



Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

Provisional

8649th

meeting

Tuesday, 29 October 2019, 10 a.m.

New York

President: Mr. Matjila/Mrs. Pandor/Ms. Mapisa-Nqakula (South Africa)

Members:

Belgium	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
China	Mr. Zhang Jun
Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Moriko
Dominican Republic	Mr. Trullols Yabra
Equatorial Guinea	Mrs. Mele Colifa
France	Mrs. Gueguen/Mr. De Rivière
Germany	Ms. Müntefering
Indonesia	Mr. Djani
Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
Peru	Mr. Duclos
Poland	Ms. Wronecka
Russian Federation	Mr. Kuzmin
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Ms. Pierce
United States of America	Mrs. Craft

Agenda

Women and peace and security

Towards the successful implementation of the women, peace and security agenda: moving from commitments to accomplishments in preparation for the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)

Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2019/800)

Letter dated 8 October 2019 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2019/801)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Women and peace and security

Towards the successful implementation of the women, peace and security agenda: moving from commitments to accomplishments in preparation for the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)

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The President: I wish to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, Ministers and other distinguished representatives present in the Security Council Chamber. Their presence today underscores the importance of the subject matter under discussion.

In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Georgia, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Maldives, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, the Netherlands, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, the Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Rwanda, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, the Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Uruguay and Viet Nam to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the

Empowerment of Women; Ms. Bineta Diop, African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security; Ms. Lina Ekomo, on behalf of the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation and the African Women Leaders Network; and Ms. Alaa Salah, civil society activist and community leader.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I also invite the following to participate in this meeting: Ms. Clare Hutchinson, Special Representative of the NATO Secretary-General for Women, Peace and Security; Her Excellency Ms. Mara Marinaki, Principal Adviser on Gender and the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women and Peace and Security of the European External Action Service; His Excellency Mr. Maged Abdelfattah Abdelaziz, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations; and Ms. Amarsanaa Darisuren, Senior Adviser on Gender Issues of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

I propose that the Council invite the Permanent Observer of the observer State of the Holy See to the United Nations to participate in the meeting, in accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and the previous practice in that regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2019/800, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security, and document S/2019/801, which contains a letter dated 8 October 2019 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/2019/841, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Armenia, Australia, Canada, Denmark, Georgia, Indonesia, Ireland, Jordan, Liberia, Morocco, North Macedonia, Norway, the Philippines, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, San Marino, South Africa, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and Uruguay.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Belgium, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, France, Germany, Indonesia, Kuwait, Peru, Poland, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2493 (2019).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements on the resolution just adopted.

Mrs. Craft (United States of America): The United States joins other member States in support of resolution 2493 (2019), on women and peace and security. We remain deeply committed to this issue. I commend South Africa for the cooperative spirit in which it led this process.

However, the resolution refers to previous documents that include references to sexual and reproductive health. I must note that we cannot accept references to sexual and reproductive health or any references to safe termination of pregnancy or language that would promote abortion or suggest a right to abortion. The United States has stated clearly on many occasions, consistent with the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action and its report, that we do not recognize abortion as a method of family planning nor do we support it in our women's global assistance initiatives.

The United Nations should not put itself in a position of promoting or suggesting a right to abortion, whether in its humanitarian or development work. A new resolution on women and peace and security offers an opportunity to highlight the great personal risk that women face and to emphasise efforts to support and protect women peacebuilders. We are pleased that this resolution includes elements of the women and peace and security agenda related to peacekeeping because, as we all know, women improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions.

However, the resolution falls short of putting the full weight and support of the Council behind the women who are putting their lives on the line every day to build peace. The resolution also leaves out key

aspects of the Action for Peacekeeping Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, which emphasizes that Member States need to collectively ensure that a gender perspective is integrated into all stages of peace processes.

While we appreciate the fact that the resolution notes the system-wide gender parity strategy, we are disappointed that it fails to highlight the aspects of the strategy that are aimed at increasing the number of women in the military and police contingents of United Nations peacekeeping operations. Individually, we should all be taking steps to address the persistent barriers that women peacekeepers face and to overcome these barriers in our systems. We continue to urge all troop- and police-contributing countries to adopt and promote policies to achieve these objectives.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom was pleased to vote in favour of resolution 2493 (2019), which South Africa proposed today, and we are very grateful for your efforts, Sir, to secure Council consensus on the resolution and the efforts of your Mission.

We welcome the resolution's focus on implementation. Implementation is the United Kingdom's main priority on women and peace and security as we look forward to the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) next year. We believe that today's resolution represents the final push that the Council needs to provide on implementation. From the United Kingdom's perspective, our focus should now be on delivering on the ambition of the full existing framework of women and peace and security resolutions and not on producing more texts.

Turning to the text itself, we endorse its confirmation of the Council's call for full — and I stress the word “full” — implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and its encouragement of increased engagement by Member States and United Nations agencies, as well as increased support for civil society.

The emphasis on full implementation — and again, I stress “full” — is vital. The implementation gap is visible right the way across the women and peace and security agenda. We have not seen sufficient progress in ensuring women's meaningful participation, in increasing the number of women in peacekeeping or in building an effective response to conflict-related sexual violence.

In all cases, this needs to include sexual and reproductive health services. I know that not all Member States agree with this, but from the perspective of the United Kingdom sexual and reproductive health services are a vital part of public services for women in all countries and a vital part of ensuring that women can play a truly equal role in the building of their countries. We welcome the resolution's support for the creation of safe and enabling environments for civil society, as well as the importance of funding, which we consider to be essential for organizations and individuals to carry out their work free of interference and free from fear.

However, I have to say that the United Kingdom was disappointed that the Council did not seize the opportunity to draft a resolution that was more ambitious in scope.

First, we believe that the resolution would have broken new ground if it had included explicit language on women human rights defenders and their protection and security. The work of women human rights defenders is essential to the functioning of democracy and the maintenance and achievement of peace.

Secondly, we regret that it was not possible to include broader recognition of civil society's role in implementation. We talk a lot about implementation in meetings and events in New York, but civil society, and especially women at the grass-roots level, are responsible for making the Council's resolutions a reality on the ground. They are the ones on the front lines, and they need increased recognition and support in order to effect greater and more effective change.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Belgium congratulates South Africa on the adoption of resolution 2493 (2019), on women and peace and security. Our vote in favour of the resolution reflects my country's full commitment to the agenda and the empowerment of women. On the eve of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), we welcome the stress placed on the importance of implementing our joint commitments.

However, we regret that it was not possible today to adopt a resolution that would have underlined the key role of human rights defenders in the implementation of the women and peace and security. In addition, we regret that the Security Council was not in a position to call on countries to adopt measures to protect civil society and safeguard critical thinking and the freedom of expression.

As with previous Council debates on related issues, we would also like to highlight that it is clear that the full implementation of resolutions on women and peace and security means fully implementing all the provisions of all of the Council's resolutions pertinent to this agenda item, including provisions on sexual and reproductive health.

In this spirit, we eagerly look forward to engaging with all members in the course of the year during which we will mark the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000).

Ms. Müntefering (Germany): We thank South Africa for highlighting the importance of the women and peace and security agenda with today's resolution 2493 (2019). With its adoption, the Security Council has once more underlined the crucial role it attaches to the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in prevention, peace processes and relief and recovery. This is the tenth time that the Security Council has adopted a resolution on women and peace and security, which has been a German priority since the very first time, 19 years ago. We agree that implementation is key in making progress, but we still have a long way to go.

The resolution serves as a reminder that it is our obligation as Member States to redouble our efforts to ensure the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and all subsequent resolutions that form part of the women and peace and security agenda, with all their provisions. The resolution highlights a crucial element of the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, namely, the role of civil society. That includes international and local non-governmental organizations, formal and informal community women leaders, women peacebuilders, political actors and women human rights defenders, all of whom play an indispensable role in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

We are strongly concerned about attacks and reprisals against women activists, human rights defenders and civil society in general, as well as about the concerted efforts by some States to backtrack on the women and peace and security agenda and on the universality of all human rights. We stand united with many Member States of the Council and the United Nations — as we heard from the representatives of Belgium and the United Kingdom — as well as with civil society to resist such efforts.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): France thanks South Africa for its efforts in a difficult context and welcomes the Security Council's unity. This is a victory for the women and peace and security agenda, which will mark its twentieth anniversary next year. France welcomes the fact that resolution 2493 (2019) calls for the full implementation of all resolutions on this agenda, which are mutually reinforcing and to which France is committed in all their aspects.

We would have liked the role of civil society and women human rights defenders to be fully recognized. Indeed, how can one envisage implementing the women and peace and security agenda without civil society and those women on the ground who try to change the status quo to demand the role that belongs to them.

It is regrettable that the Security Council continues to be silent on the crucial issue of sexual and reproductive health and rights, without which women's rights remain in jeopardy and we cannot respond to the most basic needs of the victims of sexual violence throughout the world.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm that France will continue to support the full — and demanding — implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, including the full complement of all related resolutions.

The President: I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres.

The Secretary-General: The women and peace and security agenda is clearly one of the top priorities of the United Nations as a whole. We see that in the adoption of a great many resolutions by the Security Council, including landmark resolution 1325 (2000) and its many follow-up decisions. We see it in the global recognition of the central role that women must play in preventing and resolving conflicts. And we see it when we gather to discuss the issue. That is always when the Chamber is at its fullest and the list of speakers is the longest. We have exactly that same situation today.

Given such strong support and common understanding, an observer might be forgiven for thinking that things are substantially improving. But the sad fact is — and we must be blunt about it — that the commitment that is always reflected around this table is not translating into real change around the world. It is not coming fast enough or far enough. Change is coming at a pace that is too slow for the

women and girls whose lives depend on it, and for the effectiveness of our efforts to maintain international peace and security.

Nearly two decades after resolution 1325 (2000) was adopted, women still face exclusion from many peace and political processes. Peace agreements are adopted without provisions that consider the needs and priorities of women and girls. A pitifully small 0.2 per cent of bilateral aid to fragile and conflict-affected situations goes to women's organizations. The number of attacks against women human rights defenders, humanitarians and peacebuilders continues to increase. Sexual and gender-based violence continues to be used as a weapon of war, with the survivors of such violence often left without justice or support. This year alone, millions of women and girls were in need of life-saving sexual and reproductive health services, and millions more required interventions to prevent sexual and gender-based violence. There is also a growing number of armed groups for which gender inequality is a strategic objective, and misogyny part of their core ideology. And, of course, we know that women and girls continue to suffer the consequences of conflict in general. To cite just one example, in north-east Syria, we saw thousands of women and children fleeing the latest violence. But despite this grim litany, we will not give up. This, for me, is an absolute priority.

