national action plan, in collaboration with civil society and academia. Our aim is to strengthen the domestic dimension of gender security-related aspects, including the consequences of Russia's aggression in Ukraine on women and girls, many of whom have found shelter in Czechia. We are also discussing the need to adequately reflect the current and emerging challenges and strengthen resilience. We all face new security threats, including climate change, health crises and cybersecurity issues. Such challenges often disproportionately affect women and girls and deepen gender inequality. Therefore, we must include their voices in addressing those issues to achieve security and stability.

In conclusion, Czechia will continue to work on promoting women's leadership and participation in security decision-making at the national and international levels, including in preventing conflict and building sustainable peace.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium.

Mr. Cardon De Lichtbuer (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Belgium aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the European Union and on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

(*spoke in English*)

Against the backdrop of record levels of armed conflict, rising authoritarianism and the worldwide push-back against the human rights of women and girls in all their diversity, the women and peace and security agenda is, almost 25 years after its adoption, more relevant than ever. Allow me to focus on three points.

First, despite repeated commitments, we are witnessing a stagnation if not a regression with regard to the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace and security. Belgium welcomes the concrete recommendations of the Women Mediator Networks Retreat. Indeed, women's equal and meaningful participation requires targeted efforts, even before peace processes are needed, such as gendered conflict analysis, gender mainstreaming at every stage of the process and support for women leaders, women peacebuilders and women human rights defenders.

Secondly, in that regard, let us take a moment to recognize how women in Israel and Palestine — often the first victims — have contributed to the peace process in the Middle East in the past and stress the importance of ensuring their full, equal and meaningful participation in any de-escalation, ceasefire or other efforts to negotiate peace in the Middle East.

Thirdly, in the same vein, women's full, equal and meaningful participation in post-conflict reconstruction calls for targeted efforts, even before a solution to conflicts and crises is reached. That requires a focus not only on physical reconstruction but also on social reconstruction. We must think about the need for safe spaces in the context of rising gender-based and domestic violence or other relevant questions, such as who is taking on the burden of care work and whether all occupations are open to women. Post-conflict transition periods offer critical windows of opportunity to eliminate the historical disadvantages experienced by women by mainstreaming gender throughout post-conflict reconstruction in the areas of governance and political systems, economic recovery, environmental sustainability, justice and the rule of law. Of course, those windows of opportunity do not just appear; they require careful preparation, strong political will and — yet again — support for women leaders, grass-roots organizations and women human rights defenders.

In conclusion, as we face ongoing crises in Ukraine, Haiti, Yemen and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, among other countries, let us not only focus on today but also look ahead and prepare for strengthened gender equality in transition periods.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Latvia.

Mr. Ilgis (Latvia): Let me express our appreciation to Switzerland for convening today's debate on women and peace and security. I also thank the briefers for their insightful contributions.

Latvia aligns itself with the statements delivered by the Ambassador for Gender and Diversity of the European Union and by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security. I thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and sobering report (S/2024/671), which highlights the undeniable truth that we have not yet succeeded in our efforts. Therefore, it is vital that we gather today to reaffirm the significance of the women and peace and security agenda.

Latvia remains steadfast in its commitment to the principles enshrined in that agenda and — as a candidate country for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the 2026 to 2027 term — considers it a top priority. We advocate for a gender-responsive approach to global peace efforts, emphasizing the meaningful participation of women at all levels, especially in high-level decision-making processes.

Given Latvia's field experience, we would like to focus on the impact of digital technology on the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. Digital communication tools have become a crucial enabler of inclusivity in mediation, empowering women peacebuilders to share their narratives and engage in decision-making. However, as technology advances, so do the dangers of gender-based disinformation, leading to unpredictable and far-reaching consequences. That troubling trend has been worsened by the perilous synergy between gender-based disinformation and various forms of violence, including conflict-related sexual violence, which is often used as a weapon of war. Disinformation campaigns frequently aim to discredit survivors, downplay atrocities or justify acts of violence. In response to those challenges, Latvia prioritizes women's empowerment in its development cooperation

by focusing on digital literacy, leveraging its established experience in promoting information integrity and media literacy.

Furthermore, Latvia fully supports the prosecution of gender-based crimes, including gender persecution, at the International Criminal Court, and calls for accountability for violations of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. We must adopt a multi-stakeholder approach, engaging Governments, civil society, the private sector and international organizations to build resilience in responding to the threat of disinformation and its consequences.

In conclusion, as we approach the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), next year represents a unique opportunity to renew our commitment and accelerate the full implementation of this landmark commitment.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Let me congratulate Ambassador Baeriswyl and the Swiss delegation on a very successful monthly presidency of the Security Council and for convening today's annual open debate on women and peace and security. We also thank the Secretary-General and the other briefers for their valuable insights.

Next year will mark 25 years since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). It is therefore an opportune moment to reflect on our achievements and shortcomings and consider the future course of action. Resolution 1325 (2000) marked a watershed. It placed women's issues at the centre of the global conflict prevention debate and recognized for the first time that women are not just victims of war but also active agents of peace and stability. The impacts of the efforts that have been made under the women and peace and security agenda are visible. A growing number of Member States have subscribed to the women and peace and security agenda and adopted its four-pillar policy. Violence against women in conflict situations has been contained in several conflict zones. The number of women serving as special representatives and special envoys has increased. The participation of women peacekeepers has improved. The involvement of female civil society representatives in peacebuilding has expanded.

Pakistan remains strongly committed to advancing the gender perspective in all United Nations actions, especially those related to United Nations peace operations. My country was the first to endorse the Secretary-General's Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, which identified women and peace and security as a central priority to strengthen United Nations peacekeeping. Our political commitment was matched with practical steps in the field. For example, in 2019 we dispatched our first all-female community engagement team to Africa, which undertook several successful initiatives, including vocational training for local students, teachers and women.

An increasing number of Pakistani women peacekeepers in recent years have served as doctors, nurses and police officers. Our policewoman, Shahzadi Gulfam, was the first-ever recipient of the International Female Police Peacekeeper Award in 2011. Pakistan's highly trained and professional United Nations peacekeepers, including female peacekeepers, continue to set the highest standards in fulfilling peacekeeping mandates and protecting all vulnerable segments of the population, including women, from violence in some of the most dangerous and complex conflict situations.

