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SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT ONE OF WORLD'S MOST VICIOUS CRIMES: GLOBAL COMMUNITY

MUST USE ALL ITS TOOLS TO END IT, SAYS SECRETARY-GENERAL IN SECURITY COUNCIL

Council Also Hears from Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict: NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security: 60 Delegations in Day-long Debate

Despite success in cracking the silence around the systematic use of sexual violence as a war tactic, it persisted as one of the world's most vicious crimes, destroying individual lives and terrorizing communities, delegates in the Security Council stressed today, calling on the 15-member body to ratchet up pressure on perpetrators and use its full means to prevent its occurrence.

"To succeed, we must use all the tools at our disposal," said Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, launching the Council's day-long debate on women and peace and security. That included peacekeeping and political missions, mediation efforts, initiatives to protect human rights and deliver humanitarian assistance, as well as the work of everyone involved in building post-conflict peace.

For their part, United Nations peacekeeping missions in Sudan, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo — together with country teams — were establishing Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangements, which he hoped could be completed before the end of the year.

The need could not be more urgent. Drawing attention to his latest report (document [S/2013/149](#)), Mr. Ban said that the negative effects of wartime rape persisted long after the guns had fallen silent. Although such violence disproportionately affected women and girls, men and boys were also targeted. Other trends underscored the need to address sexual violence during ceasefire negotiations, peace processes and security sector reform. Against that backdrop, he looked forward to the Council's sustained leadership to prevent such abuse.

Broadly agreeing, Zainab Hawa Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, said the Council must send an unequivocal message that "sexual violence in conflict will not be tolerated and the full force of international order will be brought to bear to ensure accountability". For too long, women had borne the "crippling" effects — physical, psychological, social and economic — of wartime rape. They were often ostracized from their communities and families, and left destitute with their children.

Over the last five years, the Council had helped to usher in a "paradigm shift" that had altered the approach to addressing that crime. Stressing the importance of prevention, she urged engaging national stakeholders to foster national responsibility for the problem. The Council's efforts could only complement national measures and she rallied delegates to seize the opportunity for change. "May this be a decisive moment — our moment to put an end to this crime that is a blight on our collective humanity," she implored.

Throughout the day, more than 60 speakers took the floor to decry the atrocities that women were forced to endure — rape, trafficking, sexual exploitation, forced pregnancy and female genital mutilation among them — as well as the entrenched discrimination that excluded them from negotiating tables and made them vulnerable to sexual violence, even in times of peace. Impunity was simply not acceptable, many said, stressing that there was no “real” security without women’s security.

Saran Keïta Diakité, speaking on behalf of the non-governmental Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, as well as the Réseau Paix et Sécurité des Femmes d’Espace, said prevention of sexual violence — and the underlying causes of conflict itself — was the most powerful instrument available. As she had seen in Mali, there was a devastating link between the flow of arms and the perpetration of sexual abuse. The Working Group had advocated for a gender-sensitive arms trade treaty, not because women were vulnerable, but because they were targeted. Sufficient resources must be devoted to women-led civil society organizations, particularly those providing services to survivors.

While the United Nations had made great strides, more support was needed to ensure that gains were not lost, they said. For its part, the Council could consider putting in place a procedure to monitor commitments by parties to conflict under its resolution 1960 (2010). It also could develop ways to apply sanctions where no sanctions committee was in place.

“It is a broken society that fails to protect its most vulnerable citizens from sexual violence,” said Louise Mushikiwabo, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Rwanda, whose country holds the Council’s Presidency for April. As Rwanda recoiled from the horrors of 1994, it had worked assiduously to instil a culture of respect — including within the military and police force — which had prompted a “profound” attitude shift. De-stigmatizing sexual violence was also key to achieving post-genocide justice. It was time to move beyond expressions of outrage and make measurable progress towards “a world where the bodies of women are no longer considered a battlefield”.

The challenge, some said, lay in formalizing various processes to ensure they became integral parts of national and regional actions. On that point, the representative of Papua New Guinea recalled the efforts of women in Bougainville, an island affected by a long and bloody civil conflict, in pushing for peace. The Bougainville Peace Agreements confirmed the notion that “women are agents of change” in peace and security. There was more to be done, he said, acknowledging support from the United Nations in work to prioritize gender equality.

In a similar vein, Vanda Pignato, First Lady and Ministerial Secretary for Social Inclusion of El Salvador, said her country’s civil war had been followed by two decades in which attention to human rights and gender equality were “not high” on the Government’s agenda. But today, with international help, El Salvador had seen changes, including a 50 per cent drop in the incidence of femicide last year. Further support, especially from the United Nations, was needed so momentum was not lost.

Hailing one success in the fight against impunity, Guatemala’s representative was encouraged by the change in the treatment of sexual violence by the International Criminal Court, as seen in the cases of Bosco Ntaganda and Jean-Pierre Bemba. Both had set jurisprudence vis-à-vis the responsibility of commanders for sexual violence as a war crime and a crime against humanity. Those changes complemented the work of national courts and mixed tribunals to fight deeply rooted discriminatory practices, and further, combated the perception that it was useless to denounce such crimes.

Also participating in the debate today was the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway (on behalf of the Nordic countries).

Additional speakers included the representatives of Republic of Korea, United States, China, Argentina, Pakistan, France, Togo, Russian Federation, Morocco, Luxembourg, Australia, United Kingdom, Azerbaijan, Slovenia, Liechtenstein, Canada (in his national capacity and on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security), Botswana, Japan, Syria, Kazakhstan, South Africa, Brazil, Solomon

Islands, Viet Nam, Switzerland, Spain, Egypt, Netherlands, Estonia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Italy, Chile, Lithuania, Kyrgyzstan, United Republic of Tanzania, Ireland, Fiji, Sudan, Germany, Portugal, New Zealand, Qatar, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, India, Afghanistan and Turkey.

The Permanent Observer of the Holy See also spoke, as did the Head of the European Union delegation.

The representative of Syria took the floor a second time.

The meeting began at 10:13 a.m. and adjourned at 5:36 p.m.

Background

The Security Council met today for a day-long debate on sexual violence in conflict. At the start of the meeting, the Council held a moment of silence in remembrance of former United Kingdom Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who passed away on 8 April and was buried today in London.

Opening Statements

Secretary-General BAN KI-MOON said today's meeting on conflict-related sexual violence was an issue of grave importance to the innumerable civilians who had been affected, as well as to the United Nations. Wartime rape not only destroyed individual lives, it laid waste to families and communities, and impeded both reconciliation and sustainable development.

Thanks to the Council, there was a solid framework for preventing and addressing conflict-related sexual violence, with resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1960 (2010), which guided the work of United Nations agencies and States alike. In addition, the Special Representative on the issue carried out global advocacy, while other important actors included the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, the Women's Protection Advisers and the Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangements.

The report before the Council today reflected the improvement of analysis and data, he said, a result of greater awareness on the ground and strengthened capacities of missions to monitor, investigate and respond. Certain patterns were becoming clear, including that the negative effects of wartime rape persisted long after guns had fallen silent. From the Balkans to Africa, the United Nations and others were providing vital medical and psychosocial support to victims and survivors.

Another pattern showed that, although this vicious crime disproportionately affected women and girls, men and boys were also targeted, he said. Other emerging trends included the link between conflict-related sexual violence and illegal exploitation of natural resources; the impact of sexual violence on displacement; and the importance of addressing sexual violence during cease-fire negotiations, wider peace processes and security sector reform efforts.

Building on the work of her predecessor — and of the 13-entity United Nations "Action Sexual Violence" network which she chaired — Special Representative Zainab Bangura was combating impunity, he said, stressing prosecution as a means of prevention, and the importance of national ownership and leadership. The Prosecution Support Cells in the Democratic Republic of the Congo — created by the Government with support from the United Nations Mission there — were a positive example of combining the two approaches. Other peacekeeping operations intended to carry out similar projects.

Highlighting other gains, he said the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo represented an opportunity to address the root causes of conflict-related sexual violence. "Ultimately, however, we must strengthen our collective efforts to prevent sexual violence in the first place," he asserted. With that in mind, peacekeeping missions in Sudan, South Sudan and the

Democratic Republic of the Congo — together with country teams — were working to establish Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangements, a priority he hoped could be accomplished before year-end.

Together, with such tools as the human rights database of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the protection monitoring project of Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations would be better placed to identify trends and patterns, and thus, prevent such crimes, he added.

But, such work required funding, he said, noting that eight Women's Protection Advisers had been deployed in South Sudan, where the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) was the first peace mission to budget for and appoint them. Those advisers were being recruited for missions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire and the Central Africa Republic. He called on States to provide resources for their deployment in other situations of concern. "We must make this a regular feature of planning and budgeting," he stressed.

He also called for sustained funding for the Team of Experts working to strengthen national rule of law and justice actors, which had partnered with authorities in Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Liberia and South Sudan. It could do even more with the necessary backing.