We can report at least some progress. In Yemen, where women were absent from the formal rounds of consultations, my Special Envoy established a Yemeni women's technical advisory group to ensure that the perspectives of Yemeni women are included. In Guinea-Bissau, women played a direct role in breaking the political impasse last year, supported by the Peacebuilding Fund. They led unprecedented mobilization for parity laws requiring a minimum of 36 per cent of women on the ballot, and they were key to the success of the elections this year. There were record numbers of women candidates and voters, and the country achieved parity among ministerial posts. In Syria, women make up approximately 30 per cent of the new Constitutional Committee, including some from the Women's Advisory Board that has been working for peace all these years.

Within the United Nations itself, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations are implementing a new and stronger policy on women and peace and security. All heads of special political missions and my Special Envoys have

been instructed to report regularly on their efforts to promote women's direct participation throughout all stages of peace processes, in ways that ensure they have influence over the outcomes. An objective related to women and peace and security has now been included in all senior managers' compacts related to peace and security mandates. In our peacekeeping operations, we are working to end sexual exploitation and abuse and increase women's participation. Incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse have been reduced by half, and we are finally moving the needle on the percentage of women in the military and the police components of our operations. I have appointed many more women as heads and deputy heads of missions, and we are pursuing emergency measures to achieve gender balance.

Women and peace and security is one of the eight priority pillars of our Action for Peacekeeping initiative, endorsed now by more than 150 countries. I have also requested peacekeeping and special political missions to improve their monitoring and reporting of threats and violence against activists, including women human rights defenders, and for that to be built into early warning signs of escalating conflict or instability. Without a gender analysis, we are operating on partial information and are unable to anticipate and respond effectively to early warnings.

Today we recognize both progress and how much more we must do. When we fall short, women, girls and all members of society suffer the consequences. A failure to act on women's rights and the principles of the women and peace and security agenda bring about enormous costs. Let us work together to change the narrative and improve, through implementation, the situation on the ground.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka.

Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka: There is a common message coming from women affected by conflict and actors who are concerned about women and peace and security matters — whether it be women in Afghanistan, Libya, the Sudan, Burundi, the Philippines, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Yemen or Colombia; whether it be Kurdish or Yazidi women, or young women who are here for this week or global focal points on women and peace and security from different countries; whether it be women peacekeepers like the ones from South Africa who shared their touching stories with us

yesterday, highlighting the need to increase the number of women in uniform — the loud and common message is that progress is too slow, political will is not strong enough and pushback against the needs and interests of women is threatening the progress we have made, and is pushing further away those who most need our resolve and support. That is despite the many good words, agreements, discussions and events. Change is not as real as it needs to be.

As I address the Security Council today, I urge that we heed the call of those women. As we discuss the report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/800), we must aim to close the gap between words and action, as articulated by the Secretary-General. Even though we agree on so much, the collective scorecard is not where it should be. There is a stark contrast between the expressed support from Member States and regional and international organizations for the women and peace and security agenda, and reality.

The correlation between gender inequality and a society's propensity for civil or inter-State conflict is now well-established. The link between the participation of women and more durable peace has also been established. And yet we still live in a world that tolerates and excuses women's continued exclusion from peace and political processes and institutions. Violent misogyny is on the rise. We are witnessing record levels of political violence targeting women. Sexual violence continues to be used as a weapon of war and terror, while its survivors are left without justice or support, and the support they need is sometimes even minimized by decisions that we take here. After conflict, economic recovery for women is primarily limited to micro-credit and micro-enterprises, while large-scale reconstruction is dominated by men and overwhelmingly benefits men. Feminist organizations' repeated calls for disarmament, arms control and shifting military spending to social investment still go unanswered. It seems easier to use arms than to deliver clean water and energy or heal the women in north-east Nigeria from the recurring tremor, as noted last week by Assistant Secretary-General Åsa Regnér. The list of examples of people who should be, but are not, benefitting from this resolution is way too long.

Last year, the Secretary-General tasked UN-Women with commissioning an independent assessment of progress in the implementation of the gender-related recommendations of the three peace and security reviews that the United Nations conducted in 2015. Its findings

are summarized in the Secretary-General's report. Of the recommendations that targeted the United Nations specifically, 50 per cent have been implemented or are in progress and 10 per cent have either regressed or are not progressing. From 1990 to 2018, fewer than 20 per cent of peace agreements included provisions that addressed women or gender, and last year none of the agreements reached in United Nations-led processes included such provisions. The United Nations-led processes are also supported by Member States; therefore, together, we have a responsibility to do better.

Many of the countries that will speak here today generously support mediation and peace negotiation efforts. But we need all of those countries to also advocate for the full deployment and use of women with tremendous skill that are committed to the agenda. We need them to demand women's direct and meaningful participation in all phases of peace talks.

Women's absence from peace tables is still commonplace, but it no longer goes unnoticed. Partners that support peace talks also do not include women, or are represented by very few women. This is not from lack of trying on our part. As we speak, in all ongoing peace processes, fewer than 8 per cent of agreements reached contained gender-related provisions, down from 39 per cent in 2015. In the recent past, even where agreements include specific gender provisions, ensuring implementation remains a challenge.

The 2016 peace accord in Colombia is a landmark agreement, and great efforts went into putting it together. But a recent analysis shows that around half of the gender-related provisions in the agreement have not been initiated and that gender provisions are being implemented at an even slower rate than the rest.

I have some promising news, however, and I recognize that it is not nice to give such a gloomy report. The independent assessment identified areas where progress is under way, such as in the stronger integration of gender considerations in preventing violent extremism. However, we still face challenges when national counter-terrorism legislation often adversely affects women's civil society organizations. The Secretary-General's report urges Member States to review such legislation and to take action.

UN-Women has just supported two research projects conducted by Monash University in four countries — Indonesia, the Philippines, Bangladesh and Libya. In all four, hostile sexist attitudes towards

women were the factors most strongly associated with support for violent extremism — far more than age, degrees of religiosity, level of education or employment. That is a significant finding, especially because the vast majority of studies on terrorism ignore gender. We appreciate the close collaboration among the agencies that are working in this area and are grateful for the Member States that collaborate with us.

In addition, the number of countries that have adopted a national action plan on women and peace and security increased by 50 per cent since 2015. We welcome and applaud those countries. But that still represents fewer than half of the countries in the world, and only 22 per cent of all plans included a budget at the time of adoption. We urge countries with new plans to make sure that they include budgets.

Women's economic empowerment is key to sustaining peace. Women need to be given priority in efforts to respond to crises and to plan for peace. Without shelter, food, support for education and health needs, woman's lives continue to be frozen in low-intensity warfare. Discrimination against women and their access to assets and productive resources violate women's human rights and leave them vulnerable to extreme poverty, gender-based violence and trafficking in all countries. Family members are also at risk of being drawn into terrorism and of being in harm's way.

The marginalization of women in decision-making and in the political economy of foreign aid, reconstruction and economic revitalization is part of the problem that the Security Council can solve, and together we can move the needle. In fragile and conflict-affected countries, only 4 in 10 women are in paid work, compared with 7 in 10 men. Creating work opportunities for women is therefore an important contribution. In countries experiencing prolonged crisis, such as Afghanistan, Syria and Yemen, the gender employment gap is 50 or 60 points. In contrast, in 2016 and 2017 only 0.2 per cent of total bilateral aid to fragile and conflict-affected situations went directly to women's organizations.

Investing directly in women is also critical. In 2018, total world military expenditure reached \$1.8 trillion. Some of that money contributed to deepening crises in the same fragile countries that we are meant to be helping through resolution 1325 (2000). It is important to say that the overall share of aid promoting gender equality in some form has increased to 42.6 per cent,

which is higher than ever before, but less than 5 per cent of it goes to programmes with the primary objective of improving gender equality and women's empowerment. This support comes from a small group of countries, which we can really expand.

In the United Nations, only a few entities have to date committed to achieving minimum targets on allocation and expenditure on gender equality. The Peacebuilding Fund remains the bright spot thanks to the consistent championing by senior leadership and to collaborative efforts that we can all learn from. The Secretary-General's report on women and peace and security urges United Nations entities next year to benchmark targets and put in place accountability mechanisms. The Security Council's active support in that direction would go a long way to help.

I would further ask members to address the issue of the participation and inclusion of women in all peace processes, as well as the inclusion of women in uniformed armed services. This is one of the important components of resolution 1325 (2000), and Council members can also do more to help us enforce and implement it.

As I said last year, the United Nations and Member States should not be giving support to peace processes that exclude women, because if they take a stand on this matter things will change. We know that such processes have limited chances of bringing durable peace. It is therefore important that the Council intervene decisively. Choosing to exclude women therefore means that we may be choosing to compromise our collective desire for lasting peace.

Tomorrow, most representatives here will be at the global forum for survivors of conflict-related violence, led by Nobel laureates Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad and my colleague Pramila Patten, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Thanks to many efforts undertaken during the past decade, this is no longer history's greatest silence. We know women are not just victims. They continue to lead and to stand up, even after terrible experiences. Nadia is living testimony to the resilience of women who defy all odds, and I applaud her contribution — which has been made in partnership with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the International Criminal Court, Justice Rapid Response and others — to ensuring the thorough investigation of crimes and that these crimes

are documented. I want to make sure that as we move forward and prepare for the twentieth anniversary celebration next year, we can close some of the gaps within the year ahead of us.

In a few minutes, the Council will be listening to women's voices and stories. Alaa Salah from the Sudan is one of the many women who are leading the change in her country. She represents the young women of courage. The Council will hear about Congolese women describing the political representation barriers they faced in the lead-up to the country's first election in 2011. Council members will also hear about South Sudanese women and have listened in the past to Afghani, Libyan and Yemeni women demanding respect for women's rights and for the meaningful participation of women in negotiations and decisions that will determine the future of their countries.

On International Women's Day just a few months ago, Angelina Nyajima Simon Jial, one of the members of the South Sudan Women's Coalition, told the Council that,

“We need not just to be consulted, but to be heard. When we raise concerns about tensions mounting or the need for services, we speak from an informed position” (*S/PV.8480, p.6*).