While considerable progress has been made, especially on the normative front, in promoting the women and peace and security agenda, the world continues to remain a very dangerous place for women and girls, who often find themselves caught in the vortex of unending wars and violence, leaving them extremely vulnerable to sexual violence. The most egregious violations against women and girls occur in situations of foreign occupation, since a principal objective of foreign occupation is the subjugation of the occupied population, among which women and girls are the most vulnerable. That is the case in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Since 1990, more than 100,000 Kashmiri men, women and children have been killed in occupied Jammu and Kashmir. There is documented evidence that Indian occupation forces have targeted Kashmiri women. In addition to intimidating and oppressing women, Indian forces have used rape as a weapon of war to inflict punishment and humiliation on the entire community. Among the most notorious of those incidents was the widely reported rape of 25 Kashmiri women in the twin Kashmiri villages of Kunan and Poshpora in 1991. It is documented in the 2018 and 2019 reports of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for

Human Rights, in the international media and by human rights organizations. The anguish of Kashmiri women is further compounded when their family members, including children, are abducted in midnight raids, illegally detained and tortured by occupying forces, while the unremitting restrictions on movement and communication condemns Kashmiri women to helplessly witnessing the suffering of their children.

The women and peace and security agenda must accord salience and priority to ending the suffering of women under foreign occupation, whether they are in Kashmir or whether they are in Gaza, the West Bank or the entirety of Palestine, which is being subjected to a genocidal war. The Security Council must live up to its responsibilities and address the dire and unacceptable situation of women and girls under foreign occupation.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of El Salvador.

Mrs. González López (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): El Salvador appreciates the convening of today's open debate on women and peace and security and thanks the various women briefers.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

Peacebuilding is an urgent priority in a world in which armed conflicts not only continue unabated but are also unfortunately spreading. We are therefore pleased that today's open debate was convened, and El Salvador has been an active participant in these meetings over the past few years. My country believes that this platform gives Member States an excellent opportunity to renew in earnest our commitment to resolution 1325 (2000) and its subsequent resolutions, which have constituted milestones towards increasing women's meaningful participation in all stages of peace processes. Overwhelming evidence indicates that peace agreements that include women's meaningful participation are stronger and last longer. Today more than ever, the world needs more peace processes in which women are key actors and not mere spectators.

Furthermore, we view the women and peace and security agenda as a cross-cutting agenda and therefore promote its incorporation, not only in the Security Council but also in the committees and subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly, in particular those related to disarmament, non-proliferation, arms control

and peacekeeping and peacebuilding. In that regard, we welcome the principles outlined in the Pact for the Future, in particular its action 19, which stresses the need to accelerate the implementation of the commitments of the women and peace and security agenda.

Although we have made significant progress, barriers still continue to impede women's active and meaningful participation. That is why it is crucial for us to continue to seek innovative solutions, such as online platforms, to promote women's inclusion in peace processes, while also ensuring that those spaces are safe and accessible for all women. It is also crucial to integrate the principles of the women and peace and security agenda in the deployment of peace operations. I am pleased to inform the Council that my country, the largest police-contributing country in our region, has achieved gender parity in the deployment of observers in special political missions.

Conflict prevention requires us to address the root causes of conflicts, while taking into account the various forms of inequality and structural discrimination. The United Nations and all States Members need to address comprehensively the issue of exclusion and to prioritize women's economic empowerment, taking a life-cycle approach that also includes older women, who are often left behind. We must also invest in education, especially for girls, who face greater disadvantages in the countries of the world.

At the national level, El Salvador continues to implement its national action plan on women and peace and security for the period 2022 to 2024 and is currently drafting its third national action plan. We have also launched a course aimed at strengthening participants' knowledge of this important agenda. The course will initially be offered to the institutions that are part of the implementation committee, but we hope to expand participation in the future. Other relevant initiatives include those being implemented with the support of the United Nations system through the Peacebuilding Fund. In that regard, we would like to take this opportunity to highlight the importance of funding for peacebuilding for the efforts to implement the women and peace and security agenda.

In conclusion, we renew our commitment to advancing the implementation of women and peace and security agenda. That is why my country will be attending the International Conference on Women, Peace,

and Security, to be held next week in the Philippines, and we recognize that country's commitment to that important agenda.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. França Danese (Brazil) (*spoke in French*): Brazil commends Switzerland for choosing the topic of women and peace and security for today's open debate and thanks the briefers for their very insightful briefings.

Women have traditionally played a vital role in conflict prevention and mediation. We must step up efforts to support their work and ensure that no peace talks take place without the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of women. Achieving gender equality and enhancing women's participation in peace and security require challenging deeply entrenched gender norms and stereotypes, as they perpetuate women's exclusion and marginalization. We must all work together to promote positive cultural and social change that supports women's rights and participation in those fields, among many others.

As Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), I invite all Members to take into account the written advice (see S/2024/757) submitted by the PBC to the Council in preparation for today's meeting. Besides highlighting women's expertise in various aspects of peacebuilding — and not only in gender issues — the PBC also encourages members to adopt targets for women's inclusion.

As we approach the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), Brazil echoes UN-Women's call for members to mainstream language on women and peace and security in various resolutions. Last year, when Brazil had the honour to preside over the open debate on women and peace and security, we questioned the narrative that the agenda belongs to a few countries (see S/PV.9452). In fact, the global South, including Brazil, pioneered the integration of gender equality, a principle of the Charter of the United Nations, into the work of the Security Council.

And we should not forget the plight of women in the many conflict zones at the moment. In particular, Brazil draws attention to the risk faced by Palestinian women and girls, in the light of the draft bills currently being discussed in the Knesset that could render the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees

in the Near East incapable of fulfilling its mandate and cause even more suffering to the Palestinian people.

Brazil believes in the power of dialogue. We therefore applaud the Secretary-General's common pledge to increase women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace processes. I am proud to announce that Brazil supports that timely initiative, as the world needs peace more than ever before, and mindful of that, in the words of Bertha Lutz, the Brazilian delegate to the San Francisco Conference, we will not be able to achieve it without the help of women. As a strong supporter of mediation and as a member of both the Ibero-American Network of Women Mediators and the Southern Cone Network of Women Mediators, Brazil stands ready to work with the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and other partners to make the pledge launched today a key contribution to mediation worldwide.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Mrs. Tahzib-Lie (Kingdom of the Netherlands): I would like to thank Switzerland for organizing today's event on United Nations Day and the civil society briefers for their indispensable work and enormous courage.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the European Union and on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

In a world in flames, women are the key to peace — women like Zainab, a local mediator in Iraq, who uses religious teachings and cases in Islamic history to resolve tribal disputes. In Nigeria, women active in peace management networks have managed to reduce violence between farmers and shepherds and among ethnic and religious groups. And within the Syrian political process, the Syrian Women's Advisory Board to the United Nations Special Envoy to Syria plays a pivotal role. Women leaders participating in different tracks work together, contributing to a more inclusive and sustainable peace. Those are empowering examples of millions of women around the world who are making a difference. Yet their efforts to build and sustain peace are rarely truly valued. Spaces, structures and norms dominated by men create both visible and invisible barriers to women's participation. My country, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, is determined to help make peace processes more inclusive, viable and sustainable. I would like to highlight three areas for action.