"Preventing sexual violence is, first and foremost, a responsibility of States, in particular the security forces, which are often the perpetrators of this grave human rights violation," he said. Prevention was also a collective responsibility and to succeed, all tools must be used, including peacekeeping and political missions, mediation efforts and efforts to protect human rights and deliver humanitarian assistance. In addition, such work must include all those involved in building peace after conflict — from restoring the rule of law and advancing gender equality, to promoting early recovery and longer-term development. "As we deepen this effort, I look forward to your sustained leadership and support," he concluded.

ZAINAB HAWA BANGURA, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, described her recent visit to Mogadishu in which she had met Luul Ali Osman, a woman who had been arrested and imprisoned for daring to speak out about her rape by security forces. "For too long have women borne the crippling consequences — physical, psychological, social and economic — of wartime rape," she said, adding that women who suffered rape were often ostracized from their communities, cast out by their husbands and families, and left destitute with their children. Over the last five years, progress had been made towards eradicating the crime of rape in conflict, with the Security Council helping to usher in a paradigm shift that had ultimately altered the approach to dealing with the crime. Resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1960 (2010) had affirmed that sexual violence, when committed systematically and used as a tool of war, was a fundamental threat to international peace and security, and required an operational security and justice response.

Notwithstanding such progress, however, the report of the Secretary-General before the Council today painted a "grim picture", covering 22 situations and listing 32 parties in its annex. The report emphasized the urgency of ensuring that sexual violence considerations were explicitly and consistently reflected in peace processes, ceasefires and peace agreements, and in all security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes in which the United Nations was involved. It was also necessary to throw a more concerted spotlight on the perpetrators, she said. The Council's engagement must send an unequivocal statement of intent: "Sexual violence in conflict will not be tolerated, and the full force of international order will be brought to bear to ensure accountability for such crimes."

Spotlighting, among other things, the importance of prevention, she said that she had placed particular emphasis on engaging national stakeholders in order to foster national ownership, leadership and responsibility. The work of the Council and the United Nations in general must serve to complement the measures taken at the national level, she said in that respect, stressing that Member States bore the primary responsibility to protect their citizens and that the commitment of the United Nations, however great, could never substitute for the political will and action of national authorities.

She then went on to describe several visits undertaken to various countries, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo. There, she had visited a community where 11 babies between the ages of 6 and 12 months were raped by elements of the Mai Mai Morgan. Describing that atrocity as “unimaginable”, she called for a resolve that matched the ruthlessness of that crime. To that end, a joint communiqué of the Congolese Government and the United Nations to strengthen cooperation in a number of critical areas had been issued, and signed by the Prime Minister. The country’s parliament had also committed to establishing a Parliamentary Working Group on Sexual Violence. Turning to Somalia, she said that collective efforts over the last months had freed Luul Ali Osman and those who dared to speak out for her cause. It was anticipated that a joint communiqué outlining a framework of cooperation to address sexual violence would be adopted in early May when the international community convenes the Somalia Donor Conference in London.

In the Central African Republic, she said that two communiqués had been issued, and stressed the need to send a clear message to the Seleka Coalition and all parties to the conflict that they were expected to uphold all the commitments made. “Let us make the commitment around this table today that in situations where sexual violence is a concern, there will never again be a peace agreement, ceasefire agreement or ceasefire verification mechanisms that does not explicitly address sexual violence,” she said. Turning finally to her predecessor’s visit to Colombia, she said that the country had shown an openness to develop a “framework of cooperation”, outlining key technical areas in which the United Nations and Government could enhance cooperation. She also intended to take up invitations by the authorities in Syria, Mali and South Sudan as soon as possible, she said.

She emphasized that the gravitas of the Council, and the mandate created to address sexual violence in conflict, opened doors “at the highest levels”. In that vein, she had been pleased to participate last week in the G8 Foreign Ministers meeting in London, and that a historic Declaration on the Prevention of Sexual Violence in Conflict had been adopted. The Declaration “gives us additional momentum at a crucial moment”, she said, adding that “we have an opportunity like at no other time before in history to break the back of this age-old evil”. She, therefore, hoped that the Council would once again show unity of purpose in adopting a new resolution on sexual violence in conflict in June.

SARAN KEÏTA DIAKITÉ, speaking on behalf of the non-governmental Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, as well as the Réseau Paix et Sécurité des Femmes d’Espace, said that effectively addressing the complexities of conflict-related sexual violence required powerful and urgent leadership at all levels — local, national, regional and international. Commitment and action, in times of conflict, post-conflict and peace, were essential. Focusing on several key areas, she turned first to the crucial participation and equality of women, noting that sustainable peace and the elimination of conflict-related sexual violence would not be possible without addressing the root causes of inequality. Concretely, that meant ensuring women’s equality at all stages of peace processes and peace agreements, ensuring that sexual violence was a violation of ceasefire agreements and not allowing amnesty provisions for such crimes.

The prevention of sexual violence, and of the underlying causes of conflict itself, was the most powerful instrument available, she said. As demonstrated in the Secretary-General’s report and as she had seen first-hand in Mali, there was a devastating link between the flow of arms and the perpetration of sexual violence. Members of the Working Group had recently advocated for a gender-sensitive arms trade treaty, not because women were vulnerable, but because they were targeted. “We call on States to uphold their commitments regarding women, peace and security in all disarmament processes,” she said in that regard.

When sexual violence was perpetrated, the response to victims and survivors was crucial, she continued, stressing that survivors and their families had a right to sufficiently funded medical, psychological and legal support and rehabilitation programmes. In Mali, the 2012 coup d’état in Bamako had meant that many service providers left the country, leaving survivors without access to vital medical and psychological services. With the support of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), her organization, along with others, had been able to partially fill that gap.

On the issue of accountability and reparations, she said that, unfortunately, impunity remained the

overwhelming norm for perpetrators of sexual violence. In the context of conflict, reform of security sectors must guarantee that sexual violence crimes were addressed and responded to. All avenues to justice, including referrals to the International Criminal Court, should be pursued, and reparations were an important tool for redress and acknowledgment of previous harm. Such efforts must include action to combat the stigma that accompanied crimes of sexual violence, she said, stressing that survivors of the crime must not be blamed and victimized when they sought services and justice.

Finally, she said, as civil society played a vital role in combating sexual violence in conflict, sufficient resources must be devoted to women-led civil society organizations, particularly those providing services to survivors and those that enabled women to access justice and participate in decision-making. Member States must take immediate steps to ensure that women's human rights defenders were supported and protected, and that the risks that they faced were recognized and effectively addressed. In that respect, she said, when conflict and violence came to Mali, women mobilized for peace, but did not have access to training to make their voices heard. With the assistance of international partners — including UN-Women — 80 Malian women had been trained in mediation, negotiation and mobilization, vital skills in ensuring that women at risk could be heard.

Statements

CHO TAE-YUL, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, said the Secretary-General's report had revealed worrisome emerging trends, such as the nexus among sexual violence, the illicit extraction of natural resources and displacement of civilian populations. Even more worrying was that sexual violence was almost universally under-reported. Thus, he wanted to highlight several key points. Fighting against impunity was essential, because “we can never expect to eradicate sexual violence without ensuring that those responsible are systematically brought to justice”. In that regard, it was regrettable that the lack of adequate national capacity to investigate and prosecute sexual violence remained a main impediment to ensuring accountability. The Security Council should better incorporate the issue of conflict-related sexual violence into its work. Special languages on that issue should be included in the authorizations and renewals of peacekeeping and special political missions, and targeted sanctions should also be used. He also stressed the need to provide victims of such violence with sustainable assistance, including medical, psychological, legal and other multi-sectoral services. For its part, as a member of the Group of Friends for resolution 1325 (2000), he welcomed the declaration by the Group of 8 on the issue, and said his Government was working on the National Action Plan for the implementation of the resolution.

ROSEMARY DICARLO (United States) called for greater emphasis on prevention, including at the community level and in the United Nations System. At the community level, understanding of existing mechanisms should be enhanced and grass-roots networks should be leveraged. She highlighted some successful examples in Darfur and South Darfur. United Nations missions should equip their peacekeepers and civilian staff with the expertise needed to respond early to information about such large-scale threats. The training module was a step in the right direction and linking female police peacekeepers worldwide would enable them to share best practices, as well as advocate and mentor female police. Deployment of gender experts and protection advisers in United Nations missions, including technical assessment missions, should be routine. Action to counter the scourge should be prioritized throughout peace processes, the “DDR” [disarmament, demobilization and reintegration] phase and security sector reform. The issue was hardly theoretical; it was persistent, she said, pointing to the Syrian situation. A new Security Council resolution should be adopted to address outstanding challenges.