There is lot of trust in and expectations for the Council, and I hope that we will be able to rise to the occasion. Between now and October 2020, on the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), let us take big steps to close the gap. That is what women are asking us to do. There is a lot we can do even in this year. The Council's action can move the needle and set the example of political courage — not just the courage of people who have much less to give and much more to lose. All of us together can take action.

The President: I thank Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Diop.

Ms. Diop: Allow me to congratulate you, Madam President, and through you the Republic of South Africa, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October as we commemorate the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). I thank you for inviting me, as Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Commission, to brief the Council on the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda in Africa. I convey the best wishes of

Commission Chairperson, His Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, for a successful women and peace and security month under your leadership.

Twelve days ago, the AU Peace and Security Council held its annual open session on women, peace and security. The institutionalization of this issue is a clear indication of the attention that the Peace and Security Council accords to the women and peace and security agenda. Indeed, the Peace and Security Council adopted the Continental Results Framework for Reporting and Monitoring on the Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in May 2018, with the aim of supporting member States in accelerating the implementation of the agenda and of making the report part of the global discourse on advancing the agenda. During the open session, I presented the first report of the Chairperson, based on data provided by member States using the Continental Results Framework. The Executive Director of UN-Women was also present and addressed the Council on that occasion. Highlights of the report include the following.

Africa continues to lead in the adoption of national action plans on women, peace and security. There are presently 25 countries in Africa that have adopted national action plans, constituting 30 per cent of all such plans globally. In addition, South Africa organized recently a validation forum and I am sure it will soon adopt its own national action plan. The recent development of national action plans in Africa incorporated lessons learnt from the first-generation national action plans. The lessons include the security sector ministries taking a leading role and the recognition of sector-wide responsibility in financing the agenda.

Despite the existence of advanced instruments, implementation continues to lag behind. Out of the 25 countries, only 7 have reached the 30 per cent threshold of women's participation in parliament and only two have reached parity at cabinet level. Violence against women continues unabated, including the use of women and girls as suicide bombers, as seen in the Sahel and the Lake Chad basin. Female peacekeepers require gender-sensitive strategies for deployment, as evidenced in yesterday's presentation by South Africa on the plight of women who have been deployed in peacekeeping missions but who are resilient and still want to contribute to building peace in our continent.

The report calls on Member States to use the Continental Results Framework, identify gaps, build on good practices and scale up actions, especially in the light of the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), the AU Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative and Beijing +25 forum. Among key practices is the inclusion of women at the peace table. When we take a look, we see that they are not present. When we look at the discussion concerning the Sudan currently under way in Juba, we see that women are missing. That is why the AU Commission has established the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation, commonly known as FemWise, to enhance the role of women in mediation at all levels, including the community level. Women mediators have been deployed to AU liaison offices in conflict-affected countries. At the same time, the AU Gender Peace and Security Programme is deploying gender advisers to enhance capacity on gender equality and women empowerment.

As for strengthening the nexus between peace and development, the AU and the United Nations, with the support of Germany and UN-Women — and I thank my sister Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka — have joined forces to build a movement of women leaders, the African Women Leaders Network, to play a decisive role in the transformation of the continent, in line with the Agenda 2063 of the AU and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Through joint solidarity missions, the AU and the United Nations have adopted an action-oriented approach with the aim of listening to women at the community level and bringing their actions to the forefront. Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed led our delegation. That was the third time we went to the field. She will brief the Security Council in the coming days on the outcomes of the latest mission to the Horn of Africa that visited Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia.

Community-supported peace operations is an area in which I think we need to do more. The African Union Military Observer Mission in Somalia, which I was with last week, has provided technical expertise to the Government of Somalia on drafting its national gender policy and community watch programmes for the prevention of violent extremism.

Time does not permit me to talk about implementation and what we have found at the country, regional and continental levels, but let me conclude my remarks with a few recommendations.

Member States need to scale up the adoption of national action plans for the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, with a clear accountability framework. We need to measure through data collection and the sharing of good practices; otherwise, we cannot know what we have achieved. With a view to the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) next year, the African Union Commission aims, together with the United Nations, to have at least 50 per cent of United Nations Member States adopt a national action plan, so that we can follow effective implementation on the ground.

Women's organizations experience the realities of women and girls in our various countries on a daily basis. They take care of survivors, providing legal services, psychological support and economic recovery. They are there to restore the dignity of women who have been affected by conflict. It is crucial to provide support to those organizations in working hand in hand with Member States, the United Nations and the AU in addressing the gaps identified in the delivery of the women and peace and security agenda.

In a recent intergenerational dialogue on women's leadership held in Kenya, we heard the demands of young people, like Alaa Salah, for a bigger say and role in building peace in Africa. We need to hear them, we need to include them, and we need to let them take the lead on women and peace and security.

Let me again thank the Secretary-General for supporting the women and peace and security agenda. He came to Africa in January and he supports FemWise and the African Leadership Forum. He has the support of his brother Moussa Faki Mahamat. Let me also recognize Norway, the United States, Ireland and South Korea, just to name a few that have been supporting our agenda, AU member States — for instance South Africa — as well as UN-Women, the United Nations Development Programme, and the United Nations Population Fund, among others.

No more words. The time to act is now.

The President: I thank Ms. Diop for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Ekomo.

Ms. Ekomo (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Central African women leaders for peace, I would like first of all to extend my sincere congratulations to the Government of South Africa on assuming the presidency of this organ and to thank, in particular,

the Minister for Foreign Affairs of South Africa, who kindly gave us the opportunity to make the voice of Central African women and girls heard in the Chamber.

The Central African Republic has a national plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). However, women have been excluded from the Central African peace initiative from the outset, despite the many pleas made by leaders of women's organizations to national authorities, guarantors and facilitators. Those who were invited to finalize the talks between the Government and the armed groups did not have access to the negotiating table. Nevertheless, women have persisted in their advocacy, resulting in United Nations and African Union support for efforts to disseminate in the prefecture capitals the peace initiative and the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, and to integrate women into implementation and monitoring mechanisms.

However, the women who are involved in the monitoring of the peace agreement were not involved in the negotiations. Their involvement in implementation monitoring mechanisms does not yet give them the right to participate in assessments or decision-making on policy and strategy. The peace agreement signed by the Government and the 14 armed groups is a political document that includes concessions on the part of the leadership to assuage the armed groups.

Its implementation is not living up to the expectations of the population. In particular, women and other victims of armed groups find it hard to understand how their tormenters are officially promoted within the country's ruling class without any legal vetting as to their eligibility under the principle of impunity, as recommended by the National Forum of Bangui. The justice that the population yearns for is therefore being sorely tested. The Special Criminal Court has clearly been weakened in carrying out its mandate, and the same concern applies to the Commission on Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation, were it to become operational.

In the name of the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, the social dimension seems to have been relegated to the background, because in prioritizing the interests of armed groups, all the policymakers forget that there are people who are suffering; that fires in villages have led to the deaths of hundreds of people and the displacement of thousands of families and left

many others without roofs over their heads, living in inhumane conditions; that women and girl victims of rape and sexual violence have been abandoned without assistance; that hundreds of young people have been tortured and are living with disabilities; that women can no longer farm their fields; that heads of households can no longer carry out their daily tasks, as they are all afraid of being abducted, tortured, raped and even killed; and that young women, who are living in hiding for fear of being abducted and raped, can no longer go to school.

Seven months after the signing of the Political Agreement for Peace, we are seeing 60 to 70 violations committed every week by armed groups, according to the report of United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic. The armed groups remain very active on the ground. They are preventing the deployment of State authorities, imposing hardship on the population and continuing to procure heavy weapons. In general, the fulfilment of their obligations as set out in the Political Agreement for Peace is showing extremely weak progress.

The worrisome situation that I just described requires overhauling strategies for implementing the Political Agreement. To that end, the Government must be encouraged to create the necessary conditions to foster positive inclusive dialogue that will promote genuine ownership of the Agreement and diffuse the already discernible social and political tensions in the country.

In terms of perspective, I would respectfully call the Council's attention to the following challenges. The holding of peaceful elections in 2020 and 2021 will be a significant challenge for lasting peace in the country and will not be possible without the support of women. Within the framework of civil society organizations, we have begun to train women to be both voters and candidates, but the majority of women live in remote areas of the country that are the strongholds of armed groups and therefore difficult to access. Re-establishing security in remote areas of the country is urgently needed so that the elections can be effective.

There is a constant need to strengthen cooperation with civil society to take into account the real aspirations of women and girls, rather than prioritizing institutional partnership, which does not always ensure that the assistance delivered to populations is efficient. Indeed, there is a genuine gap between the commitments

made by partners and the Government with regard to the universal vision for the participation of women in the peace process. The absence of a comprehensive and coherent support programme for women's civil society organizations in a country in conflict where everything must be done to restore women's dignity and hope is a relevant indicator.

Moreover, the challenges faced are many and can be clearly seen across the pillars set of resolution 1325 (2000) — conflict prevention and the protection of civilians. In this regard, cooperation between women and young people was created through the contribution of those groups to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and 2250 (2015). This momentum for joint actions needs to be underpinned not by sporadic support, but as part of a long-term programme framework to change mindsets and thereby achieve a lasting impact.

With respect to gender-based violence, the situation is well known and documented with alarming indicators, but there remains an absence of an expanded programme for providing psychosocial support for either victims or communities that continue to live with their traumas. Furthermore, support for victims and prevention initiatives need to be bolstered in the provinces. To this end, it is necessary to increase the number of women Blue Helmets deployed on the ground in the communities.

With regard to providing assistance to conflict-affected populations, the Central African Republic has more than 4.5 million inhabitants, and a half of the country's population is in need of emergency assistance, according to reports from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Central African Republic. The majority of displaced persons say that they feel abandoned to their tragic fate without the necessary assistance to enable them to restore their human dignity. Frustration is increasing on a daily basis and could generate social tensions.

As one displaced woman in the town of Bria in the north-western part of the Central African Republic asked,

"How can I go and speak of peace when I am not even living in peace — after the murder of my son, the burning down of my house that made me lose everything I owned, and the rape of my daughter — and I am receiving no assistance to rebuild my livelihood after those tragedies?"

Indeed, thousands of families simply want to receive a minimum amount of assistance to return home and begin a new life.