First, peacebuilding takes on many shapes and forms. We must recognize, value and support the efforts and voices of women in all their diversity. We must appreciate their different roles, whether it is through formal structures in political processes or through informal pathways. We all must ensure that the crucial role of local, women-led and feminist organizations in advancing the women and peace and security agenda is recognized, valued and amplified.

Secondly, women not only have the right to participate; peacebuilding and peacemaking depend on women's leadership and participation. We need to have the preconditions in place that enable women's full, equal and meaningful participation. That will lead to more stability, less violence and more prosperity. In that light, access to both mental health and psychosocial support, as well as to sexual and reproductive health and rights, are key.

Thirdly and lastly, peace can never thrive in a context in which women and girls, men and boys and members of the LGBTIQ+ community continue to be subjected to violence. All of us must work to prevent sexual and gender-based violence, including in situations of conflict. Our efforts include improving access to justice and accountability, imposing sanctions and combating harmful gender norms, while placing survivors' needs, perspectives and wishes at the very centre.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of the Netherlands is strongly committed to implementing resolution 1325 (2000), as illustrated by our feminist foreign policy and national action plan, because we simply cannot afford to exclude women and throw away the key to peace. Let all of us together make next year's twenty-fifth anniversary a milestone that we can all be proud of.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Mr. Larsen (Australia): Australia is pleased to contribute to today's open debate on women and peace and security, which is being held against the backdrop of the highest levels of global conflict since the Second World War. Even in our own region, women human rights defenders and civil society organizations in Myanmar are under attack. Since the military takeover, more than 5,000 women have been arrested and hundreds of women human rights defenders have been forced to flee.

Let me start by taking this opportunity to thank Switzerland for its leadership on this issue during its

Security Council presidency. Building and sustaining peace has never been more important, and implementing the women and peace and security agenda is at the heart of our success. Studies have shown again and again that the full, equal and meaningful participation of women at all stages of the peace process makes peace more likely and more durable. And yet the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda continues to lag. We continue to see increasing push-back against the human rights of women and girls and gender equality, which flies in the face of the foundational principles that bring our global community together. Australia is committed to four key areas designed to accelerate the women and peace and security agenda.

First, Australia is championing accountability for gender-based crimes. Last month, Australia, along with Germany, Canada and the Netherlands, invoked Afghanistan's responsibility under international law for violations of the rights of women and girls. By doing so, we sent a clear message that we will not accept a world in which women and girls are erased from society.

Secondly, Australia is supporting women-led initiatives to resolve disputes and protect women peacebuilders. In South-East Asia and the Pacific, those networks are increasing women's participation, leading to stronger conflict-resolution outcomes, and in recognition of that Australia has committed some \$2 million to establish the Pacific Women Mediators Network. By harnessing the local knowledge and power of affected communities, that initiative has helped Pacific countries respond to the mounting challenges posed by climate change.

Thirdly, we believe that now is the time to accelerate efforts for more women to deploy and lead United Nations peacekeeping operations, bringing them to the front lines of building durable peace. While women's participation in peacekeeping is moving in the right direction, women still make up only 8 per cent of the Blue Helmets overall. Our support for the Elsie Initiative Fund has been a key catalyst for that change. Gender parity in peacekeeping is possible, but only if we hold ourselves accountable.

Fourthly, we support the efforts of our global partners to implement gender-responsive peace and security actions. I am pleased that Australia has recently agreed to associate with the 2024 NATO policy on women and peace and security. That association is a clear signal of Australia's support for NATO's ongoing commitment to advancing the women and peace and security agenda.

In conclusion, through our engagement with partners — whether with organizations such as NATO, with our Indo-Pacific and global partners or with women-led civil society — Australia continues to progress our own national action plan to advance the women and peace and security agenda. Australia adds its voice to the calls for moving from rhetoric to action. The women and peace and security agenda will not implement itself. Women peacebuilders, human rights defenders, survivors and community leaders are the largest and most reliable constituency for peace. We can no longer fail to offer them our fullest support.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland.

Ms. Gilsean (Ireland): I would like to thank all this morning's briefers, especially Ms. Nu of Women's Peace Network, whose words about the realities faced by women in Myanmar, including the plight of the Rohingya people, challenge us all to translate political will into concrete implementation.

This year's open debate is being held in the context of record levels of armed conflict and the acute realities of climate change. We are witnessing an escalating global backlash against gender equality and the rights of women and girls, as crucial financing for women's organizations decreases. Ireland remains steadfast in our support for local civil society organizations — the backbone of conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts. Women in all their diversity are being excluded from decision-making and peacemaking. Those whose lives are most adversely affected by armed conflict are also those whose voices are most marginalized.

In the Middle East, the gravity and magnitude of the conflict is steadily worsening. In Gaza, more women and children have been killed than in any conflict in the past two decades. An estimated 52,000 pregnant women are expected to give birth with little access to care, as hospitals and clinics have been destroyed. How can we speak of equal participation in decision-making when women's fundamental rights, including their sexual and reproductive health rights, are so blatantly undermined? Humanitarian access is urgent, and women's needs must be at the centre of our response. We reiterate our steadfast support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in that regard.

In the Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Haiti, women and girls are facing unimaginable horrors on a daily basis, with unprecedented levels of

conflict-related sexual violence. We must ensure that perpetrators, including those who fail to prevent the weaponization of sexual violence, are held accountable through rights-based and survivor-centred means.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban are systematically stripping women and girls of their fundamental rights and erasing them from all facets of public life. We, as the international community, have a responsibility to adopt all tools available to reverse that and to ensure that the voices of Afghan women and girls are included in decision-making in the future of their country.

The debate today is focused on implementing the women and peace and security agenda in a changing and ever more complex environment. As we look towards its twenty-fifth anniversary, we must also adapt our strategies for women's participation, tailored to specific types of peace processes, if we are to effectively implement the goals of the women and peace and security agenda. We offer three suggestions in that regard.

First, we must continue to press for the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peacebuilding efforts at all levels, from informal processes to ceasefire agreements to comprehensive peace negotiations. Excluding Colombia, only 1.5 per cent of peace agreements signed in 2023 included a woman signatory. Yet we know that women's participation is fundamental for an inclusive and sustainable peace. We therefore call on the United Nations and all Member States to lead by example and to demand women's direct participation in peace processes.

Secondly, we must do better to ensure safe participation. Too often, women face reprisals and intimidation that exclude them from key forums and damage our collective efforts towards peace. That is absolutely unacceptable. Equally, we know that hearing at first hand from women peacebuilders is vital. Protection concerns cannot be used as grounds for compromising on participation, including in the Council. We must develop concrete measures to address reprisals, both online and offline.