LI BAODONG (China) said that victimizing women in armed conflict was not only an infringement of their rights, but a challenge to resettlement and social reconstruction. Despite closer cooperation between the United Nations Member States and regional and subregional organizations, the problem persisted, proof that the international community had a long way to go. China condemned all violence against women in armed conflict and supported full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. It also urged the parties to conflicts to abide by international legal instruments to protect women and other disadvantaged groups. Governments bore the primary responsibility for the safety and rights of women in their countries, and the international community should support those efforts, while fully respecting national sovereignty and focusing on capacity-building and resolving funding and technical difficulties. The international community

should pay attention, not only to the phenomenon, but to the elimination of the sources of conflict, by focusing on economic and social development, and advancing, in real terms, women's status and empowerment.

GERT ROSENTHAL (Guatemala) recognized the importance that mediators and envoys in mediation, ceasefire, peace and prevention diplomacy processes played in the dialogue with the parties to conflict on sexual violence, as well as in ensuring it was also addressed in peace agreements. Guatemala agreed with the Secretary-General that sexual violence should be prohibited by ceasefires and concretely included in their provisions related to security and transitional justice. Guatemala had long supported without reservation the work that the Security Council had been doing in that area, and its commitment had deepened further now that it had been elected to the Council. In that regard, the delegation was encouraged by the important change in the treatment of sexual violence by the International Criminal Court, as illustrated in the cases of Bosco Ntaganda and Jean-Pierre Bemba. Both cases had set jurisprudence with regard to the principle of the responsibility of commanders for sexual violence as a war crime and a crime against humanity. Those changes were an important complement to the work of national courts and mixed tribunals to fight deeply rooted discriminatory practices and impunity, and also helped to combat the perception that it was useless to denounce the crimes of sexual violence. Another "step in the right direction" was the judgment against Thomas Lubanga, which, while he was not charged with crimes of sexual slavery and rape, did include specific guidance on reparations for the victims of sexual violence.

MARÍA CRISTINA PERCEVAL (Argentina) supported the proposal to establish a follow-up mechanism in the Council to address sexual violence in conflict. Refugee women were especially vulnerable to violence. Recognizing that UNHCR had drawn up guidelines for their protection, she affirmed the importance of including women in all decisions that affected their lives. At the same time, UN-Women had pointed out that, of the 585 peace accords signed between 1990 and 2010, only 16 per cent referred to women, 17 per cent referred to gender equality, and only 3 per cent referred to gender-based sexual violence. Women were the majority of victims of such abuse, which often took place amid the complicity of State armed forces, peacekeeping operations and non-governmental organization volunteers. As such, mandates of all peacekeeping operations should include a gender perspective in their reference to the protection of civilians, and outline guidelines for punishing perpetrators. All should have a special adviser, resources and follow-up mechanisms. Security sector reform must include training in human rights and the prevention of sexual violence.

MASOOD KHAN (Pakistan) said that while the United Nations was doing much to protect women, "we all know this is not enough". As the largest troop contributor, Pakistan could testify that the appointment of gender advisers in the field had served a useful purpose and the practice must be strengthened. Supporting the call for all parties to conflict to end violence against women and make time-bound commitments to ensure non-recurrence of such acts, he said the Secretary-General's six-point priority agenda was a good way to attack impunity and foster national ownership. Also, full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) would elevate women's status to equal partners in preventing and resolving conflicts. The Council must be ready to take targeted measures through sanctions committees against the perpetrators of sexual violence. Noting that States bore the primary legal and moral responsibility to address sexual violence, he urged that resources be allocated for protection advisers and the provision of multi-sectoral assistance for victims.

MARTIN BRIENS (France) said that sexual violence had accompanied all wars in history, but for a long time, it had been perceived as a secondary issue, undeserving of the international community's attention; it was never taken into account as part of conflict settlement or post-conflict peacebuilding. However, the Council had taken up the issue and broken the silence surrounding that abominable crime. Since then, significant progress had been made, he said, pointing to several examples, including the commitment of the Secretary-General's Special Representative, which had heightened visibility of the issue. The annual reports of the Secretary-General were useful follow-up tools, particularly the "name and shame" list, which provided a solid basis for missions' engagement in dialogue with those groups. There had also been legal progress, and he underlined a relevant provision in the new Arms Trade Treaty. Despite such progress, sexual violence was used continuously as a weapon to terrorize populations, he said, drawing attention to the situations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Syria, northern Mali and the Central

African Republic. Combating the crimes required protection, sanctions and prevention schemes.

LIMBIYE KADANGHA-BARIKI (Togo) said women and girls were victims of all kinds of intolerable violence, particularly rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, pregnancy and sterilization, and marriage, as well as kidnappings. The number of victims had increased, particularly in Africa, with the appearance of new armed groups. Sometimes, Government forces themselves committed the violations. He also highlighted the situations in the Central African Republic, Mali, and the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, where, he said, the atrocities committed were unimaginable. The underlying causes were linked to economic and social conditions, as armed groups often sought forced displacements in order to pillage a region's natural resources. Sexual violence was also used to dominate entire communities, so as to satisfy political ambitions. The exponential increase in the number of victims had many underlying causes, among them, the refusal of women and girls to report the violations for fear of reprisals, stigma or punishment. States parties also lacked the political will to implement the relevant conventions, and resolutions of the Council went unimplemented. Justice must be served and impunity must be obliterated.

VITALY CHURKIN (Russian Federation) said sexual violence must be condemned, noting that preventing and combating such abuse at all stages was within the competence of national Governments. Depending on context, such abuse was handled by the Council, as well as the General Assembly, Human Rights Council and the Commission on the Status of Women. Linking sexual violence only to the Council's work would lead to an imbalance in system-wide coordination. The Secretary-General's report raised questions, he said, noting that a credible discussion of the issue required objective information. Responsibility for sexual crimes in Syria, for example, had been placed only on Government forces, whereas crimes committed by the opposition were only "obliquely" referenced. Also, he was unclear on the selection of countries mentioned in various sections. In addition to countries on the Council's agenda, situations in other States were discussed. He did not see the need to establish a special procedure to monitor compliance by parties to conflict, as the current mechanisms were sufficient. Such issues must be considered solely under the Council's item on women, peace and security. International efforts would be in vain without the participation of national Governments, which bore the primary responsibility for such issues

MOHAMMED LOULICHKI (Morocco) appreciated the conclusions in the Secretary-General's report, which would help curb sexual violence against women, children and the elderly. Partnerships and use of adequate resources would allow for achieving humanitarian goals. He urged taking into consideration the variety of views and need to consult with interested States vis-à-vis early detection machinery for sexual violence. Also, the difficulty in accessing refugee camps and lack of registration records impeded efforts to protect refugees, a responsibility of UNHCR and host countries. Services must be provided to guarantee refugees' freedom of movement; refugees should not be subjected to humanitarian or political blackmail. A commitment to combating impunity, as well as cooperation with the judiciary to try perpetrators and make reparations to victims would help ensure non-recurrence. Curbing sexual violence required the involvement of all parties, including national human rights bodies and women's associations. "We have a long way to go", but that should not dissuade the international community from tackling the scourge on all levels through all available means.

SYLVIE LUCAS (Luxembourg), associating with the European Union, said sexual violence in conflicts had many targets, as the situations in Syria, Mali and the Democratic Republic of the Congo attested. The contexts were varied and it was important, therefore, for the Council to draw on the full arsenal at its disposal. He highlighted aspects of the normative framework against the scourge, including the recent work undertaken by the Commission on the Status of Women and the Declaration adopted last week by the G8. Promotion and protection of human rights and the fundamental freedoms of women and children were the basis for combating the crimes. Follow-up mechanisms should be established to analyse and communicate information to peacekeeping operations and political missions, and sufficient resources should be allocated to them to implement the relevant measures on the matter. Once the perpetrators were identified, the Council must adopt targeted measures leading to action by competent courts. The accused should be judged in national jurisdictions, but the international criminal justice system also had a role to play, and he welcomed the efforts of the International Criminal Court. Sexual violence could and should be stopped, and measures must be in place to allow the world community to act.

GARY QUINLAN ([Australia](#)) said that under many sanctions committees, the perpetrators of conflict-related sexual violence fit within existing listing criteria and he supported a more rigorous application of those criteria. He agreed that sexual violence should be included in the definition of acts prohibited under ceasefire agreements and supported the introduction of a systematic procedure to monitor compliance. He also urged better “preventive vetting”, so that the perpetrators of sexual violence could not assume positions of power in post-conflict settings. Strongly supporting the use of gender expertise in all Council-mandated missions — including women protection advisers — he also urged women’s participation in conflict resolution, addressing survivors’ needs and ensuring resources for national institutions to address prevention, service provision and measures to end impunity.