The establishment of the national chapter of the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) allowed for the establishment of a coordination framework for all the leaders of women's organizations in the Central African Republic. These women leaders organized joint missions to all of the provinces of the country and saw first-hand the suffering facing populations in conflict areas. The women leaders who are members of AWLN must work in their civil society role as partners for the implementation of urgently needed assistance programmes for women in remote areas.

With regard to the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, the participation of women remains limited to raising awareness of the Agreement itself, but there are substantial difficulties in terms of implementation owing to the active presence on the ground of the signatory armed groups. In such an environment, it is important to rapidly come up with a strategy allowing for women's leadership to play a substantial role in calming tensions, promoting a cessation of hostilities and initiating dialogue among the parties to the conflict.

As part of cooperation with civil society, it is important to develop a more strategic approach to be able to capitalize on the investments by partners in the area of training by involving civil society in negotiations, mediation and lobbying. Such collaboration should also allow for balance and consistency to be established between the national tools and the operational agendas of partners in the country and also take into account the level of financing needed for civil society actors.

Lastly, I remain convinced that such collaboration, if it is indeed to be effective, will make it easier to monitor performance indicators, promote the ownership of initiatives by the population and consolidate the effectiveness of assistance to the Central African Republic in terms of peace and security.

In conclusion, we women leaders of civil society working on questions of peace and security in the Central African Republic need to work more closely with partners to alleviate the suffering of the population, including women and young girls.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Ekomo for her briefing.

(*spoke in English*)

I now give the floor to Ms. Salah.

Ms. Salah (*spoke in Arabic*): I am honoured to be here in the Security Council from the Sudan, which is today full of hope for peace, freedom and justice. My name is Alaa Salah. I am 22 years old and I grew up in Khartoum. Before the revolution, I was a student of architectural engineering. I did not grow up around politics, but in an ordinary middle-class family. My mother is a designer, and my father owns a construction company. As I would walk to university every day, I would see my fellow citizens around me struggling to obtain food and medicine, half of the country living in poverty. How could I not become political? Our struggle for bread became a struggle for our freedom in December 2018.

I stand before the Council today to tell my story, which is one shared by thousands of women and men of the Sudan who left their homes, schools and daily work to take to the streets and face bullets and tear gas, risking their lives and their livelihoods to demand the end of the dictatorship. My journey here was forged by countless Sudanese women who fought for peace and justice in our communities for decades, well before we arrived at this important moment for the future of the Sudan. I would not be here if it were not for them.

I address the Council as a member of MANSAM, a coalition of Sudanese women's civil and political groups, and on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security. My statement will focus on two key issues: first, women's meaningful participation and the protection of women's rights; and, secondly, accountability and disarmament.

Women of all parts of the Sudan have played an important role at pivotal moments in our history — in opposing colonial rule and fighting for the right to vote as well as in recent struggles against the dictatorship of Omar Al-Bashir. It also took extraordinary courage to fight for basic rights — to wear trousers, to leave their hair uncovered, to voice their opinions on social media without fear and to share a meal with male friends. All of those acts were criminalized by the former regime's public-order laws. Those laws were designed to quash dissent and target women, particularly from the most marginalized and working-class communities, such as

tea- and food-sellers, whose working tools could be confiscated without explanation, who faced fines and who could be jailed.

Women and young people were at the forefront of the recent protests, often outnumbering men and accounting for 70 per cent of protesters. I was one of many women chanting, singing and walking with my fellow male and female citizens through the streets. Women led resistance committees and sit-ins, planned protests and disobeyed curfews, even in the midst of a declared state of emergency that left them vulnerable to security forces. Many were tear-gassed, threatened, assaulted or thrown in jail without any charge or a fair trial. Both women and men also faced sexual harassment and were raped. Women also faced retaliation from their own families for participating in the protests.

Women served as key members of the Forces of Freedom and Change and helped shape coalitions such as MANSAM and an initiative against the oppression of women. As part of the Forces of Freedom and Change, women helped to develop a road map for the Sudan's transition from military to civilian rule.

However, despite that visible role, despite their courage and their leadership, women have been side-lined in the formal political process in the months following the revolution. Even in the past, when we achieved a seat at the table — women represented 31 per cent of parliamentarians in 2018 — they were often without real influence and left out of decision-making circles. Despite women standing ready to actively contribute to the political negotiations that began in April between the Military Council and the Forces of Freedom and Change, only one woman participated in the talks, and only after strong advocacy by women's groups. Now, unsurprisingly, women's representation in the current governance structure falls far below our demand of 50 per cent. We are sceptical that the 40 per cent quota on the still-to-be formed legislative council will be met.

For the past 30 years, women's bodies and rights were policed, and the backlash was swift and violent when patriarchal norms were challenged. Women activists, politicians, human-rights defenders and peacebuilders continue to be systematically attacked and targeted, including through sexual violence, which has forced many women out of the country entirely.

Moreover, women's organizations are on the front line of meeting basic needs and protecting rights

in conflict-affected areas, but security restrictions and obstructive administrative requirements prevent critical work from being carried out, in areas such as Blue Nile and the Nuba Mountains in particular. Humanitarian access to Jebel Marra, a conflict area in Darfur notorious for the routine use of mass rape by security forces to terrorize women and girls, continues to be a major challenge to the provision of life-saving services for those communities.

Given women's pivotal role in working towards peace and development, promoting human rights and providing humanitarian assistance to communities in need, there is no excuse for us not to have an equal seat at every single table. If we are not represented at the peace table, and if we do not have a meaningful voice in Parliament, then our rights will not be guaranteed, discriminatory and restrictive laws will remain unchanged and the cycle of instability and violence will continue. After decades of struggle and everything we risked to peacefully end Al-Bashir's dictatorship, gender inequality is not, and never will be, acceptable to the women and girls of the Sudan. I hope it is equally unacceptable to the members of the Security Council.

The Sudan is one of the most highly militarized countries in the world. We do not need more firearms. Yet many Governments continue to sell weapons that directly contribute to and perpetuate conflict, ongoing violations of human rights and forced displacement. The widespread availability of weapons in my country is one of the factors fuelling violence and insecurity for all people, including women and girls.

As members of the Council are well aware, accountability and access to justice have been all but absent in my country. The existing discrimination and inequality women face, coupled with conflict and violence over decades, have resulted in women being subjected to a wide range of human rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence on an epic scale. Those crimes contributed to the indictment of our ousted President for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. But violence against women did not end with the end of Al-Bashir's reign. As recently as early September, seven women living in the Shangil Tobaya camp for displaced persons in Darfur were raped by armed men. Those women join the thousands of women and girls who have borne the brunt of the violence carried out across the country. Now women are saying, "Enough". It is time for accountability and justice for all crimes committed before, during and

after the revolution. This is the least that can be done to honour those killed or who suffered atrocities.

The strength of the revolution came from the representation of diverse voices from across the country. That inclusion is now integral to the legitimacy of the transition process. Unless the political process reflects the diversity of our society, women's civil society groups, resistance groups, ethnic and religious minorities, those who have been displaced and people with disabilities, then no agreement will reflect our collective aspirations. In conclusion, I urge the Security Council and the international community to take the following five steps.

First, press the transitional Government, the Forces of Freedom and Change and movements of armed struggle to support the full, equal and meaningful participation of women. We call for at least 50 per cent representation of Sudanese women across all peace processes, in current negotiations and at all levels of Government. We urge the international community to support our demands in all its engagements with the transitional Government.

Secondly, actively monitor the situation in Darfur and halt the scaling down of the peacekeeping mission until the security situation stabilizes, the protection of civilians — including those in internally displaced camps — can be ensured and the conditions for safe and voluntary returns are met.

Thirdly, support accountability and end impunity. The transitional Government must fully support an independent international fact-finding mission to investigate and hold to account all perpetrators of human rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence. Omar Al-Bashir must immediately be transferred to the International Criminal Court. The transitional Government must ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women without any reservations.

Fourthly, support civil society and ensure that women human rights defenders are able to carry out their work unhindered and without fear of reprisals. Stop the use of lethal and excessive force against male and female protesters.

Fifthly, stop fuelling conflict. We implore all countries to stop exporting arms to our country when there is a risk that they will be used in violation of international humanitarian law and human rights

law, including to perpetrate sexual and gender-based violence, in line with the Arms Trade Treaty.

In conclusion, I would like to leave the Council with a slogan that rang out during our recent protests: "Freedom, peace and justice — revolution is the people's choice".

The President: I thank Ms. Salah for her briefing, and I thank the guests present here for their applause. I had been wondering whether people applaud at the United Nations, because I am a stranger to this organ. I am therefore very pleased to see that there is a human element present. I notice that many participants are looking at their cell phones as the discussion continues. I hope that they are tweeting that they support all the demands that have been put to them this morning.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Minister for International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa.

My name is Naledi Pandor, and I wish to begin by acknowledging the Security Council for its adoption of resolution 2493 (2019), just a few moments ago. We are absolutely thrilled at the unanimity that was indicated in that adoption. I am told that that is a welcome return to consensus in the Council, and we are extremely pleased at that.

I wish to thank everybody here for participating in our discussion today. In particular, I wish to thank all those who provided us with such significant briefings in the course of our deliberations. As we have heard, women from diverse contexts across the world continue to face obstacles and resistance. They continue to bear the brunt of armed conflict, and their personal, economic, civil and political security is persistently undermined.

Women's efforts to ensure their participation in peace processes continue not to receive a positive response. If we fail to address the barriers in the next 20 years and beyond, then we will have to face the fact that we are falling far short of our ambitions to realize the objectives that we set as an international community. Together, the United Nations, Member States, regional organizations, civil society and other actors supporting peace processes must hold each other accountable to maintain and go beyond current progress in the area of women and peace and security and its agenda by 2020.

Everybody's participation today in this important meeting confirms the significance of the women and peace and security agenda. The myriad and complex

conflicts in the world serve to underscore the need to reinforce the implementation of that agenda and its related actions. Resolution 1325 (2000), which was adopted 19 years ago in October, and its subsequent resolutions underpin the women and peace and security international normative framework.

We in South Africa view the women and peace and security agenda as a means for women to mediate in conflict situations and as an essential tool for ending the use of force as a means of settling disputes. The report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/800) that we have before us provides us with a useful overview of the successes and gaps in the implementation of that agenda. It gives us concrete recommendations that can move us from rhetoric to action, so that we can effectively implement the commitments that we have set ourselves. Women are tired of us talking. Women want action. Women want change.