Thirdly, the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence and accountability for such violence must be prioritized. As we mark the fifteenth anniversary of the mandate of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence and Conflict, we commend the vital work carried out by her office, as well as by United Nations gender advisers and women protection advisers across the United Nations system. We call for continued support and ex-

pertise to ensure effectiveness across the United Nations system in addressing conflict-related sexual violence. The international community must invest in accountability measures, which are essential to end impunity.

Women can and do play a central role in advancing conflict prevention, breaking the conflict cycle and working towards sustainable peace at many levels. The unwavering efforts of women, particularly young women, demonstrate that. They do not have the privilege of waiting for the right moment to act but rather must seize every opportunity to promote peace. We can learn from their resolve by ensuring women's leadership and participation at all levels of mediation and negotiation, better addressing reprisals, preventing sexual and gender-based violence and supporting local women-led civil society. We can make progress on implementing our commitments.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Austria.

Mr. Pretterhofer (Austria): Austria aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the European Union and on behalf of Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

We greatly appreciate Switzerland's efforts to convene this year's annual open debate on women and peace and security. Let me also thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Sima Bahous, Executive Director of UN-Women, Justice Effie Owuor and Ms. Wai Wai Nu, Founder and Executive Director of Women's Peace Network, for their comprehensive presentations and insights.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2024/671) makes for harrowing reading and continues the negative trend in recent years of each report's findings being worse than the last. Hard-won progress over decades is slipping through our fingers. Collectively, we need to do better and take that as a wake-up call. In line with the guiding questions for this debate, I would like to focus on three points.

First, I will focus on commitments. On the eve of the thirtieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the landmark resolution 1325 (2000), we need to reset our focus on the human rights of women and girls and on the international normative framework for women and peace and security. That requires strong political will and a robust rule of law. Austria has pledged over €11 million in the context of the Compact on Women,

Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action and has increased its multi-year funding to the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund from €5 million to €9.7 million euros until 2025. Rest assured that Austria will remain strongly committed to the women and peace and security agenda and will actively contribute to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and its follow-up resolutions.

Secondly, I will focus on concrete initiatives. In order to promote the full, equal, meaningful and effective participation of women in all their diversity in peace processes, they need to be supported at all levels and across various sectors. Austria is committed to empowering women at grass-roots levels and supporting local women's civil society organizations. Through our funding to UN-Women, Austria funds various projects supporting local women leaders, women human rights defenders and women journalists, particularly in Ukraine and Afghanistan. Women must also be encouraged to take on leading roles in the highest political, judicial and military positions. Role models are very important in that regard. Austria remains committed to increasing the number of women politicians, judges and military personnel, including military staff sent on peacekeeping missions. A triple-nexus approach ensuring cooperation between the humanitarian, development and peace sectors is also very important. The protection of sexual and reproductive health and rights and the provision of sexual and reproductive health services are also crucial prerequisites for women to be able to attain leadership positions.

Thirdly, with regard to tools, modern technologies provide no shortage of possibilities that can help to bring women to the negotiating table. One aspect is that data- and research-based evidence about what works and what does not work is much more accessible and more straightforward to share, bridging the gap between theory and practice. It is also much easier for women from different regions to connect, create networks, participate in training and share experiences online. The flip side of new technologies, including artificial intelligence in that regard, is that they often inherently perpetuate gender biases and can be used for online sexual and gender-based violence and harassment. The Austrian Government has recently launched two online platforms aimed specifically at supporting women: an online counselling centre called "Women advise women", which offers legal and psychological advisory services and group seminar sessions, and a help desk to provide girls with psychosocial support, called "MonA-net".

No one ever said that putting the women and peace and security agenda into practice would be easy. We regularly call upon Council members in particular and all Member States to remain actively seized of the matter and further the women and peace and security agenda. If we all pull together, the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace and transition processes will be achievable and so, ultimately, will be inclusive and sustainable peace.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Deputy Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations.

Mrs. Elardja Flitti (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Madam President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month and for convening today's important meeting. I also thank the briefers for their statements on this important agenda item.

Today's meeting is being convened one full year after the start of the ongoing tragedy of killing, systematic destruction, forced displacement and genocide in Gaza. It has been a year in which Palestinian women have been stripped of their dignity, and their rights have been totally violated. Palestinian women have become icons for women around the world, as they continue to bear the brunt of the brutal war and its humanitarian repercussions, namely, oppression, violence, displacement, torture and detention under catastrophic conditions that lack the basic elements of a decent life.

Despite the Council's adoption of resolutions 2712 (2023), 2720 (2023) and 2735 (2024) and the International Court of Justice issuing an advisory opinion that confirmed Israel's settlement occupation of the entire occupied Palestinian territory, the situation remains regrettably at an impasse, as Israel is not committed to implementing those resolutions or even acknowledging them. Notwithstanding this paralysis and stalemate in the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions, Palestinian women remain steadfast and resilient, even though they continue to pay a very high price for the Israeli colonial practices and aggression perpetrated against them, their children and families for more than 75 years, which remain ongoing. Those practices have escalated as a result of the international silence on the crimes Israel has committed in Gaza. This silence emboldens Israel to continue its abuse of Palestinian women and girls, who nevertheless have not lost hope that the Security Council will bring them solutions.

Amid that deafening silence in the face of the destruction and annihilation, what we all feared has come to pass: the Israeli killing, destruction and aggression machine has moved from Gaza, Jerusalem and the West Bank to Syria and Lebanon, whose citizens are also being subjected to a barbaric Israeli military escalation, the likes of which have not been seen in two decades. Lebanese women and girls are also enduring the consequences of destruction and displacement inflicted upon them in flagrant violation of international law, international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Moreover, Arab women and their children are also suffering as they are the ones who are bearing the brunt of the events in the Sudan and Yemen. There, they face the gravest humanitarian crises in the world as a result of raging wars, ongoing conflicts and instability on the ground.

All those crises have spurred the League of Arab States and its Secretary-General to continue efforts aimed at implementing the women and peace and security agenda and resolution 1325 (2000) with a view to protecting Arab women from all forms of violence during war and conflict in the region. We have spared no effort in supporting the UN-Women agenda by taking a holistic approach in line with the region's priorities and working tirelessly and closely with the United Nations and the relevant regional organizations to protect women during armed conflict and promote their participation in peacemaking, peacebuilding and sustaining comprehensive peace.