MARK LYALL GRANT ([United Kingdom](#)) recalled last week’s historic Group of Eight decision on preventing sexual violence, which declared for the first time that rape and sexual violence constituted grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions. Nonetheless, “there is a huge amount still to be done”, he said, commending the Secretary-General for recommending that all resolutions and mandate renewals for special political missions include the language of resolution 1960 (2010). Peacekeeping mandates should include language on cessation of sexual violence and deployment of women protection advisers that were funded from peacekeeping budgets. A focus on security sector and justice reform also was critical, as was the need for training security forces, and ensuring that the security sector was accessible and responsive to all. He welcomed calls to ensure that the Council, States and mediators engage in dialogue with parties to conflict, which was central to ensuring that such abuse was recognized in peace processes and ceasefire agreements. Women must be active participants in all efforts to combat the horrific phenomenon.

AGSHIN MEHDIYEV ([Azerbaijan](#)) said the appointment of a Special Representative and establishment of a system-wide entity on women’s equal rights and empowerment had added a new dimension to global efforts. It was imperative for all parties to armed conflict to abide strictly by their international obligations. He strongly condemned all acts of sexual violence in armed conflict and insisted that all necessary measures be taken to bring the perpetrators to justice and to end impunity. National courts were the principal venue for that purpose, but lack of adequate domestic capacity and experience to investigate and prosecute remained a key impediment to ensuring accountability. As the Secretary-General had stated in his report, where national authorities failed to take action, the international community should play a more proactive role. Unfortunately, however, not all grave violations of international humanitarian and human rights law received due and impartial attention. Failing to bring the perpetrators to justice risked the long-awaited peace and reconciliation and raised the potential for new conflicts.

LOUISE MUSHIKIWABO, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of [Rwanda](#), said that just 19 years ago, Rwandan women had been forced to endure inhuman and degrading atrocities. Many had been raped and left for dead. Among those who had survived, many had been infected with incurable diseases, some had been made pregnant, and many had suffered the humiliation of having been abused in front of their families. And yet, they refused to be defined or defeated. They had raised their heads, sought justice and demanded dignity. Their unshakeable spirit of defiance had enabled the country to recover from the events of 1994.

She said that the use of sexual violence in conflict had then been “exported” to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and adopted by a plethora of armed groups operating in the region. Those crimes must not be accepted as a fact of life, she said, declaring: “It is a broken society that fails to protect its most vulnerable citizens from sexual violence.” Moreover, no society could move beyond crisis and conflict until it had corrected course with respect to sexual violence. As Rwanda recoiled from the horrors visited upon its women, it had worked assiduously to instil a culture of respect — within the military and police force, in classrooms, within families and communities. That had prompted a “profound attitudinal shift among Rwandans of all ages and walks of life”.

All parties to armed conflict must enforce a clear prohibition on sexual violence through chains of command and ensure that alleged abuses were investigated swiftly and that perpetrators were held accountable. It would support, on a case-by-case basis, adoption or extension of targeted sanctions against persistent perpetrators of rape and other forms of sexual violence. The problem must be addressed in post-conflict and peacebuilding processes, and national authorities must take proactive steps, whether through

legislative reforms, awareness-raising campaigns, or the training of police, prosecutors and other judicial personnel. In Rwanda, the destigmatization of sexual violence was central to “post-genocide justice”. She said it was time for the world to move beyond expressions of outrage, and make concrete, measurable progress towards “a world where the bodies of women are no longer considered a battlefield”.

ESPEN BARTH EIDE, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway, on behalf of the Nordic countries, said security threats against women were often written off as cultural issues. Conflict-related sexual violence could constitute a war crime and, in the most serious cases, an act of genocide. It required the same urgency as other security threats. The Secretary-General’s report was a catalogue of violence that included rape and torture. Its attention to sexual violence against men and boys and the plight of children borne of wartime rape was valid and timely. Governments had the main responsibility to protect civilians from conflict-related sexual violence. “All too often they fail to do so,” he said, as in Syria, where there had been an utter failure to protect civilians.

As long as the Council was divided, gross human rights violations would continue with impunity, he said. To ensure that resolutions on women, peace and security had a real impact and that commitments were followed up, the Council must continue to combat impunity and use its unique powers to increase pressure against perpetrators. He welcomed the Secretary-General’s call for emergency contraception and safe abortion to be included in services for survivors. Girls and women who had been raped during war should not be forced to carry out unwanted pregnancies. Peace could not be achieved without inclusive processes. Supporting the “women, peace and security” agenda was a priority in Nordic countries’ efforts to foster gender equality and peace and security, goals which were closely linked.

VANDA PIGNATO, First Lady and Ministerial Secretary for Social Inclusion of El Salvador, said her country’s civil war was followed by two decades in which attention to human rights and gender equality were “not high” on the Government’s agenda. Little had been done to fight impunity, and even less to establish measures that would allow for reparations to victims. Countries often needed time to repair national institutions that were weak and in need of economic and human resources. El Salvador had found itself in that position and, today, it was fighting the conservative sectors responsible for creating a feudal system that had divided the powerful from the impoverished.

With international help, El Salvador had seen changes, she said, noting that, for the first time, there was a policy guaranteeing human rights and social rights. There also had been an unprecedented drop in crime, especially murder. Femicide rates had fallen, last year by 50 per cent, while a special act helped to ensure that the State protected and guaranteed women’s rights. She also described the “Women City” project that provided comprehensive services for women, including entrepreneurship training, education and sexual and reproductive health care. More than 140,000 women had benefited, efforts that had been recognized as an outstanding gender equality policy. In addition, El Salvador now had a policy to combat sexual and gender-based violence. It required international support, especially from the United Nations, so that such gains did not lose momentum.

THOMAS MAYR-HARTING, speaking on behalf of the European Union, noted the nexus between sexual violence and the illicit extraction of natural resources, the forcible displacement of civilian populations, as well as the inadequacy of disarmament and security sector reform efforts. The recently adopted Arms Trade Treaty stated that the risk of conventional arms being used to commit acts of gender-based violence needed to be taken into account by States parties. That reaffirmed that sexual violence needed to be considered as part of all actions taken to ensure international peace and security. Sexual violence continued to be perpetrated as a tactic of war, and also against men and boys, including in the context of detention or interrogation on which further information was needed. The European Union underlined the need to take all measures for the protection of survivors, witnesses, humanitarian workers, medical personnel, human rights defenders and journalists who contributed to aiding survivors and collecting information on sexual violence.

Ensuring accountability and punishing perpetrators of the most serious crimes against women and girls under national and international law remained essential, he said. In that regard, he welcomed the

significant advancements in international law made by the Rome Statute, which included sexual violence in the definition of crimes, in particular as a crime against humanity. He strongly condemned incidents of gender-based violence in Mali, Syria and the Democratic Republic of Congo outlined in the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security. To meet the challenge of combating such acts, he said the European Union pledged increased funding to prevention and response efforts, such as programming to combat gender-based violence, including sexual violence, from the first phase of conflict and humanitarian emergencies.

MATEJ MARN ([Slovenia](#)), also speaking on behalf of the Human Security Network, said that the Network strongly encouraged that direct information sharing be established between the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the sanctions committees, as well as other relevant bodies. The Group remained deeply concerned about some of the Secretary-General's findings, including two deeply problematic trends in Syria: the occurrence of sexual violence during house searches and at checkpoints; and sexual violence against detainees. All necessary steps, including targeted measures, must be taken in order to prevent sexual violence in conflict. It was also crucial that amnesty provisions not be made. "We have to place equal importance on addressing the root causes" and providing resources to organizations of women, among other things, he said. The Network supported the availability of reparations, which could deliver redress and acknowledge harms suffered. It also noted the report's recommendations, and said that the exchange of information between peacekeeping missions, the Special Representative and others would be crucial. The Network further noted the lack of inclusion of the "zero-tolerance" policy for United Nations personnel in the Security Council's relevant resolutions, and urged the increased reference to that policy on the part of relevant actors. He also reiterated that women's participation in decision-making and peacebuilding processes could not be overestimated, and highlighted the importance of the recently adopted agreed conclusions at the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which had stressed that gender-based violence must be effectively addressed in situations of conflict.

FRANCIS CHULLIKATT, Permanent Observer of the [Holy See](#), expressed disappointment that the Secretary-General's report failed to highlight targeted attacks based on religious beliefs. The perpetrators could be found among legitimate State actors, including in armed or security forces, and even among United Nations peacekeepers and non-State actors. Sexual violence was an egregious form of degradation, and yet another consequence of the destructive power of war. Thus, all States and the international community must do their utmost to stop those barbarous acts, he said, highlighting three critical aspects of the issue: prevention; criminal responsibility; and victims' assistance. All too frequently, the victims, as well as those who reported the crimes and who became pregnant by them were ostracized from their communities. Particularly disturbing was the "re-victimization" of a woman or girl who was raped and then forced to live with her aggressor as a "wife".