It is within that context that we in South Africa saw it fit to present a draft resolution (S/2019/841) focused on the full implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. Resolution 2493 (2019) now recognizes that, although there has been progress, there is still a great deal that we must do.

As we exchange views on how to strengthen implementation, particularly as we move towards the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), it is also imperative for us as the international community to take into account the findings and the recommendations of the 2015 *Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325* — the study commissioned by this very organ needs to be taken into account. We believe that some of those recommendations from 2015 are still relevant in terms of elaborating practical and attainable deliverables. It is also for that reason that we in South Africa have advocated for its inclusion, in order to embolden the message on the full implementation of the agenda outlined in resolution 1325 (2000).

Our deliverables must be visible and discernible. They must be clearly aimed at ensuring the meaningful participation of women at all levels of peace processes; increasing the number of women in uniformed and civilian components of peacekeeping operations; investing in women as peacebuilders, such as in mediation and negotiation; protecting the human rights of women, particularly sexual and reproductive health

rights; and advancing accountability for heinous crimes such as sexual violence.

South Africa has been a proponent of the women and peace and security agenda since its inception. We remain committed to implementing the agenda so that it can support and contribute to silencing the guns across the world, as well as work towards saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war, as we committed to do at the founding of this very Organization. Our country has been engaged in training women across all of these areas. We are therefore optimistic that operationalizing the Global Alliance of Regional Women Mediators Networks will advance some of these objectives. We are not speaking empty rhetoric when we refer to the participation of women — we have women here from our various armed forces in South Africa and our police service who have served in peacekeeping missions. They are here to observe our continued commitment to serving areas of the world in which there is conflict. I would like to ask those women in uniform to stand. They have served and therefore deserve recognition. I know that I am breaching all diplomatic rules, but it is unfortunate that they appointed a novice as Minister for Foreign Affairs.

On peacekeeping, South Africa will continue to ensure the meaningful participation of women in peace support operations. Currently, our national defence force comprises 30 per cent women. That has enabled South Africa, as a troop-contributing country to United Nations peacekeeping missions, to deploy more females on the front lines of armed conflicts. The South African contingent of the Force Intervention Brigade of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is composed of 14.5 per cent women, and the officer commanding the South African force is a woman. During our side event here at the United Nations on women in peacekeeping, which was held yesterday afternoon, these women shared experiences on how to achieve the goals we have set to increase the representation of women in peace support operations. We are pleased that the United Nations uniformed personnel gender-parity strategy clearly indicates the quotas and time frames that must be reached to increase the number of women deployed as military, police, corrections and justice personnel. As a supporter of collective approaches to address issues that affect us all, South Africa will continue to actively participate in existing global initiatives, such as the Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network; the

Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations; and the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative. We find these initiatives useful in that they also serve as instruments to raise awareness on the importance of the women and peace and security agenda.

As I conclude, let us agree to commit today to continue to advance the cause of women and of peace and security and the agenda thereto by ensuring that we implement the recommendations and guidelines emanating from existing resolutions. Our contributions all indicate that we know what must be done — perhaps we need to devote a sharper focus on why we are failing to act in pursuit of agreed objectives. Once we have identified the real barriers, we will probably then begin to make greater progress.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to the other Council members who wish to make statements.

I call on the Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office of Germany.

Ms. Müntefering (Germany): Women's rights are human rights, and human rights are women's rights. That is what we are fighting for and that is why we are here today. This is also at the centre of my Government's foreign policy.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General and Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka for their comprehensive briefings. We appreciate the focus of Ms. Diop on her work in Africa. I want to thank Ms. Ekomo for her important work with FemWise-Africa and the African Women Leaders Network. I would also like to express my special appreciation to Ms. Salah, who came from Khartoum to give her testimony to the Security Council today.

Knowing the situation on the ground is the soul of the service. Briefings by representatives from civil society also ground our discussions here in the Security Council, as they bring the much-needed insight and expertise from the grass-roots level. Representatives from civil society, including human rights defenders, peacebuilders and local activists, especially women, need to be an integral part of the Security Council's discussions.

Let me assure the representatives of civil society and all like-minded Member States that Germany will remain by their side in their endeavours. We remain

by the side of women human rights defenders, women peacebuilders, civil society actors and activists who work every day — and often even risk their lives — to make the full, effective and meaningful participation of women, their full empowerment and respect for women and their rights a reality. That is why, in April, we invited a record number of 11 women and two men representing civil society to brief the Council. The outcome, in our view, was inspiring and helpful. We hope to walk down that road together with all those here today.

Resolution 1325 (2000), as you mentioned, Madam President, was adopted 19 years ago. The adoption itself changed not only the way the Council works but also how the United Nations and the international community approach peace and security issues. We all know that it constituted long overdue recognition of the important role that women play in creating peaceful societies. There is no lasting peace without women. There is no lasting peace without bringing representatives of half of the population to the table and safeguarding their involvement. Most important, perhaps, the involvement of women changes the process itself by changing its dynamics. That is one reason that peace treaties tend to last much longer when women participate.

Today, more than a generation later, we are taking stock of what has been achieved. We have to acknowledge that, while progress has been made, essential parts of the agenda remain neglected and underfunded. Even today, there are very few women negotiators and mediators. Very few peace processes benefit from the meaningful participation of women. Women and children are still the most affected by sexual and gender-based violence. Survivors of sexual violence receive little or no psychosocial care, counselling or health care, including services regarding sexual and reproductive health and rights. That which could save the lives of survivors is often not available owing to limited funding or ideological boundaries.

We want a world without these barriers — a world where women and men participate equally politically, socially and in economic life. I call on all fellow members of the Security Council, all States Members and the United Nations system as a whole to finally fully implement what the Council has agreed upon 10 times since the year 2000. We made a promise to our generation and to all those that will follow, namely, nothing less than the full, effective and meaningful

participation of women in all aspects of peace and security.

We demand accountability for its full implementation. In April, Germany and the United Kingdom, together with UN-Women, invited Member States to pledge their renewed commitment in implementing the full women and peace and security agenda before its twentieth anniversary, next October, and we will follow up on it. We all need to work harder to translate our words into actions. Germany is already implementing 10 of our 12 commitments and has fully completed the implementation of three.

In Afghanistan, like in any other country, lasting peace and stability can be achieved only if women's voices are both heard and considered. In the framework of the intra-Afghan dialogue, which we co-hosted together with Qatar in Doha this July, we brought Afghan women and other stakeholders of Afghan society together, including the Taliban. Even a tense security situation and threats to their lives could not prevent Afghan women from exercising their rights. They have our full support.

In April, under the German presidency, the Security Council managed to adopt the ninth resolution on the women and peace and security agenda. Resolution 2467 (2019) is a major step forward for the prevention and fight against the scourge of conflict-related sexual violence. For the first time, the Security Council places a clear focus on the rights and needs of survivors of sexual violence. Delivering justice and accountability is key for survivors of sexual violence.

In the context of Iraq and Syria, criminal prosecution of crimes committed by Da'esh is a priority for my Germany. My country has also welcomed more than 1,100 Yazidi refugees. Our Government is well ahead in its proceedings against members of Islamic State and the Syrian regime.

Last but not least, allow me to make some remarks on behalf of the 61 member States of the Group of Friends of the African Women Leaders Network, which Germany proudly co-chairs with Ghana. Since its establishment, in 2017, the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) has brought women's leadership and their participation in peace, security and sustainable development in Africa to the fore. The meaningful participation of women in peace, security and peacebuilding processes requires moving beyond the numbers to real qualitative

representation. Let me briefly underline three points that I deem critical in their approach.

First, there is a need for capacity-building to enhance women's qualitative participation. Secondly, a bottom-up approach is needed, from the grass-roots level to the local and national levels. I particularly welcome the establishment of the Group of Friends; to date eight national chapters have been established, with the target of reaching 25 before the end of 2020. Thirdly, we must achieve the integration of youth in this work through dialogue between young and experienced women leaders, for example.

The countdown to the twentieth anniversary for our common agenda starts today. The time is now, and time can be on our side if we make best use of it.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I thank you, Madam President, for coming here today. I also thank you and the German Minister for creating an environment where over two thirds of the people sitting around the table are women. That is fantastic, a taste of things to come. I hope you will visit us often.

I also wanted to congratulate you, Madam, for South Africa's fantastic record, with that 30 per cent figure you gave us and your military colleagues, sitting in the Chamber. That is incredibly impressive. I thank you for your commitment to carry on producing women for peacekeeping operations. The United Kingdom joins you in that commitment. Sadly, we are only at 17 per cent, so you have the match on us. But I think, nevertheless, there is more that all of us can do in that regard.

As other speakers have said, this is a timely debate, a year ahead of the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000). It is a good opportunity for us to reflect on the achievements and challenges in fully implementing the resolution. But as we have heard from all the fantastic briefers today and as the Executive Director of UN-Women eloquently made clear, we must raise our ambition, we must commit to even more radical change and we need to ask ourselves, 20 years and 10 resolutions later, why is there still such a stark implementation gap when all the evidence suggests that incorporating the gender perspective helps achieve sustainable peace and security?

I think, again, as the Executive Director of UN-Women said, that is a question we need to ask ourselves all the time as we design any peace process, international

mechanism, project or programme. How can we make sure that we are living up to the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000)? That obviously means putting a particular focus on designing inclusive processes from the outset. Arms and territory should not be the only reason that negotiators get a seat at the table. That is not right morally, it is not sensible economically and it is not sensible or feasible if one wants a just and lasting peace settlement.

This year the United Kingdom funded Gender Action for Peace and Security to deliver consultations with civil society in our nine national action plan focus countries. We did that because we wanted to better understand how we can identify, and therefore overcome, those gaps. We are taking concrete steps to promote and protect women peace builders and human rights defenders. We are providing sustainable multi-year funding. And we are ensuring that we practice what we preach in terms of representation and policy.

As I look ahead to 2020, I hope we can have an effort across the United Nations, not just in New York but right across the whole United Nations system, both in the field and in the other Headquarters buildings, to focus efforts on the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). For our part, we will be particularly working on increasing women's meaningful participation in peace processes, notably in Afghanistan, South Sudan and Yemen. The German Minister explained very eloquently what was happening in Afghanistan, so I will not repeat that. In Yemen, the United Kingdom is funding a gender adviser and senior inclusion position within the United Nations Special Envoy's Office so that we can build on its work to take forward women's participation in the peace process. Ahead of the November deadline for a transitional Government in South Sudan, we are continuing to work with local women's groups to advocate for an inclusive process. And, of course, with my very good friend and colleague the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, we have also set up a women's group in New York, of which the United States Ambassador is also a part, to take forward the participation of women in that very important peace process.