To that end, we have launched a number of important and pioneering regional initiatives, foremost of which is the Arab Women Mediators Network — a serious initiative that supports the role of women in mediation and diplomacy. In 2023, in order to keep pace with new developments at regional and international levels, the League of Arab States also updated the Arab regional strategy on women, peace and security, which is the cornerstone of implementation of the UN-Women agenda in the region.

The League of Arab States firmly believes that it is time for the Council and the international community to take decisive action to save women and girls in the region and spare them the consequences of the ongoing military escalation on the ground, in accordance with resolution 1325 (2000) and the women and peace and security agenda. To that end and within the framework of implementing the special mechanisms of the Council

in its capacity as the organ entrusted with maintaining international peace and security, the League of Arab States calls on the Council to undertake the following actions.

First, the Council must exert all necessary pressure so as to expedite an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza and Lebanon, end the forced displacement of people and allow the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid. Doing so is part of the Council's responsibility to end injustice and the Israeli colonization of the Palestinian people.

Secondly, the Council must promote the comprehensive inclusion of women in all efforts aimed at peacemaking, peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the region, in implementation of the women and peace and security agenda and relevant Council resolutions, by strengthening and fostering initiatives to implement economic and humanitarian integration programmes, bring women back into the political arena so that they can defend the rights of their fellow women, including refugee women, displaced women and victims of conflict, and afford women long-term stability.

Thirdly, the Council must promote collective action to address the obstacles to the meaningful and effective participation of women in conflict resolution, peacebuilding and peace sustainability by advocating increased funding for women's mediation networks, so that women can resume their activities and ensure that they take part in peace negotiations in conflict zones. Those networks must become a parallel international platform that supports the work of the Security Council.

In conclusion, the League of Arab States, like its regional and international governmental organization counterparts, still hopes to rid our region of war, destruction, violence and annihilation. It also looks forward to the day when all of us in this Chamber will witness an end to the suffering of women in the Middle East and worldwide so that security and peace can be enjoyed by all peoples of the globe.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Spain.

Ms. Jiménez de la Hoz (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful to the Swiss presidency for convening today's debate.

Spain aligns itself with the statements made by the observer of the European Union and the representative of Canada speaking on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, to which we belong. I would

like to put forward a number of further considerations in my national capacity.

Against a backdrop of multipolar crises, we are witnessing a gradual rollback of women's rights, including in relation to the women and peace and security agenda, as the report of the Secretary-General presented today states (S/2024/671). The increase in conflict worldwide is having a disproportionate impact on women and girls. The report points to various conflict and humanitarian crisis contexts. All of the data are alarming. The attacks perpetrated by Hamas on 7 October 2023 included case of sexual violence. Two thirds of the victims in Gaza are women and children. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, more than 123,000 cases of gender-based violence were recorded in 2023. The report's figures on sexual violence for Haiti and Ethiopia are also alarming.

Many countries have adopted action plans that develop the women and peace and security agenda at the national level, but women are still absent from peacebuilding processes, and militarization continues to grow. Spain has completed its second national action plan on women and peace and security, and at present we are currently working on the third, taking note of the gaps and challenges that emerged when carrying out the previous plan.

Restrictions on the education, freedom of movement and right to work of women and girls are unacceptable. They represent human rights violations that have a serious impact on the lives of women and girls. It is necessary to work on accountability, including for sex crimes. The women and peace and security agenda is primarily a prevention agenda, in line with the Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace. In that context, Spain's cooperation has a long history of developing training activities for women mediators in Latin America; these efforts have been extended to include West Africa and the Middle East. Together with Mexico and a dozen Ibero-American countries, in 2023, we created the Ibero-American Network of Women Mediators to provide training and create a committee of women experts in mediation. The protection of women in crisis contexts, including in the digital environment, is the best tool to enable their participation.

We commend the courage of women human rights defenders and civil society leaders who continue to speak out despite the threats and intimidation to which they are subjected. In Spain, of the more than 400 defenders who have benefited from the programme for the protection

and temporary reception of human rights defenders, half are women. We have also hosted 2,000 Afghan women, including human rights defenders, judges and journalists.

In order to strengthen the women and peace and security agenda, we need the presence of more women in leadership positions at the national level and in multilateral forums, such as this Organization. This year, Spain, together with Mexico, is chairing the Feminist Foreign Policy Group in New York and promotes gender alternation in the presidency of the General Assembly. In the almost 80 years that the Organization has existed, only four women have presided over the Assembly, and none have held the post of Secretary-General. We therefore support a woman becoming the next Secretary-General.

In the final recommendations of the report of the Secretary-General, in view of the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) next year, the Secretary-General lists a series of proposals for Member State commitments, including measures to increase women's participation in decision-making processes, support women in countries where there has been a withdrawal from peacekeeping missions and promote accountability. Spain will continue to make progress on its commitments to improve the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). We cannot wait 25 more years for women and girls to be able to enjoy their legitimate rights.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Nepal.

Mr. Thapa (Nepal): First of all, I thank the presidency of Switzerland for convening today's open debate and extend my gratitude to the briefers for their comprehensive and insightful briefings.

The role of women is crucial in achieving sustainable peace and security. Their involvement in peacebuilding is vital, especially in today's challenging environment marked by heightened geopolitical tensions, record levels of armed conflicts and climate change. Next year we will celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000). That landmark resolution called for the systemic inclusion of women in prevention, protection, participation and peacebuilding. The Pact for the Future (General Assembly resolution 79/1) also reaffirms the critical role of women as agents of peace and pledges to enhance their participation in peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

Yet, despite some progress, the vulnerabilities of women and girls have been further exacerbated. We are deeply concerned about the increasing number of casualties among women in conflicts and the rise in cases of conflict-related sexual violence. We are far from realizing women's inclusion in decision-making roles in peace and security. Similarly, financing for the women and peace and security agenda is insufficient.

Allow me to highlight three key points. First, women's involvement in peacebuilding — from political participation and grass-roots leadership to security and economic empowerment — is essential. Women prioritize community welfare, social justice and education, leading to more comprehensive and lasting peace agreements. Strong political will is critical to ensuring women's participation in peace negotiations, peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction processes.

Secondly, we must prioritize gender-responsive conflict analysis, sectoral reform and early-warning systems to mitigate violence against women. Integrating more women into security forces will yield positive impacts.

Thirdly, increased financial support is urgently needed for the implementation of women and peace and security policies and action plans. Structures must be strengthened at all levels to support women's expertise while fostering stronger collaboration with civil society and women peacebuilders and peace actors. Their digital and technological capacities should be harnessed to protect and promote women's voices and participation.