GEORG SPARBER ([Liechtenstein](#)), aligning himself with the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, said that there was a clear link between the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict situations. There was ample evidence that small arms facilitated a vast spectrum of human rights violations, including rape and other forms of sexual violence, he said. Hence, he welcomed the fact that the Arms Trade Treaty included the risk of gender-based violence and violence against women and children as one of the criteria that exporting States needed to consider before authorizing an arms export. Although States had the primary responsibility for holding individuals accountable for sexual and gender-based violence, he believed that the International Criminal Court had a complementary role to play when States were unable fulfil that responsibility. The fact that crimes of sexual violence played a role in nearly every case under investigation by the Court spoke both to the startling prevalence of sexual violence in armed conflicts today and to the emphasis placed by the Court on holding perpetrators of those crimes accountable.

GUILLERMO E. RISHCHYNSKI ([Canada](#)), speaking on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, urged the Security Council to ensure that its mandated missions consistently evaluated the level of protection and promotion of women's human rights. The Friends Group welcomed the work of the Special Representative on sexual violence in conflict and strongly supported her efforts in preventing and addressing conflict-related sexual violence. As mandated by the Security Council in

resolution 1888 (2009), the Friends Group urged the further and timely deployment of women protection advisers to mandated missions. Missions must plan and budget for women protection advisers in all relevant situations of concern. Further, he stressed the need for Member States to take steps to ensure that women's human rights defenders were afforded greater protection to carry out their work without risk.

Speaking in his national capacity, Mr. Rishchynski said that following the "harrowing" accounts of sexual violence in Mali reported by the Secretary-General, Canada would urge the Council to ensure that the Mali mission mandate specifically addressed sexual violence. Perpetrators of sexual violence must be held accountable, he said, adding that he supported prosecution for those who had perpetrated or who had a command responsibility for those crimes. He welcomed the recent agreement between the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the United Nations to strengthen efforts to tackle conflict-related sexual violence and urged its urgent implementation on the ground. Canada's contribution to the prevention of sexual violence in conflict situations included \$18.5 million over the next five years to support victims, as well as contributions to investigations and prosecutions of perpetrators in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo where rape was used as a weapon of war. He added that more could be done in Afghanistan to end practices that imprisoned victims of sexual violence while allowing the perpetrators to go free.

CHARLES T. NTWAAGAE ([Botswana](#)) emphasized the need for increased and more systematic attention to the women, peace and security agenda in the Council's work. Efforts to address sexual violence in armed conflict should complement wider efforts to promote implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Botswana supported the work of the Special Representative, especially her focus on national ownership and responsibility, by engaging with Governments and armed groups to establish commitments to accountability and to formulate principles that would allow for follow-up. Greater coordination and collaboration with other relevant stakeholders was also vital to improve global efforts. He took note of the parties named in the report, and said that, despite repeated condemnation of sexual violence, they had not only continued, but had become systematic and widespread. Impunity must never be tolerated and he, therefore, called on the Council to continue its efforts to combat it and to uphold accountability.

KAZUYOSHI UMEMOTO ([Japan](#)) said that, last month, his country had announced a new contribution of \$4.5 million for programmes to prevent sexual violence and support victims in countries such as Libya, Somalia, Central African Republic and Mali. Japan condemned attacks against women's human rights defenders, and emphasized that Member States should take steps to ensure their protection. It also recognized the importance of multi-sectoral services for the victims. Its recent contribution would make possible the establishment of relief and recovery systems for legal support and mental health care in refugee camps and those for internally displaced persons. Efforts to comprehensively address cultures of impunity were also vital, as was addressing sexual violence in the context of security sector reform. Over the past five years, Japan had been providing \$100 million to support the Afghanistan National Police, part of which had been used for the employment and training of female police officers. The country was also developing a national action plan based on resolution 1325 (2000).

BASHAR JA'AFARI ([Syria](#)) said that his country had examined the report of the Secretary-General, and, while it supported all efforts aimed at putting an end to all forms of the crime of sexual violence in armed conflict and put an end to impunity, it nonetheless called for "extreme care" in addressing that grave issue. Moreover, Syria stressed the need to bring to justice perpetrators of the crime, whether it took place during the days of Ghraib or at any other time. The Special Representative had devoted seven paragraphs of her report to Syria, and had based allegations on a report by the International Commission of Inquiry. Syria stressed that the work of that commission was not professional, and was instead politically motivated. The commission had rejected hundreds of documents submitted by Syria regarding the activities of armed terrorist groups, and instead chose to use inaccurate sources; it had also failed to visit Syria to date.

Syria had sent several letters to the Special Representative detailing rape and other crimes of sexual violence by armed groups "for the entertainment of the terrorists". Jihadi thugs and perverts had sanctioned the use of those crimes under the guise of so-called "sexual religious warfare", he added. The United Nations' "suspicious silence" on that matter was no longer acceptable, he stressed, raising a number of questions in that regard: Why had the Special Representative chosen to ignore her own February 2013 statement to the effect that "Syria [had] released kidnapped women and children and protected them from

sexual violence”, as well as the hundreds of reports by media sources that documented violations by terrorist groups? Furthermore, why had she ignored violations by the countries hosting displaced Syrian refugees? Syria hoped to deal seriously with such “heinous, obnoxious violations” of human rights, and to expose the true events unfolding in Syria, away from the influence of certain Powers.

BYRGANYM AITIMOVA (Kazakhstan) said that the Council was taking a positive step by expanding its work at the level of sanctions committees by considering sexual violence or rape as designation criteria in various sanctions regimes. She called for better information sharing between the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, the sanctions committees and associated expert groups. It was noteworthy that provisions for protection against gender-based violence and violence against women and children had been incorporated in the Arms Trade Treaty. She said that a United Nations system-wide coherence on gender-based violence in conflict, combining synergy with regional organizations, intergovernmental bodies and key stakeholders, would result in strengthened mechanisms for monitoring, reporting and implementation. At the same time, there was a need to facilitate and reinforce women’s participation, through local networks and groups, by assessing and overcoming factors that impede their effective involvement. Hurdles arising from a lack of resources, access to information and security itself could be counteracted through including women’s groups in developing strategies for the prevention, resolution and recovery from conflict, especially in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes, through training and capacity-building.

DOCTOR MASHABANE (South Africa) said the full and effective implementation of the key resolutions underpinning the women, peace and security agenda was critical to closing the protection gaps in the context of sexual violence in conflict. Justice for victims of serious violations of international human rights law was an essential requirement for sustainable peace, security and development for States emerging from armed conflict or in post-conflict settings, where the rule of law must enjoy primacy and be scrupulously upheld. Access to justice was particularly important for women in conflict and post-conflict settings, including through gender-responsive legal, judicial and security sector reform and other mechanisms. In that regard, his delegation was appreciative of the commendable work undertaken by the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict. South Africa supported efforts undertaken by the Council towards ensuring that more systematic attention was given to the implementation of women, peace and security commitments in its own work. The integration of gender perspectives into the mandates of relevant peacekeeping missions and other thematic areas of peace and security would positively advance that objective.

MARIA LUIZA RIBEIRO VIOTTI (Brazil) said that the resolutions adopted by the Council had not only created a comprehensive body of norms and tools, but had also stimulated discussion, self-criticism and progress on the protection and promotion of women’s rights. When discussing the problem of sexual violence in conflict, she said, the challenge was to translate sorrow and outrage into practical action capable of bringing real change. Only an integrated approach that combined a stronger focus on prevention, the fight against impunity and better support to victims could help fight sexual violence in conflict in an effective manner. Methods of prevention included strengthening national capacities, addressing the needs of States in terms of institution-building, training personnel, supporting victims and promoting the rule of law. Also essential, she said, was development of national awareness-raising activities to break taboos. Prevention also involved tackling the disturbing relation between the wide-spread availability of illicit small arms and light weapons and conflict-related sexual violence.

ROBERT G. AISI (Papua New Guinea) said that the unfortunate and sobering reality today was that women were still part of the “battleground”, as they were marginalized, harassed, raped, abducted, humiliated, killed and made to undergo forced pregnancy, sexual abuse and slavery. Moreover, women were still largely excluded from formal decision-making processes around peace and security. The challenge going forward was to work diligently with renewed commitment and to upscale efforts to better institutionalize all the various processes, in order for them to become integral parts of national and regional actions. In the context of his country, it was worth recalling the efforts of the women of Bougainville, an island affected by a long and bloody civil conflict, in pushing for peace. The Bougainville Peace Agreements testified to and confirmed the notion that “women are agents of change” in peace and security, he said. There was more to be done, he said, and apart from the United Nations, his country continued to receive

strong support from development partners Australia and New Zealand, along with other partners such as the European Union in prioritizing gender empowerment and equality. Moreover, he acknowledged that the role of civil society was increasing in Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Islands region, in advocacy work on fostering women and girls development issues.