If I can turn to the United Nations — again, a number of speakers mentioned the United Nations — obviously, it has a huge role to play in implementing resolution 1325 (2000). On the nineteenth anniversary, with a year to go to do something about it, the United Kingdom

would like to invite the United Nations to make progress in three particular areas.

First, establishing a strong formal working relationship with the Global Alliance of Women Mediators Network will ensure women mediators have access to key peace actors and are systematically considered for deployment as negotiators, mediators and advisers. Secondly, United Nations processes need to set the gold standard for inclusion, and United Nations Special envoys should be held to account on their commitments to implement resolution 1325 (2000). Finally, we must ensure that United Nations-led peace processes are closely supported by gender experts to guarantee gender perspectives; this needs to be integrated throughout the mission. This is not a desirable; it is not a “nice to have”; it is an intrinsic part of any successful peace process.

In conclusion, 2020 is not just about resolution 1325 (2000). Next year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, the fifth anniversary of the youth, peace and security agenda, and 10 years until the deadline to reach the Sustainable Development Goals. We cannot let this moment slip through our fingers. Now is the time to make progress on women and peace and security as well as gender equality, and the United Nations and its Member States have a responsibility to deliver on all of this next year.

Mr. Zhang Jun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Before making a formal statement, I want to assure participants that, although I belong to the group that makes up one third of those seated at this table, my colleagues and I will do our best to promote gender equality and the development of the cause of women.

The Chinese delegation wishes to thank Secretary-General António Guterres; UN-Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka; and the African Union Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security, Ms. Bineta Diop, for their respective briefings. We also listened attentively to the statements made by Ms. Lina Ekomo and Ms. Alaa Salah.

China welcomes the adoption of resolution 2493 (2019) by the Council and appreciates the efforts made by the Government and the Permanent Mission of South Africa.

Next year marks the twentieth anniversary of the Security Council agenda on women and peace

and security, which coincides with the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The international community should capitalize on this opportunity to review and take stock of the achievements and shortcomings with respect to the women and peace and security agenda so as to identify the right direction for future cooperation and strengthen consensus. China stands ready to actively support and participate in the comprehensive review of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and work with all parties to promote the work of the United Nations in the field of women and peace and security so that it can reach new heights.

Over the years, thanks to the vigorous efforts of the Council and all parties concerned, women have played an increasingly prominent role in the field of peace and security and become increasingly important participants in and contributors to peace processes. More and more women hold senior positions at United Nations Headquarters and in field missions, and the number of women peacekeepers and police is gradually increasing.

In conflict-affected countries, women play an indispensable role in preventing conflict, conducting mediation and peacebuilding, and measures to protect and assist them have been continually improved. The international community should continue to strengthen coordination and give full play to the important role of women in the maintenance of international peace and security.

First, we should commit to seeking political solutions to hotspot issues through dialogue and consultation as well as create an international environment that is conducive to the survival and development of women. The Security Council should effectively implement its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, not only by taking effective measures to provide comprehensive security and protection to women affected by conflict and carrying out humanitarian relief work, but also, and more importantly, by energetically moving forward the political process and promoting the peaceful settlement of disputes so as to shield women from the suffering caused by war and conflict and the harm resulting from terrorism and violent extremism.

It is imperative to secure women's full right to participation and decision-making at all stages of the peace process, while ensuring that women's representatives involved in peace processes truly reflect the voices of women on the ground.

Chinese women peacekeepers and medical teams, in defiance of all odds and hardships, have been actively safeguarding peace in conflict areas and helping and taking care of women and children. They truly are beautiful sights to behold.

Secondly, we need to address both the symptoms and root causes of conflicts, effectively strengthen women's capacity-building and ensure their effective participation in the peace process. It is imperative to help women achieve equal development, escape poverty and access quality education, which constitute important conditions for their effective participation in the peace process. It is essential to actively help the countries concerned to carry out post-conflict reconstruction, focusing on capacity-building, and ensure that development benefits all, not least women.

Support should be provided for gender equality and women's empowerment in conflict-affected countries, and special funds should be earmarked to support capacity-building projects for women. Over the years, China has provided substantial support to countries in conflict in such areas as women's empowerment, counter-terrorism and conflict prevention, through platforms that include as the China-Africa Cooperation Forum and the China-Arab Cooperation Forum.

China is actively fulfilling the commitments made by Chinese President Xi Jinping at the 2015 summit, the Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A Commitment to Action, by providing assistance to women and girls in developing countries in health, education, vocational and technical training, and other fields.

Capitalizing on the opportunity presented by the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, we are deepening our cooperation with all parties in an effort to advance women's empowerment.

Thirdly, we need to fully respect the sovereignty and will of the countries concerned and ensure that the various United Nations agencies can create synergies while leveraging their respective strengths. The countries concerned must shoulder their primary

responsibility for the promotion of women's effective participation in peace processes and take appropriate measures in the light of their national conditions.

The relevant bodies, including the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and UN-Women should, in accordance with their respective mandates, bring their strengths into full play and intensify their coordination in a joint effort to promote the important role of women in the field of peace and security.

Regional and subregional organizations are best informed and can therefore provide targeted solutions. The autonomy and unique role of the relevant regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union and the League of Arab States, should be fully respected, and policy exchanges should be strengthened and best practices shared. Non-governmental organizations are expected to play a constructive role by observing the laws of the countries concerned, respecting the ownership of the host Government and fully consulting with them. China therefore reserves its position vis-à-vis paragraph 6 of resolution 2493 (2019), which we have just adopted.

China has taken note of the efforts of the Council's Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security, but notes that the Group is not an official body of the Council and that the work it does in the name of the Council must respect the views of all Council members in a manner consistent with the Security Council mandate and the rules of procedure, or its decisions will not be authoritative or morally binding.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by thanking all of the briefers for their participation and their contribution to this debate.

Next year marks the twentieth anniversary of the women and peace and security agenda, which together we have built over the years. If we look at the resolutions that have been adopted, we will realize what we have accomplished. Tomorrow we will celebrate the tenth anniversary of the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. We have established monitoring, analysis and reporting agreements within the United Nations. We have created the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security, which is a highly effective instrument that assists the Security Council in incorporating the aspects of the women and peace

and security agenda into the various mandates of peacekeeping operations. Advisers on issues affecting women work to promote a gender-sensitive approach in missions and when liaising with United Nations entities on the ground.

But while the Council has produced texts and developed road maps on paper, it is implementation on the ground that is most important. To cite just one example, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict has signed formal agreements with the Governments of the countries concerned that represent a crucial step in overcoming the culture of silence surrounding conflict-related sexual violence. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, that cooperation framework has enabled the prosecution of more than 1,000 people since 2013. Those are genuine changes on the ground for women who have often endured horrific experiences.

Promoting gender equality and the political, social and economic advancement of women, based on dignity, respect and empowerment, remains a key element of the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. Two weeks ago, Belgium had the honour to present a joint statement in the Third Committee on behalf of 75 countries, on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women. That shows the strength of the global support for women's rights, and while it is important to respect cultural sensitivities, it is clear to us that no law, tradition, religion, custom or culture can justify discrimination against women and girls.

Like some 80 other countries, Belgium is implementing a national action plan on women and peace and security, in fact our third such plan. It includes numerous measures for improving the situation of women's rights in conflict areas. Among other things, in the spirit of seeing our commitments concretely implemented on the ground, Belgium also supports FemWise-Africa in training female African mediators.

In April of this year the Council adopted resolution 2467 (2019), which calls for a survivor-centred approach. That requires political measures and financial resources. In that regard, Belgium contributed €2 million to the Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery. We also support the Trust Fund for Victims established by the International Criminal Court, which helps ensure women's access to justice.

In that context, Belgium underscores the importance of health, and sexual and reproductive health in particular, for all women. Medical care is what victims of sexual violence need most urgently. In addition, my country will continue its efforts to ensure that women who must make the difficult choice of having an abortion can do so.

We thank South Africa for its commitment to the rights of women and underscore that the fight for a world in which women can show their ability to lead peace efforts is a fight that can and should unite us all.

Mr. Trullols Yabra (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank South Africa for convening today's open debate and the briefers for their briefings and recommendations.

Gender equality, the promotion and protection of women's rights and women's full political, social and economic participation and empowerment play a key role in preventing and resolving armed conflicts. Furthermore, the role of women in peacebuilding and peacekeeping, the prevention of sexual violence and the protection of women and children is not only necessary, it is crucial. Alaa Salah and her extraordinary story provide us with an example of how the voices of young women carry a powerful and transforming force.

Despite the resolutions that have been adopted and the indisputable progress that has been made, we continue to face challenges in implementing the women and peace and security agenda. Although it has acquired normative force since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), we believe that it is vital to strengthen the commitments already made by all actors so as to promote the agenda in their own countries and advance its full implementation. In that process, it is fundamental to ensure that we cooperate with and support the members of civil society, including women peacebuilders, young women and human rights defenders, who play a central role in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. However, the threats, intimidation and violence to which they are subjected make it a matter of urgency to establish and strengthen mechanisms to protect them. In Syria's nascent political process, thanks to facilitation by the United Nations and the Security Council, the makeup of its Constitutional Committee, which is called on to bring about a national political transformation, is about 30 per cent women. It is crucial to assure them of a safe and inclusive

environment at this critical juncture in building peace in Syria.

The Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security has served as a key platform for improving the implementation of the agenda on the ground. We remain committed to working to facilitate a more holistic approach to the work of the Council, including in its resolutions, reports and field visits. In countless contexts, gender inequality, exacerbated by the indiscriminate actions of armed groups and the proliferation of weapons, constitutes one of the principal causes of violence, particularly gender-based violence.

We defend the importance of linking the rights of women to peacebuilding. For that reason, it is vital to train peacekeepers and to take gender issues into account in the design, planning, implementation and evaluation of peace operations, as well as the increase in the number of women deployed as troops. It is crucial to include gender-disaggregated data in mission reports, deploy gender advisers and women's protection advisers and strengthen zero-tolerance policies for acts of sexual violence or discrimination on the basis of gender.

We commend the work of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Department of Peace Operations and UN-Women and take this opportunity to praise the initiative to strengthen cooperation, which enables access to political and technical skills pertaining to the issue of women and peace and security, in support of the collective efforts of the United Nations system.