Nepal has been a proactive supporter of the women and peace and security agenda. In 2011, we were the first country in South Asia to adopt a national action plan for the implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008). Our second national action plan, adopted in 2022, further underscores the centrality of women's contribution across the women and peace and security agenda. As the largest troop- and police-contributing country, Nepal remains committed to increasing the participation of women peacekeepers and advancing the women and peace and security agenda. The increasing political representation of women in Nepal has also helped to take this vital agenda forward.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that women's leadership, resilience and determination offer us a path forward in our evolving world. Recognizing the role of women and involving them in building peace is

not just a matter of justice; it is a strategic imperative for achieving lasting peace. Let us invest in peace by investing in women.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mrs. Márdero Jiménez (Mexico): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the MIKTA Group of countries, namely, Mexico, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Türkiye and Australia, with Mexico acting as Chair of the Group.

We extend our appreciation to Switzerland for convening today's debate.

Gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment are priorities for our cross-regional platform. MIKTA members recognize the key role of women in conflict prevention and resolution, as well as in peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The full, equal, meaningful and safe participation and leadership of women in all stages of building and sustaining peace must be the norm, not an afterthought.

Unfortunately, as stressed by the Secretary-General in his most recent report on the topic (S/2024/671), women continue to face entrenched barriers to their direct participation in peace and political processes. Women and women-led organizations struggle to gain access to sufficient financing and other resources, while military spending continues to grow. At the same time, while there is greater attention to the threats and violence faced by women human rights defenders, such violence is still on the rise.

We wish to highlight three points. First, MIKTA will continue to strongly support the meaningful engagement, participation and leadership of all women in all aspects of peace processes, including through regional and local women mediators networks, as well as the increased deployment of women in peace operations, in line with the Secretary-General's uniformed gender parity strategy 2018–2028.

Secondly, we urge all Member States and the United Nations system to ensure that all women, young women and girls in conflict situations have access to essential services, such as quality education, employment and healthcare, including sexual and reproductive healthcare services, and mental health and psychosocial support.

Thirdly, collectively, we must address the root causes of gender inequality and promote and defend the human rights of all women and girls. We call for

the full respect and application of international law and international humanitarian law, and for the elimination of all violence inflicted on women and girls, including sexual and gender-based violence, harmful practices and trafficking. A survivor-centred approach is key to restoring safety and dignity, ensuring access to justice and accountability and ending impunity.

Next year's twenty-fifth anniversary of the women and peace and security agenda is an opportunity to take stock of progress made, evaluate gaps and commit to urgent and concerted action. Women's participation and leadership contributes to more robust democracies and longer-lasting peace. Therefore, MIKTA strongly advocates and supports targeted measures for advancing substantive equality and building inclusive and sustaining peace. We look forward to working with other Member States in that regard.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

I shall now speak on behalf of my country, Mexico.

We thank Switzerland for convening today's open debate on an issue that is a priority for my country, as well as the Deputy Secretary-General and UN-Women Executive Director for their briefings.

In line with its feminist foreign policy, Mexico is fully committed to the women and peace and security agenda, specifically to promoting the participation of women and girls across the peace continuum.

Nearly a quarter of a century after the adoption of the landmark resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, we recognize today that progress has been made in building a robust international normative framework on this agenda, but that this progress contrasts with worrisome gaps and setbacks with regard to women's participation and representation in peace processes, as the most recent reports of the Secretary-General on the subject show.

Women's active participation in peacebuilding is not a concession — it is both necessary and imperative. In the face of increasing armed conflict, tensions, hate speech, mistrust and polarization on the international stage today, the voice and vision of women is nothing less than essential to sustaining dialogue and building trust. That implies overcoming the mindset that has historically reduced women to the role of victims. On the contrary, in the field and at the negotiating table, it has been proven time and again that women are architects

of peace and that they can re-establish channels of communication and build trust among those who do not find the path of dialogue and reconciliation so easily.

In that regard, I am pleased to highlight Mexico's support for the Secretary-General's common pledge on women's participation in peace processes and the implementation of its four concrete measures, in order to promote greater participation of women in peace processes, against the backdrop of the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) next year. That initiative comes at a timely and necessary moment, and Mexico supports it and will promote its implementation.

We are at an important moment in the fulfilment of the women and peace and security agenda. Although we have 10 resolutions on women and peace and security, the challenge we face lies in implementation on the ground and preventing setbacks. In that context, Mexico proposes the following concrete actions. First, we must ensure that the work of women mediators, peacebuilders and human rights defenders in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and sustainable peace is supported and recognized, both internationally and nationally. Secondly, we must ensure that women's voices, experiences and capacities are given priority in peace negotiations and agreements. Thirdly, young people must be involved in mediation and peacebuilding efforts. To that end, it is necessary to establish synergies between the women and peace and security and the youth and peace and security agendas.

It only remains for me to call on Member States, international organizations and civil society to join forces to take advantage of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the resolution that gave rise to today's agenda and achieve tangible results in the short term.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Guatemala.

Ms. Del Águila Castillo (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Guatemala thanks the Government of Switzerland and its President for presiding over today's important open debate. We appreciate the valuable briefings by Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, UN-Women Executive Director Sima Bahous and the representatives of women's peace networks.

Guatemala reiterates its commitment to resolution 1325 (2000) and the women and peace and security agenda. Almost a quarter of a century after its adoption, major challenges remain to ensuring women's full and

safe participation in peace processes. We firmly believe that, through multilateralism and political will, promises can be turned into concrete action.

In a global context marked by more than 120 armed conflicts, women's participation is not only a right, but it is essential for lasting peace. Experience shows that peace processes that include women are more sustainable, more effective and lead to a higher implementation rate of agreements reached.

When discussing mandates for peace operations, it is critical to include actions to address sexual violence in conflict, for example through the presence of women's protection advisers, security sector reform and other disarmament measures, ensuring that there are no security gaps owing to troop reductions and that hard-won gains in women's empowerment and gender equality are not lost. That is key to preventing and saving more victims.

Networks of women mediators are key to conflict resolution. My delegation urges States to provide them with the necessary political and financial support to safeguard their impact on peace processes. In addition, new technologies can be powerful tools to promote women's participation and ensure their inclusion in all aspects of social and political life. However, such tools also pose risks, such as online harassment and misinformation. We must invest in digital security training for women mediators and establish inclusive platforms to enable their safe participation in peace dialogues.

Our commitment to resolution 1325 (2000) requires designing inclusive peace processes that respond to the needs of all those affected. In Guatemala, that commitment is implemented through the Inter-agency Committee on Women and Peace and Security. True to the agenda, we will continue to promote concrete actions to close the gaps between legislation and its implementation.

We call on the Security Council and Member States to redouble their efforts to ensure that women's voices are heard in all peace processes.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Thailand.

Mr. Chaivaidvid (Thailand): At the outset, I wish to commend Switzerland for today's very important debate and thank all the briefers for their contributions.