COLIN BECK (Solomon Islands) said that, while stamping out sexual violence from any conflict was a global responsibility, the primary responsibility rested with the State. The Solomon Islands continued to tackle issues of sexual violence under its gender-based national framework. The success of the country's continued partnership with the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands — led by one of the Council's sitting members, Australia, and provided for under Chapter VII of the Charter — “speaks for itself”, he said, describing efforts to bring the mission to a transitional phase. In that regard, the Solomon Islands' new police force had made a special outreach to women in terms of recruitment, and was now led by a female officer. “This speaks of the rich experience [of] women in my country,” he said, noting that women had both suffered from sexual violence and appealed for peace during the conflict. The Solomon Islands was tackling issues related to sexual and gender-based violence through a strong national campaign, services to protect victims and an institutionalized Government system to deal with the issue alongside all stakeholders. The country was also a member of the “G7+” countries that were promoting a “New Deal” agreed to in Busan, Republic of Korea, which was aimed at addressing the root causes of conflict.

LE HOAI TRUNG (Viet Nam), speaking on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that “the fundamental causes of sexual violence in armed conflict should be tackled at its root”. A preventive mechanism addressing the root causes of armed conflict should be implemented. ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation was a regional framework to promote perpetual peace, everlasting amity and cooperation among the member States. Preventing and eradicating sexual violence against women was closely linked to women's empowerment, and gender equality. ASEAN viewed women as “agents of change” who should participate fully and equally in peace, conflict resolution, peacebuilding and post-conflict processes. ASEAN member States were of the view that the States must bear responsibility and exert their utmost in preventing and addressing sexual violence in armed conflict. The United Nations and international community could play their supporting roles by providing assistance and sharing their best experiences and practices to help States exercise that national responsibility.

PAUL SEGER (Switzerland) said that the Human Security Report Project provided valuable recommendations through its various reports, and highlighted the need to better understand what caused the difference in wartime sexual violence rates. Among other things, he also welcomed the priority of the Special Representative to foster national ownership of the task of addressing sexual violence. For his part, the Secretary-General had formulated a number of useful recommendations, including the need for women and girls who had been victims of rape to have safe forms of emergency contraception and ways to terminate pregnancies resulting from rape. All too often, such women received neither reparations nor any form of support from their own communities or from the international community. He also called for measures to protect the rights of children born from instances of rape, including options for national adoption. Reparations could have a transformative effect, he added, noting that reparations as part of transitional justice were the most effective. Switzerland echoed the Secretary-General's call to recruit more women protection advisers, and drew attention to the Justice Rapid Response System, which provided the international community and Security Council with rapidly deployable expertise.

JUAN MANUEL GONZÁLEZ DE LINARES PALOU (Spain) said that fighting sexual violence in times of conflict required the adoption of measures in the areas of prevention, protection and prosecution of perpetrators. In all of those areas, the victims' collaboration was essential. It was, therefore, important to reinforce the mechanisms that encourage victims to report, to raise awareness and solidarity in the community, and to strengthen the capacity of national courts. He said that, although the primary responsibility in the trial of suspects lay with national courts, the International Criminal Court played a crucial complementary role at the international level. Stressing the importance of action in the fields of foreign and defence policies, he said Spain believed implementation of specific programmes to eradicate all types of violence and discrimination against women and girls was a priority, with special attention given to extreme situations, such as trafficking, sexual exploitation or female genital mutilation. He also requested that special attention be paid to people with disabilities, as they were a particularly vulnerable group in the area

of sexual violence and in a context of conflict. Lastly, he said Spain wished to align itself with the statement made by the representative of the European Union.

OSAMA ABDELKHALEK MAHMOUD (Egypt) said that today's debate was timely, about one month after the Commission on the Status of Women had adopted agreed conclusions that reflected the international community's firm stance against all forms and manifestations of violence against women and girls in all contexts, settings and circumstances, including crimes of sexual violence in conflict. Sexual violence in conflict represented one of the most serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and was, therefore, "a lifetime pain that cannot be healed". In that regard, Egypt stressed the importance of zero tolerance and the need to ensure that all perpetrators were held accountable. The Security Council had a unique ability to impose targeted sanctions on perpetrators as an important tool of deterrence. But, a priority should be to employ preventive measures to address the spread of sexual violence in conflict. It was also vital to address the issues of sexual violence from the early phases of the peace process, the mediation efforts, and the ceasefire and peace agreements, particularly for the provisions of security arrangements, transitional justice and reparations.

HERMAN SCHAPER (Netherlands) said his country had put gender equality at the heart of all its policies for decades and supported female leadership internationally. His nation had invested in national action plans since 2007, in cooperation with more than 40 partners, including civil society organizations, research institutions and other Government institutions. The objective of that partnership was to create an enabling environment in which women were better able to take a leading role and participate in political decision-making processes. The Netherlands supported many national activities between governmental bodies and civil society, and lent help to their partner organizations in the developing countries and fragile States. Noting that the serious consequences for girls of sexual and other types of violence for their participation in education were not sufficiently recognized, he said that his Government supported the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) programme aimed at improving the quality of girls' education in 18 fragile States. Together with Spain, the Netherlands organized the semi-annual training programme in capacity-building entitled "A Comprehensive Approach to Gender in Operations". With that, diplomats, soldiers and officials were better able to operationalize gender aspects in their work in fragile States.

MARGUS KOLGA (Estonia), aligning with the European Union and with the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, said that his delegation was proud of having co-sponsored resolution 1820 (2008) on the topic for the first time in the Security Council. On recent developments at the United Nations, he welcomed the adoption of agreed conclusions by the Commission on the Status of Women, which strongly condemned violence against women and girls committed in armed conflict and post-conflict situations, as well as the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty, which made reference to serious acts of gender-based violence as a result of the illicit trade in conventional weapons. There was a wide range of tools available for preventing sexual violence, as well as for holding the perpetrators accountable, he said. The use of targeted sanctions by the Security Council, focusing on specific individuals or entities, was an important aspect of deterrence. Estonia welcomed that the Council had expanded its designation criteria to explicitly address sexual and gender-based violence, and looked forward to the consistent application of that tool. It might be necessary to harmonize jurisdiction criteria for listed individuals and entities by including any relevant charges from the international justice mechanisms, including the International Criminal Court. Estonia strongly supported the Council's calls for State cooperation with the Court and its commitment to an effective follow-up to its decisions. Its resolutions on Mali and the Democratic Republic of the Congo calling for the missions to support the Court's efforts were important examples of Council commitment.

HUSSEIN HANIFF (Malaysia), aligning himself with ASEAN, said it was a worrying trend that sexual violence in the context of conflict remained universally underreported due to a lack of adequate national capacity and expertise to investigate and prosecute. He, thus, welcomed efforts focused on strengthening capacity of national rule of law and justice institutions. He expressed hope for more impetus in the actual realization of Security Council resolutions focused on increasing women's participation in the field of peace and security. Looking forward to the regional seminar on child protection to be held in Malaysia in September 2013, he said it would officially validate the training module for civilian and military personnel on peacekeeping missions dealing with the protection of children involved in armed conflict. He expressed deep concern that forced marriage, rape and sexual slavery had been documented in several States in

conflict under the pretext of Islamic/Sharia law, stressing that Islam did not condone any of those acts. Malaysia was involved in an educational programme in Afghanistan, he said, which aimed at enabling women teachers to master English and Islamic teachings in order to play a critical role in developing the skills of a new generation of female Afghan teachers who would serve as role models and mentors for girls in the years to come.

YUSRA KHAN ([Indonesia](#)) commended the adoption last month of the Agreed Conclusion of the Commission on the Status of Women, which sent a clear and strong message that violence against women and girls in armed conflict and post-conflict situations would not be tolerated. Indonesia's national action plan on human rights was a strong platform of its commitment to eliminate and prevent violence against women. A presidential decree was being drafted as a legal basis to formulate a national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Once completed, the plan would cover all phases of the peace process, from prevention to conflict termination, as well as recovery from social conflict. Major challenges persisted to end the gender-based violence, including insufficient gender-sensitive policies; inadequate implementation of legal and policy frameworks; inadequate collection of data analysis and research; lack of financial and human resources and insufficient allocation of those funds; and lack of comprehensive, consistent, sustained, transparent and adequate monitoring and evaluation. Those gaps had yet to be filled, and he called on the international community to join hands and provide support to States to meet that goal.

KYAW TIN ([Myanmar](#)), joining with ASEAN, added its voice in condemning all forms of violence against women and girls in conflict. This year's report not only highlighted several concerns on violence against women, but also spotlighted the practice of forced marriage by certain armed forces, as well as links between sexual violence and illicit natural resource extraction. He regretted that the report of the Special Representative made reference to Myanmar, along with the parties to an armed conflict that were credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for such acts. The country was making substantial progress in democratizing and national reconciliation, bringing an end to conflicts with virtually all ethnic armed groups. The report did acknowledge that the allegations received in respect of Myanmar had not been independently verified due to limited access. Moreover, he said, objectivity and accuracy were important in the reporting exercise, especially when dealing with sensitive issues. "A few incidents committed by certain individuals cannot always be construed as the policy of a certain Government or institution," he said in that respect. The most important issue was to have proper legal action taken against any perpetrator. Indeed, gender-based violence was being addressed in Myanmar through strong legal action against all perpetrators, regardless of who committed the crime. Members of the armed forces had to observe not only the Penal Code, but also the code of conduct of the military. "We fully support the zero-tolerance policy with regard to violence against women and girls," he said.