In conclusion, we reiterate that the Dominican Republic will continue its efforts to advance the women and peace and security agenda, in the belief it will lead to lasting peace and social transformation, with a view to ending gender inequalities, which undermine peace and security and fuel grievances, extremism and conflict.

Mrs. Craft (United States of America): I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and his report (S/2019/800) on women and peace and security. I also thank all the other briefers for speaking so candidly. We recognize the candour of the report and share its sentiment. I would also thank Foreign Minister Pandor for convening us to discuss the women and peace and security agenda.

When it comes to conflict resolution, women are indispensable. The truth was reinforced for me by a gathering of women that I met in Malakal, South Sudan, following the Security Council's trip to Juba. These women have endured and are continuing to endure more than most of us can possibly imagine. What is so difficult for such women is not what the terrible secrets that they carry but the fact that they cannot even share the simple truths of what has happened to them because doing so would put their families in danger. One of the very brave women in Malakal walked for more than two hours just to sit with us and share in confidence in a place of safety.

Those women and so many like them have important matters to express. Are we ensuring that they have a voice? Are we paying attention when they speak? The United States believes that the role of women is so essential that in 2017 we signed a stand-alone women, peace and security law — the first and only one of its kind in the world. In 2019, the President released the United States Strategy on Women, Peace and Security. The Strategy outlines how we plan to safeguard women's participation in peace and security matters and advance the women and peace and security agenda domestically and abroad.

Participation begins with having a seat at the table. How are we doing in that regard? As we speak, in the United States we are hosting nearly 80 women leaders to build a cross-cultural understanding on advancing the women, peace and security agenda. Earlier this month, the United States hosted a high-level forum on women and peace and security in the Middle East with dozens of female participants, including women from Syria. Those actions align with the aims of resolution 1325 (2000), including mandatory increases in the representation of women at all decision-making levels and the provision for the special needs of women and girls in conflict.

However, ensuring a seat at the table for women is only the bare minimum. We must also see to it that women are empowered once they have that seat. That is why we are so proud to have supported the travel of Ms. Alan Salah to the United States. Briefings such as hers strengthen the role of civil society in civic life and underscore for us the role that women play in conflict resolution. While we want to empower women abroad, we must also attend to the issue at home. We are therefore ensuring that our own national security institutions are fully prepared to support women. The

United States is enhancing training for our diplomats, development experts and military personnel so that our public servants actively promote gender equality.

Lastly, our partner Governments must work towards full equality for women, including girls, and securing women's inclusion in all stages of conflict resolution. The NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security recently and rightfully called on us to defend the legitimacy of the work of human rights defenders and their role in promoting peace and security. We read its open letter to Member States with great interest and agree that women's full, effective and meaningful participation in all aspects of peace and security must be non-negotiable and safeguarded.

One place where we can heed that call is in the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (S/2019/780), which stresses the need to address killings of human rights defenders and social leaders and the specific risk faced by women leaders. We can also heed the call by responding to the Secretary-General's request for more Member States to create national action plans to advance the women, peace and security agenda as Colombia is now doing through a joint partnership with the United States. The United States is ready to support all Member States in crafting and implementing women, peace and security action plans and strategies. But if there is one lesson that I have drawn from the past few weeks, it is that the entire Council has a moral obligation to follow through. So many women in Malakal in South Sudan and in conflict zones around the world are faithfully walking the road to peace but they need to know they are not alone on that road.

I therefore need to ask two final questions. Will we all commit to ensuring that all women have a voice? Will we pay attention to what they are telling us?

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): We commend South Africa for convening this important debate. We welcome the focus of the debate on the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda and on making our common commitment a reality. We congratulate South Africa on its leadership and efforts in bringing about a new resolution on women, peace and security (resolution 2493 (2019)). Poland was pleased to support the resolution adopted today.

The need to include women in peacebuilding, conflict prevention and conflict resolution has been gradually acknowledged by the international arena.

The women, peace and security agenda has been greatly enriched over the past 19 years, including by highlighting the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the great benefits of enhancing the involvement of women in conflict prevention and disarmament initiatives, as well as peace processes, and the absolute necessity to tackle the scourge of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence as a tactic of war. It is also widely understood that women and men have different experiences and needs both during and following conflict and that women have a unique set of challenges related to peacebuilding and security.

There is no doubt that despite such achievements, much remains to be done. There has been a marginal increase in the number of women involved in formal peace talks. Consequently, women's concerns are rarely on the agenda of peace talks. According to UN-Women, in recent years women's participation in negotiating delegations in peace processes supported or tracked by the United Nations has not improved. In 2018, out of six active processes led or jointly led by the United Nations, women were included in 14 out of 19 delegations. Between 1992 and 2018, women constituted 13 per cent of negotiators, 3 per cent of mediators and only 4 per cent of signatories in major peace processes tracked. The meaningful, full and equal participation of women in political processes regarding peace and security is not only about ensuring the equal representation of women and men but also about the quality of their participation. It concerns women's leadership. We need to identify and support policies that strengthen women's voices and women's engagement in decision-making from the initial phase of the peacemaking process to the establishment and development of local and national governmental institutions.

We are aware that there is a huge number of highly qualified women who are adequately prepared and available for high-level positions, including those of negotiators and mediators. A major challenge is to raise the awareness of decision-makers that women's participation provides a great added value and is a crucial element needed to bring about change in post-conflict environments. Realizing that change requires a mind shift by politicians, negotiators and mediators on how they view the role of women in conflict prevention and peacekeeping.

We must not forget that including women in peace efforts is not simply a matter of human rights and

women's empowerment. It is also a security imperative. Evidence shows that security efforts are more successful and sustainable when women contribute to prevention and early warning, as well as peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict resolution and rebuilding. The central role of women in many families and communities affords them a unique vantage point from which they are able to recognize unusual patterns of behaviour and signs of impending conflicts, such as arms mobilization and weapons coaching. Women are well-placed to detect the early signs of radicalization because their rights and physical integrity are often the first targets of fundamentalists.

Including women at the peace table can also increase the likelihood of reaching an agreement, as women are often viewed by negotiating parties as honest brokers. One study found that the substantial inclusion of women and civil society groups in a peace negotiation makes the resulting agreement 64 per cent less likely to fail, and, according to another study, 35 per cent more likely to last at least 15 years. Moreover, women, being disproportionately affected by sexual and gender-based violence, are more likely to advocate for accountability and services for the survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.

As a strong proponent of the women and peace and security agenda, Poland is focused on ensuring the meaningful representation of women in operations and missions abroad and on strengthening their position by increasing their presence in command-and-control structures and leadership roles. One good example is our newly deployed contingent to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), where the Polish contingent will have a 7 per cent female ratio — one of the highest in UNIFIL. We will seek to extend that to the overall mission representation.

If we are serious about our commitment to a more peaceful, sustainable and prosperous world, there is simply no alternative to investing in women, giving them a voice in all relevant decision-making processes and supporting their political and economic empowerment. We need to stop seeing women as merely victims of war but rather look at them instead as leaders for peacemaking and peacekeeping. Finally, we need to reflect on not only what women can do for peace but, even more, on what peace can do for women. Sustainable development and lasting peace are preconditions for women and girls to be able to grow, study, work and use their potential.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank South Africa for organizing this debate and for its unwavering commitment to gender equality. I also thank the Secretary-General and the various briefers for their presentations.

As we approach the commemoration in 2020 of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, and five years since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it is clear to everyone that we remain very far from achieving the goals we have collectively set for ourselves. Those anniversaries will unfortunately not resonate as victories, as the initial progress registered has been brought into doubt by a succession of crises, in which women have often been the primary victims, and by an unacceptable questioning of their rights. Those commemorations should represent an opportunity for us all to reflect on what we can do to concretely translate our commitments into practice. The normative framework is already there — we must implement it.

The review in 2020 of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture will be an important step. Several significant measures have already been undertaken. We welcome the initiatives of UN-Women, which is a driver of change at the United Nations and to which we renew our full support. The Secretary-General's strategy on gender parity is also essential and we must all mobilize to ensure that it is fully implemented. The action plans adopted by the Peacebuilding Commission, the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs should enable the greater participation of women in peace operations and negotiation processes.

Still in 2019, sexual violence continues to be used as a weapon of war. That is intolerable and must no longer be tolerated. As the Secretary-General states in his report (S/2019/800), sexual violence is being used in particular against women who are working for peace and the defence of human rights. The Council must therefore react more vigorously to combat that scourge. I commend the adoption of the action plan of the South Sudanese armed forces to combat sexual violence in conflict. I also welcome the decisions taken by the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel on the matter. Those are encouraging first steps, highlighting in particular how the Council can effectively guide the fight against sexual violence in times of conflict. But

these are only first steps and other examples should be pursued by all.

Resolution 1325 (2000) initiated a movement that now needs to be accelerated. We need to rebuild the consensus that has been weakened this year on the need for concrete action to improve women's participation in peace processes and their protection against sexual violence. In that regard, the perpetrators of sexual violence must no longer enjoy impunity and must all be brought to justice. Resolution 2493 (2019), which we have just adopted, should therefore represent an opportunity to consolidate our achievements and move forward together. We know that when it comes to women's rights, whenever we stop moving forward, we go backwards — we are never at a standstill.

France has made the implementation of resolutions on women and peace and security a strong axis of its action. We have supported initiatives aimed at providing medical, psychological and social support to survivors of sexual violence, such as the initiatives led by Ms. Nadia Murad and Dr. Denis Mukwege to set up a fund to support the survivors of sexual violence. We will also continue to support Panzi Hospital and to provide a full range of health care services, including sexual and reproductive health care, for the victims.

Finally, I wish to remind the Council that in July 2020 in Paris, in partnership with Mexico and UN-Women, France will host the Generation Equality Forum, which intends to give new impetus to women's rights and gender equality. The political and economic autonomy of women, including women's right to freely decide about their own bodies, will be at the heart of the Forum.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Madam President, and your delegation for having convened this important open debate. I also wish to thank the briefers for their valuable presentations and relentless efforts on behalf of the effective implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, both within the United Nations system and in the field.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate the South African delegation on today's adoption of resolution 2493 (2019). We appreciate the efforts made by the delegation of South Africa during the negotiations on the resolution and reiterate the importance of maintaining unity in the Council with regard to issues on women and peace and security. That is a reflection

of our shared belief in the importance of the women and peace and security agenda and the common priority we accord to empowering women and effectively involving them in achieving peace and security throughout the world. In that regard, I should like to highlight a number of fundamental issues.