As we approach the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), it is crucial to renew our commitment to advancing the women and peace

and security agenda, particularly amid growing conflicts worldwide. Thailand wishes to highlight the following points.

First, peacebuilding must be inclusive. Women are key stakeholders in peace processes. Their perspectives enrich peace efforts by bringing essential insights on social cohesion, justice and sustainable development. However, enhancing women's leadership and participation requires political commitment at all levels. In Thailand, we are developing our national action plan on women and peace and security for the period 2024 to 2027 to promote women's role in conflict resolution, peacebuilding in the community and society and protecting women's rights. On the ground, Thai women peacekeepers have positively contributed to community engagement as early peacebuilders. Last year, the Royal Thai Armed Forces launched training for its engagement team to enhance the ability of both men and women peacekeepers in community engagement efforts.

Secondly, peacebuilding requires adequate resources. Thailand calls for flexible, sustained and innovative approaches for funding peacebuilding efforts. We believe that gender-responsive budgeting is absolutely crucial for ensuring resources to support women's leadership and address their needs in conflict settings, thereby enhancing the sustainability of peace efforts. In addition, we should explore partnerships with the private sector and with regional and international financial institutions to support peace processes, including capacity-building initiatives.

Lastly, peacebuilding demands coherence. Policy and operational coherence across the United Nations system, including the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, is essential to advance the women and peace and security agenda. The United Nations must work in a synchronized manner to address the interconnected drivers of conflicts: discrimination, violations of human rights, exclusion, inequality, poverty and climate change, among others.

In conclusion, Thailand reaffirms its commitment to fully implementing the women and peace and security agenda, as it is our conviction that lasting peace, stability and sustainable development can be achieved only through diversity, equality and inclusion.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary.

Ms. Horváth (Hungary): We thank Switzerland for its leadership in organizing this crucial debate and the briefers for their sobering yet much-needed insights.

Hungary aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union (EU) and wishes to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

Hungary is deeply alarmed by the historically high number of women and girls who are distinctly and disproportionately affected by the ever-growing number and severity of conflicts worldwide. In that context, we reaffirm Hungary's steadfast commitment to advancing the women and peace and security agenda and have three key messages to share today.

First, on participation, thousands of women mediators, peacebuilders, negotiators, experts and leaders have proven to bring just and sustainable peace when they have, first, a voice; secondly, a seat at the table; and thirdly, a pen in their hand to sign peace agreements. Their full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership in formal and informal conflict prevention and resolution of peace processes and long-term peacebuilding on all levels are only a question of political will, and we urge all partners to ensure the safe and supportive environment that enables women to carry out their important work.

Secondly, no lasting peace is possible without gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the full and equal participation of women and girls in all spheres of life. That requires eliminating discriminatory laws and policies and deeply entrenched negative social norms in societies as a whole. We call for gender-responsive reforms in the security sector and beyond, including ensuring that the human rights of all women and girls are upheld, that survivors of conflict-related sexual violence receive holistic, comprehensive, survivor-centred and trauma-informed support and services, as well as access to justice and remedies, and that the perpetrators are held accountable without exception.

Thirdly, it is my honour to announce that Hungary finalized its first-ever national action plan on women and peace and security for the period 2024 to 2028, which was signed by the Minister of Defence in July of this year. The action plan focuses on strengthening the role of women in the defence and security sector and on promoting gender equality in education, human resources, preparation, training and operations, among other areas. In addition, we are proud that Hungary has the highest proportion of women as active-duty soldiers

within NATO, reaching more than 20 per cent in 2023. The advancement of the women and peace and security agenda is also a key human rights priority of the Hungarian presidency of the EU, with the aim of strengthening the role of women in international security policy processes and of contributing to global peacebuilding efforts.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the genocide committed by Da'esh against the Yazidi minority, and on this occasion we urge the international community to join us in providing long-term support to women and girls belonging to persecuted religious and ethnic minorities, including Yazidis and Christians, who carry the faith and future of their communities on their shoulders.

And finally, on the fifteenth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations mandate on sexual violence in conflict, I take this opportunity to reaffirm Hungary's steadfast support for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, her Office and her team of experts, whose outstanding work is translating our commitment into reality for thousands of women and girls surviving amid unthinkable hardship around the world. We are grateful for their work.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Portugal.

Mr. Ferreira Silva Aranda (Portugal): Portugal aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and thanks Switzerland for convening this important and timely debate. We also thank the Deputy Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN-Women, Justice Effie Owuor and Ms. Wai Wai Nu for their insightful and inspiring remarks on this subject.

As we approach the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), while armed conflicts and non-compliance with international humanitarian law are disturbingly on the rise, women's participation in building and securing peace is still far from being a reality. Instead, we are witnessing a dramatic surge in incidents of conflict-related sexual violence disproportionately affecting women and girls. As highlighted in the Secretary-General's report (S/2024/671), the picture is dire and calls for renewed action. Building sustainable peace can be achieved only by ensuring that peace agreements are reached through inclusive processes, as women have a unique contribution to make to conflict prevention and resolution.

We believe that one of the most effective ways to implement the women and peace and security agenda is by adopting national action plans. Portugal has already

adopted three national plans and is currently finalizing its fourth. Portugal has also taken concrete steps to integrate the gender perspective and the women and peace and security agenda in the field of development cooperation through the approval of the Portuguese Development Cooperation Strategy 2030. In the context of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, Portugal has been involved in the drafting of an action plan to implement resolution 1325 (2000) and of a code of conduct for the prevention of sexual violence.

At the international level, Portugal welcomes the Peacebuilding Commission's determined action in implementing its gender strategy, which acknowledges the positive contribution of women in the maintenance and promotion of peace, recognizing that their broad participation contributes to long-term resilience and to strengthening conflict prevention. We also welcome the Secretary-General's renewed commitment to the implementation of the ambitious measures of his United Nations System-wide Gender Equality Acceleration Plan, particularly the new initiative for a common pledge on women's participation in peace processes, which we hope may soon lead to concrete steps towards an effective and broad participation of women in mediation activities and efforts all across the world.

Considering the downward trend of explicit references by the Security Council to gender-related issues in its decisions, we encourage members of the Council to increase their efforts towards a consistent commitment to include gender-based approaches in its deliberations and to involve more women, particularly from civil society, in its discussions. We appreciate the efforts to that end made by the Security Council signatories of the statement of shared commitments on women and peace and security.