CESARE MARIA RAGAGLINI ([Italy](#)), speaking in her national capacity, expressed concern about serious human rights violations and the heightened risk of such acts, including rape, in such places as northern Mali, Syria and Somalia. There were key early-warning and conflict-prevention tools, such as timely briefings to the Security Council by the Secretary-General's special representatives and by UN-Women, as well as the inclusion of women's protection advisers in peacekeeping and political missions. Yet, "a powerful response" by the Council was needed, such as stepping up pressure on perpetrators through targeted sanctions committee measures. She underscored the latest international commitments, including a provision in the Arms Trade Treaty obliging State parties to consider the risk of conventional arms being used to commit or facilitate gender-based violence. For its part, her Government had included provisions to address conflict-related sexual violence in its national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The 2013 Italian development cooperation strategy also included capacity-building activities and assistance to survivors in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lebanon, Libya, Palestine, Sudan and Syria. The Vicenza-based training centre for police, created by the Italian Government, systematically included the prevention of sexual violence in their courses for peacekeepers.

OCTAVIO ERRÁZURIZ ([Chile](#)), associating with a statement made by Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, highlighted the importance of the Security Council's work in protecting women against sexual violence through the adoption of various resolutions, including resolution 1325 (2000). Welcoming the appointment of the Secretary-General's new special representative, he expressed his Government's firm commitment to that end. All forms and manifestations of sexual

violence constituted human rights violations. Addressing that issue was a priority, not an option for any Government. Chile bolstered that stance by signing several international conventions. For its part, Chile had published a national action plan, in keeping with resolution 1325 (2000). This year, the Government was launching some measures to implement the plan, including an awareness-raising campaign. He also stressed the importance of women's participation in peacekeeping and decision-making processes. It was also essential to implement resolution 1325 (2000) regionally. He agreed with the Secretary-General's report that national courts should remain the principal venue for holding individuals accountable.

RAIMONDA MURMOKAITĖ ([Lithuania](#)), calling sexual violence in conflict a "horrendous assault" on human dignity, said it had been repeatedly used for imposing political agendas, perpetuating ethnic cleansing and clearing access to resources. It could not be stemmed without a determination to prevent, protect and prosecute. As long as perpetrators could "get away with it", that barbaric war tactic would continue to destroy lives and communities. The Council must use its full means to tackle impunity, including systematic referrals to the International Criminal Court, mandating commissions of inquiry and condemning such crimes. She supported the implementation of provisions in resolution 1960 (2010) on rape and other sexual violence as designation criteria when adopting or renewing targeted sanctions in situations of armed conflict. Those criteria should be consistently applied in sanctioning entities. Also, providing better support for victims, including by establishing reparation mechanisms, was key to ensuring crimes did not go unpunished.

TALAIBEK KYDYROV ([Kyrgyzstan](#)) said that the current situation in the Middle East and in some countries of the African region required the further consolidation of efforts by United Nations Member States, as well as global and regional security structures. Kyrgyzstan believed that it was necessary to take additional measures to effectively address impunity for sexual violence in conflict and to ensure the equal participation of women in the process of mediation, humanitarian assistance and post-conflict recovery. It supported the recommendations of the Secretary-General to pay more attention to the empowerment of women in the development of policies and strategies of field peacebuilding and in the consideration of the renewal of the mandates involving United Nations peacekeeping missions. The country also welcomed the efforts of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in preventing violence against women in armed conflicts, and it appreciated UN-Women for its efforts to ensure gender mainstreaming in the United Nations system. In the current difficult circumstances, however, it still called on UN-Women to strengthen cooperation with other agencies in providing support to Member States in the preparation and implementation of national plans for the implementation of Security Council resolutions on the prevention of violence against women, and enhancing their role in ensuring peace and security. In February, Kyrgyzstan had approved a National Plan of Action aimed at the formation of a system of institutional protection of women's rights and the creation of favourable conditions for increasing the role and participation of women in providing peace, security and conflict prevention, he said.

JUSTIN N. SERUHERE ([United Republic of Tanzania](#)) said that it was a matter of concern that, despite determined efforts, sexual violence in conflict was not diminishing — instead, it was on the rise. Perpetrators of such violence must be tried by competent national courts or tribunals; where that was not feasible, as was often the case in conflict and post-conflict situations, concerned States should be willing to surrender the suspects to the international criminal courts and tribunals to face trial. The international criminal justice system, despite its shortcomings, had its merits, including the elaboration of sexual violence as being capable of constituting a crime against humanity, a war crime and an act of genocide. The indictment of leaders of armed groups, such as Joseph Kony, Bosco Ntanganda and Sylvestre Mudacumura, by the International Criminal Court was a step towards ending impunity, however moderate. The United Republic of Tanzania encouraged and supported the International Criminal Court, and believed it should be strengthened with a view to broaden its reach and acceptability, for it had been of immense value to the international community. Needless to say, it was the only international criminal justice mechanism at the world's disposal for fighting pervasive impunity. It, therefore, deserved to be commended, not maligned. In addition, while prosecution was critical in ending impunity, it was also important to continue to address its root causes, including by resolving conflicts by reconciling warring parties and encouraging dialogue over military solutions, he said.

ANNE ANDERSON ([Ireland](#)), aligning herself with the statement made by the European Union

representative and the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, said that despite its range and specificity, the Secretary-General's report was far from comprehensive as the information presented was only indicative of the scope and character of sexual violence being committed against women, children and men. She said that ending impunity was critical to ensuring both accountability and effective deterrence. That required a multi-pronged approach: building national capacity to investigate and prosecute acts of sexual violence; further steps to ensure that international criminal justice dealt with sexual violence in a more systematic and consistent manner; and further consideration of how the Security Council could act more effectively in applying targeted sanctions. Ireland strongly endorsed the recommendation in the Secretary-General's report that all of the Security Council's sanctions committees include a focus on crimes of sexual violence, and that the Council expand its institutional capacity so as to develop ways to apply sanctions where no sanctions committee was in place. Further, the Council should factor women's participation into all its deliberations and decisions in a systemic way. Such a focus was essential to move beyond symptoms and address root causes.

PETER THOMSON ([Fiji](#)) said that his delegation was committed to the elimination of sexual violence and to working domestically, as well as with the international community to do so. At the national level, Fiji's Ministry of Women had revived the Inter-Agency Taskforce on the Elimination of Violence against Women to coordinate policy responses across all Government agencies. It was working with the Fiji Police Force to implement legislation introduced in the last couple of years that, among other things, introduced marital rape as a specific offense under the criminal code, and introduced a Child Welfare Code requiring teachers, doctors and other professionals to report suspected child abuse cases. The Ministry also championed a Zero-Tolerance campaign on violence against women and children, which operated at the community level in partnership with community leaders, the Police Force and non-governmental organizations. At the international level, Fiji's commitment to eliminating sexual violence was expressed primarily through its peacekeeping efforts. Fiji sent peacekeepers to missions where the mandate included capacity-building on local security institutions. It also contributed through community policing and assistance to local police institutions, he said.

MOHAMED IBRAHIM ELBAHI ([Sudan](#)) said that, aware of the need to highlight the role of women in peacetime, Sudan had established a policy for empowering women and had drafted a work plan to implement it. Gender-specific needs had been addressed throughout all Government ministries, he said. Furthermore, projects had been established for the economic empowerment of women, including through a renewable national fund. Small- and medium-sized enterprises were available for women, including projects for young agricultural graduates and for families. Empowerment projects focused on rural women, particularly in the Darfur, Kordofan and Blue Nile States. New electoral laws had increased women's participation in parliament — which now stood at 27 per cent — and women were allowed to participate in elections. Sudan also had 80 female judges and a number of female high-ranking police officials. Furthermore, a national strategy had been adopted in 2005 to combat violence against women and children, and special law enforcement agencies were set up to protect them. Female genital mutilation was outlawed, and, in Darfur, the Government had strengthened the World Health Organization (WHO) protocol on the protection of the victims of rape, as well as establishing a system for making complaints and receiving reparations. He also underscored that the framework cooperation agreement with South Sudan was aimed at assisting women in both countries. Finally, he stressed, data used in the Secretary-General's report should come from official sources, not from non-governmental organizations. Dialogue must be held with those countries affected.