Deepening and strengthening women's leadership roles in mediation, negotiation and peacebuilding are indissociable from the promotion of gender equality itself. In that vein, we cannot remain indifferent to many conflict situations worldwide. One of those situations is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in which women and girls in Gaza are living amid a total collapse of public order. The state of affairs is increasingly worrisome given the initiatives in the Knesset, which endanger the operations of United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and its capacity to provide essential human services such as health and

education. We underline the need to safeguard UNRWA's indispensable assistance to women and girls, particularly during the ongoing war in Gaza.

To conclude, the radical shift of putting women and girls at the centre of security policy, called for by the Secretary-General, is of the utmost urgency. As we approach another anniversary of the landmark resolution, let us reaffirm our commitment to the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda and the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Lebanon.

Ms. Zoghbi (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): We thank you, Madam President, for convening this annual open debate on women and peace and security, which coincides with United Nations Day. That is paramount in view of the recent developments in the Middle East, in particular in my country, Lebanon.

This open debate is taking place as we approach the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, which Lebanon was among the first countries to support. After successfully implementing its first national plan to implement resolution 1325 (2000), Lebanon has started to develop its second national plan for implementation. This meeting also coincides with the ongoing and unabated Israeli aggression against Lebanon and its people. To date, the aggression has left more than 2,593 martyrs, including more than 300 women and girls. It has injured more than 12,119 people. It constitutes a blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, resolution 1701 (2006), international law and international humanitarian law. The aggression has also led to an unprecedented wave of displacement. More than 1.2 million people have been internally displaced, 53 per cent of whom are women and girls; nearly 62,000 of the displaced households in Lebanon are headed by women; almost 56,000 women of reproductive age have been displaced; and 2,300 pregnant women have also been displaced. Of the latter, 260 are due to deliver their children next month.

Those unprecedented statistics in Lebanon reflect the horror of what the country's people are suffering, especially Lebanese women and girls, who are either victims of that aggression or became injured or internally displaced. Some of them have even been displaced to Syria or Iraq. The Israeli aggression against Lebanon has upended the lives of Lebanese men and women, resulting in endless pain along with long-term material, moral and

psychological damage that is not easy to address. Our women have had to flee indiscriminate bombings while carrying their children in the middle of the night, leaving behind their homes, property and memories.

During the month of April, Lebanon, in partnership with UN-Women, launched a project for sustainable emergency food systems during humanitarian crises. The project has adopted a new approach to humanitarian assistance and food systems during times of crises and conflicts. It is aimed at empowering Lebanese women in the south through their effective participation in local food systems. The project continues to be implemented in the city of Tyre, despite the horrors of the aggression. Our steadfast displaced women remain committed to that pioneering project, demonstrating that, despite the aggression against us, we will remain rooted in our land.

The Israeli attacks have not spared the United Nations and its bodies. As a result of one of the night air strikes on the southern suburb of Beirut on 21 October, a safe haven for women and girls, supported by United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), was destroyed, in addition to a primary health care centre. In Beirut, Bekaa and Mount Lebanon, 10 facilities supported by UNFPA have been closed, including primary healthcare facilities, safe havens and mobile maternity clinics, owing to the insecurity and the fear of being targeted.

The women and girls of Lebanon have long suffered from wars and conflicts. Today they are tired of watching the same scene repeat itself, namely, suffering, killing, injuries, displacement and destruction everywhere. We must break that bloody cycle, end the brutal aggression against our people, establish an immediate ceasefire and implement all provisions of resolution 1701 (2006). The women of Lebanon deserve to live in dignity, safety and security without having to prioritize surviving air strikes from one direction and invasions from another. Lebanese girls deserve to go to their schools and universities in safety without being terrorized by the noise of aeroplanes breaking the sound barrier or indiscriminate bombardments.

The President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the representative of Qatar.

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Her Excellency Ms. Viola Amherd, President of the Swiss Confederation, for presiding over today's meeting. We would like also to

thank the Deputy Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN-Women and the other briefers for their valuable contributions this morning.

Despite the substantive progress that has been made under the women and peace and security agenda, we continue to see flagrant violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law across various conflict zones with impunity and lack of accountability. Those violations disproportionately affect women and girls, and the situation in Gaza is a prime example in this respect. The ongoing brutal aggression there has resulted in serious violations of human values and international norms. Women and girls bear the brunt of the Israeli aggression as they face heightened levels of violence, air strikes, terrible health repercussions and a lack of food and medicine, in addition to the destruction of schools and large-scale displacement. That situation emphasizes the urgent need to translate the political will into concrete actions and raise awareness about the role that women can play in peace and security, which is vital if we are to address the complex international challenges that we are currently facing while focusing on enabling women to play a greater role in preventing conflicts and responding to them.

In the context of our commitment to fully implementing the women and peace and security agenda, the State of Qatar is proud to join the Secretary-General's campaign for the common pledge on women's participation in peace processes, which is launched by stakeholders in the area of global mediation at today's meeting.

As the twenty-fifth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security approaches, this historic opportunity provides us with extremely important opportunity to reflect on the transformative potential of the women and peace and security agenda. We note that the implementation of the agenda's goals requires thinking about not just it but also its accelerated implementation, with its four pillars, namely, prevention, protection, participation and relief and recovery. The Pact for the Future (A/79/1), which was recently adopted, is therefore a vital platform to help us achieve those goals. The State of Qatar welcomes the fact that the Pact acknowledges women as agents of peace and emphasizes that their full and equal participation in decision-making at all levels of peace and security is

essential to achieving sustainable peace. We believe that the serious implementation of the Pact will help reverse some of the worrisome trends that currently undermine women's participation in peace processes.

I would like to respond to the guiding questions posed throughout today's discussion by addressing three brief points.

First, we must take advantage of the political will in this sphere and apply it practically. We must take specific actions to implement the framework of the plan on women and peace and security. That includes strengthening political commitments and supporting them with accountability mechanisms that track progress in women's participation in peace processes.

Secondly, women's participation should be prioritized in every peace process. Efforts in building local capacities and ensuring women's empowerment to influence the desired outcomes can achieve that objective. Moreover, establishing regional networks to facilitate women's involvement in peacebuilding efforts is also vital. In that regard, we note the Arab Women Mediators Network, of which the State of Qatar is an active member.

Thirdly, new technologies bring with them both opportunities and risks. On the one hand, those technologies can enhance women's participation in peace processes by providing greater accessibility and inclusiveness. On the other, those technologies can be misused and exploited to spread false information. Therefore, it is necessary to establish strong guarantees that protect women in the public sphere and to provide them with the necessary tools that enable them to face those challenges safely.

In conclusion, I reaffirm the State of Qatar's firm commitment to working with the international community in order to support the efforts to strengthen the role of women in peace and security and to advance the women and peace and security agenda.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are still a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting. Given the lateness of the hour, I intend, with the concurrence of members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.

The meeting was suspended at 6.20 p.m.