PETER WITTIG ([Germany](#)) mentioned some points of special importance in addressing the abhorrent crime: the Council should make more use of the information it received and do more to act and hold perpetrators accountable; it should keep the issue high on its agenda and ensure specific provisions were included in mandate renewals and country visits; more women protection advisers should be deployed, including in assessment teams and missions; the security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes should increase the focus on the needs of women and girls; and Member States and regional organizations should help to ensure that sexual violence was, under no circumstances, socially accepted. In that, he welcomed the recent call by the African Union Peace and Security Council to develop new strategies to fight sexual violence in conflict. For Germany, confronting sexual violence was a priority area in its new national action plan on implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

ALVARO DE MENDONCA E MOURA (Portugal) said that national accountability needed to be reinforced, because Member States had the primary responsibility to prevent and address conflict-related sexual violence with the strengthening of the capacities of national institutions, in particular health, judicial and social systems. But, the action of the international community must also be reinforced. The deployment of women's protection advisers in relevant peacekeeping operations that would strengthen prevention needed to be accelerated to ensure that the dedicated capacity on sexual violence existed within those missions. The Council was ready to apply sanctions or to use all other means at its disposal, including referrals to the International Criminal Court, to perpetrators that had been identified or that were credibly suspected of committing sexual violence in situations of armed conflict. He called for the Council to be consistent with its decisions and reinforce the message that "impunity is simply not acceptable, that sexual violence is simply not tolerable and that there is no real security without women's security". He added that the survivors of sexual violence should be at the centre of the debate, and beyond bringing perpetrators to justice, the international community needed to afford care and reparation to victims of sexual violence in conflict-related situations.

JIM MCLAY (New Zealand) said sexual violence was as complex as it was horrifying. Despite some progress, there was still great scope for improvement in the Council's work in certain cases; the experience in the Democratic Republic of the Congo illustrated that point. Sanctions could play an important role, and listing entities responsible for sexual violence was an important signal that carefully crafted and targeted sanctions would be used to combat the most serious and systematic incidences. At the same time, the Council should ensure the listing criteria were regularly updated. It should also move to implement the Secretary-General's recommendation that similar powers be given to the Committee's responsible for Somalia, Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire and Al-Qaida in Islamic Maghreb. It would be useful to add Guinea-Bissau to that list. Civilian protection mandates were important, but it must be ensured that they were effectively implemented in the field. Finally, international criminal justice mechanisms could complement national legal systems in addressing serious violations.

YOUSEF SUTAN LARAM (Qatar) said that obstacles remained to the participation of women in decision-making and public life around the world. Qatar's laws enabled women to play major roles in the country's political and economic fields; today, women had been elected to high-ranking posts, including as the heads of ministries, and the State had adopted a pre-emptive policy in order to protect the human rights of women. "We cannot talk about women in peace and security without dealing with the root causes of this problem," he stressed, noting the need to "apply the rules" of protection of women from sexual violence in times of conflict without selectivity. It was sad that, while this meeting was being held, many women around the world, in particular in the Arab world, were suffering from violence and displacement. They were exposed to sexual, psychological and physical violence. Indeed, women in Palestine suffered from unjust measures at the hands of the Israeli occupation, and in Syria, women were exposed to sexual violence, displacement and imprisonment. The continued attention by the international community to the topic of women, peace and security would have a positive effect on international peace and security, he said

BÉNÉDICTE FRANKINET (Belgium) said her country had been "a fervent defender" of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). In too many countries, sexual violence against women was a recurring problem. As for the Secretary-General's report, she highlighted the need to ensure that countries should take ownership of the fight against such incidents, holding perpetrators accountable and not allowing impunity. War crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide could be handled by the International Criminal Court, which complemented national efforts in fighting impunity. Yet, the focus should be on preventive measures. She then commended the work of the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict for its "resolute action". Information in the report regarding the situations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and Syria, among other nations, was disturbing. The recent agreement signed by a United Nations envoy and the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to tackle sexual violence in that country should be quickly implemented. It was also vital to provide victims with the necessary services and establish a system of compensation for them. Lastly, she advocated mainstreaming the issue of gender-based violence in other parts of the United Nations' work. A case in point was the recently adopted Arms Trade Treaty, which included a clear reference to the risk of conventional arms being used to commit or facilitate gender-based violence.

MIRSADA ČOLAKOVIĆ (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that integrating a gender perspective into peacekeeping policy and advancement of the participation of women in United Nations peacekeeping operations was fundamental for more effective performance on the ground. Recruiting women in civil, military and police components of peacekeeping missions could encourage local women to report incidents of sexual violence and could also contribute to establishing better communication with local communities. His Government had spared no effort to advance that issue. The relevant authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina had adopted a policy that one third of nominated candidates for peacekeeping missions must be women. His Government had adopted a national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), as well as a gender action plan. The two documents were crucial to streamlining activities related to women, peace and security in relevant sectors and to accelerating the resolution's national implementation.

NÉSTOR OSORIO (Colombia) said that for his Government to take any corrective measures in response to the Secretary-General's report, the information must be more accurate. "It is strange for us that some of the cases presented about the situation in Colombia do not have enough supporting information related to the incidents mentioned in the report," he said. He stressed his Government was determined to fight all forms of sexual violence against women and children. However, it was worrying that the report spoke generically about increasing pressure on those responsible for acts of sexual violence in conflicts, including individuals, the parties and the states alluded to in different reports. His delegation understood that, by making that plea in the report, the Secretary-General was referring to the situations listed in the annex to the report, "that is, those situations that are under consideration by the Security Council and the sanctions committees established in connection with such situations". Consequently, the Secretary-General's Special Representative was expected to act in accordance with the mandates and make clear distinctions with situations that were mentioned in the report's body, but were not part of the Council's agenda. His delegation reiterated its position regarding the possible establishment of talks with State and non-State parties to obtain commitments. Such talks should respect local law and domestic policies. Colombia's policy regarding any dialogue between the United Nations and illegal armed groups operating in the country was that it could only be done with prior and explicit consent from the Colombian Government.

ASOKE MUKERJI (India) said that the need for greater coherence between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UN-Women could hardly be overemphasized. That was necessary not only for operational effectiveness, but also for optimal resource utilization. Noting a need to avoid making standardized prescriptions when dealing with situations of armed conflict, he said that as the specific causes and characteristics of each armed conflict varied, so would possible approaches and solutions. The United Nations peacekeeping and political missions should be provided with the necessary flexibility to deal with specific situations. Turning to the linkages between sexual violence and such issues as exploitation of natural resources and international displacement, as pointed out by the Secretary-General report, he urged caution in drawing such generalized linkages based on specific country experiences. Further, he said that the mandate of the Security Council should be observed and the report should remain focused on the situations of armed conflict on the Council's agenda. The so-called "situations of concern" were not part of that mandate.

ZAHIR TANIN (Afghanistan) said that all States had the moral and legal responsibility to uphold the rights of women and all citizens, and to protect them from sexual violence. Protecting and promoting the rights of the Afghan people had been the cornerstone of the country's efforts to build a peaceful and stable Afghanistan. Central to those efforts was enabling women to regain their historic role as proactive citizens of Afghan society. The country was, therefore, pursuing the vigorous implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) through its National Priority Programme. It had launched the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan as a 10-year blue print, which contained specific, time-bound benchmarks for progress in various areas. Afghanistan was fully committed to preventing any form of violence against women, including sexual violence. In that regard, it had enacted the Elimination of Violence against Women law, providing stronger judicial means through which to combat violence. In reference to an observation made in the Secretary-General's report, he stated, with that, the Government of Afghanistan and its citizens did not, and would not, tolerate impunity for any form of human rights violations. Together with its judicial authorities, the Afghan national security forces were working diligently to uphold law and order in all areas of

the country. “On the way forward, we are confident that our efforts will continue to bear fruit, and that women will be further empowered,” he said.

BURÇ CEYLAN ([Turkey](#)), aligning with the European Union, said that the report considered and the statement made today made clear that effective action had been taken by the United Nations system to address the scourge of sexual violence in conflict. Despite those efforts, however, sexual violence in conflict remained prevalent. Both the International Commission of Inquiry and the United Nations had found instances of sexual violence taking place just over the border in Syria, he said. Indeed, there was a massive exodus from that country, which was clearly taking place because the Syrian Government did not care about them. The “groundless remarks” made earlier by Syria should be seen through that lens, he stressed. Moreover, by levelling allegations against others, Syria sought to deflect responsibility for crimes it had committed, he said.

Taking the floor a second time, the representative of [Syria](#), responding to the statements made by the representatives of Qatar and Turkey, stressed the negative roles played by those States, which were no longer a secret. Indeed, rather than finding a solution to the situation, they were further agitating it, as some sheikhs in Qatar had supported armed groups in Syria, including those associated with Al-Qaida. She also noted that Turkey had smuggled mercenaries and weapons across the border into Syria and that Syrian women had been raped in Turkish refugee camps. In closing, she reasserted that the “ambiguous role” played by the Qatar sheikhs should not pass unnoticed by the Syrian people. All those who had committed crimes against the Syrian people would be prosecuted, she said.

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