First, we must promote the achievements made to date and address the remaining challenges as we move towards the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000).

Secondly, we must emphasize the importance of the empowerment of women and gender equality in conflict resolution if we are to achieve sustainable security and peace.

Thirdly, Member States should work in close collaboration with the United Nations towards the effective implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

Over the past 19 years, starting with resolution 1325 (2000), the international community, represented by the Security Council, has developed a robust normative framework to empower women to enjoy their inherent right to participate in achieving peace. We welcome the achievements reached in this regard as 72 per cent of the resolutions adopted by the Security Council in 2018 refer explicitly to issues of women and peace and security. All the missions undertaken by the Council this year included elements pertaining to women and peace and security, including meetings with groups of local women. The United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus is a role model of empowering women in peace missions. The Head of mission is a woman who is one of three responsible women representing the police, military and civilian components of the mission.

Nevertheless, challenges persist in achieving the full participation of women in the area of maintaining international peace and security. One such challenge is the persistence of violence in different manifestations against women, including sexual violence in situations of conflict. The humanitarian needs of women and girls have not been fully met. The representation of women in political processes, peace processes and leadership positions is low.

Next year we will commemorate the anniversaries of many reference frameworks and important events, such as the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing

Declaration and Platform for Action and the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), which stressed the critical importance of the participation of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. All of those anniversaries constitute very important and unique opportunities to synergize efforts and build on the success that has been achieved to date on the women and peace and security agenda, while addressing the challenges that prevent us from achieving that.

The fact that women are deprived of their basic rights and not treated equally in conflict, pre-conflict or post-conflict situations may constitute the main obstacle to the efforts of the international community to implement the women and peace and security agenda with a view to achieving lasting peace. There is no doubt that a lack of gender equality and continued violence against women and girls may increase the possibility of conflict break out.

It is unfortunate and unacceptable that women and girls are disproportionately impacted by conflicts and that their basic rights are violated only because of their gender. That reality is compounded when women are excluded and marginalized in efforts for peacekeeping, peacemaking and sustainable peace, and when they are prevented from truly participating in peace negotiations and peace agreements. It has been proven that the effective participation of women in peace agreements increases the chances that a successful and sustainable outcome will be reached. Undermining the role of women means not only marginalizing them, but also undermining efforts to achieve peace, empower women politically, economically and socially, and strengthen the pillars of security and stability.

We welcome the initiative of Member States in introducing their national action plans on women and peace and security in the lead-up to the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). We reiterate that Member States should shoulder the primary responsibility for ensuring respect for human rights, putting an end to all forms of violence against women and promoting their equal participation in all phases of peacemaking. We also welcome partnerships with the United Nations in building the capacities of Member States to implement the women and peace and security agenda, in line with their national priorities and characteristics. We also commend the role of regional organizations in this regard. In that connection, we also commend the regional women and peace and security

agenda of the League of Arab States, as Arab women have historically played a pivotal role in achieving peace in the Middle East. The State of Kuwait supports that agenda and its implementation.

In conclusion, empowering women, increasing their role and ensuring their effective participation in promoting peace, security, development and stability will undoubtedly contribute to implementing the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

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

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): First of all, I would like to thank South Africa for bringing the Council's attention to the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, which is so dear to Indonesia. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General and the briefers, some of whom have travelled quite far to brief us — namely, Ms. Diop, Ms. Salah and Ms Ekomo. I think that they have provided us with ample additional information on this particular issue.

Indonesia aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Indonesia's foreign policy accords special attention to the issue of women. That was also clearly stated once again yesterday in a policy speech by Mrs. Retno Marsudi, the first female Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, who was just re-elected last week. The issue of women will continue to be a priority for Indonesia in the future. Given that this issue is the focus of our debate in the Chamber today, I would also like to point out something very important — over the past 15 years, more than 50 per cent of the diplomats who have been newly recruited every year in have been women. That will make male ambassadors like me extinct in the near future.

But the good news is that we will have more women diplomats working as mediators and peacekeepers. They are the people who will continue the quest for the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda in the future. While I am proud in that regard, as we approach the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), all of us here should ask ourselves what we have achieved on this particular

agenda. Are we moving forward? How far have we gone in implementing the resolution to which we are proudly committed? I note the latest report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2019/800) and commend the inclusion of women's empowerment and gender equality in most of the agreements reached in peace processes.

However, just as all the briefers have reminded us, the implementation of the agenda has proven challenging. Much still needs to be done. Against that backdrop, allow me to highlight three pertinent points.

First, we need to reaffirm our commitments to accelerating progress on the women and peace and security agenda, which is a strong platform for transforming our words into actions. In many cases, quotas for the representation of women have been in place only in early stages and commitments to maintain such quotas have not endured. Women are in fact not only part of the solution, but have also been influential in serving as a source of inspiration and as facilitators of peace and security. We have experienced that in Indonesia, and we will continue to pursue that agenda. We feel and believe that women can have a positive influence on their communities. We are therefore committed to strengthening the role of women in mitigating social conflict and countering violent extremism. But commitments alone are not enough if they are not coupled with detailed implementation, a legal framework and on-the-ground action. In that regard, we support the need for national action plans.

Secondly, we need to optimize available resources and networks towards a whole-of-United Nations approach, particularly in the current dynamic landscape. In that context, we fully support the initiative of the Global Alliance of Regional Women Mediator Networks, which was launched last month here at the United Nations. We believe that the Alliance can make a significant impact in enhancing women's participation at all levels of peace processes. Indonesia itself has taken the initiative to host in April the regional training on women and peace and security for ASEAN women mediators in order to strengthen their capacities in peace negotiations. We will continue to support such initiatives. Indonesia also established the ASEAN Women for Peace Registry, which is a regional pool of experts to mainstream the role of women in our regional peace agenda.

Thirdly, we should advance the role of women as agents of peace. When women participate in peace processes, the resulting agreement is 35 per cent more likely to last at least 15 years. It therefore makes sense that if we want to resolve conflicts, women must be involved. Indonesia is an enthusiastic supporter of women peacekeepers. They can win the hearts and minds of local communities. Civilians also find greater comfort in them when they seek protection against sexual violence. Indonesia has deployed 128 women peacekeepers among nearly 3,000 Indonesian troops. I am proud to say that when we visited Juba, I met with several of our Indonesian women police peacekeepers who have been serving in South Sudan. We will continue to contribute more. We are currently training several hundred women peacekeepers at our training centre in Sentul, West Java. I would like to echo the President in paying tribute to all our women peacekeepers, including the peacekeeper from South African in this Chamber today. They have done all of us here at the United Nations an honour, and we will continue to support their work.

I once again congratulate us all on our successful adoption today of resolution 2493 (2019), but what is more important is that it is timely as we work to implement our commitments with the support of the available resources, networks and personnel on the ground. We should ensure that its provisions will be fully and faithfully implemented, particularly our joint commitment to promote the full, equal — I emphasize full and equal — and meaningful participation of women in all stages of peace processes. In conclusion, I would like to echo what our Foreign Minister, Mrs. Retno Marsudi, has said on many occasions. She has always reminded me that “investing in women equals investing in peace”. It is time for us all to invest substantially, seriously and generously.

Mr. Moriko (Côte d’Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes the participation of Mrs. Naledi Pandor, Minister for International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa, and Ms. Michelle Müntefering, Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office of Germany, in today’s debate. We thank Secretary-General António Guterres and appreciate the relevance of his assessments. We also appreciate the enriching contributions of the briefers — Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN-Women, Ms. Bineta Diop, African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, Ms. Lina Ekomo, former

Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Central African Republic, on behalf of the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation and the African Women Leaders Network, and Ms. Alaa Salah, Sudanese civil-society activist.

As the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) approaches, it is worrying to see, as the Secretary-General’s report (S/2019/800) indicates, that despite generally encouraging progress, the implementation of the commitments agreed on to increase women’s contribution to peace and security still has not yielded the desired results. Many sociopolitical, economic and cultural constraints continue to hamper women’s full participation in strengthening peace and security, including in many countries affected by armed conflict or emerging from crisis. The fact is that although women are among the primary victims of all types of violence in armed conflicts, they continue to be confined to peripheral roles in negotiations and in strategies for emerging from crisis and peacebuilding, despite their evident added value.

In the light of the achievements of the past 20 years and the challenges that remain, my delegation believes that we must continue efforts to include women in the mechanisms for strengthening peace and security. To that end, it is essential to further open the political space for women in times of both peace and conflict and to ensure their empowerment as agents of economic and social development.

In recognition of the decisive role of women and following our post-electoral crisis, the Government of Côte d’Ivoire has worked to position them at the heart of our national peacebuilding strategy by increasing their representation in our national political parties and political institutions such as the Parliament and the Senate. In that connection, on 16 July the Parliament enacted a law on the representation of women in elected assemblies. Well before that, on 6 March, Parliament decided to grant a subsidy to political parties in which women’s level of representation in elected bodies — in municipal or regional councils, for example — reached 30 per cent.

With regard to women’s contribution to conflict prevention and resolution, the Government contributed to the launch on 26 January 2018 of a national network of women leaders, and in June 2017 committed fully to the creation of the African Women Leaders Network, which seeks to enhance women’s contributions to peace

and stability on the continent. We have also supported women's contribution to peacekeeping operations by including female personnel in Côte d'Ivoire's contingents in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and the Central African Republic.

At the subregional level, my country supports the actions of the Network on Peace and Security for Women in the Region of the Economic Community of West African States, which seeks to coordinate and support women's initiatives and the role of women in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, security and the promotion of human rights, particularly those of women and other vulnerable groups. At the regional level, Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the African Union's commitment to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in the context of a coordinated approach with the regional economic communities. The adoption in March 2018 of the Continental Results Framework, aimed at collecting quantitative and qualitative data on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), has made it possible to coordinate and strengthen major initiatives that have been undertaken, including promoting parity in executive and legislative systems and enhancing the role of women in mediation and prevention strategies.

Ensuring greater participation by women will first require adequate education, health and empowerment opportunities for women and girls. That will make it possible to improve women's social position and therefore their more active participation in all sociopolitical mechanisms for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. In the light of that imperative, Côte d'Ivoire — which is so far still the only country to have been removed from the list annexed to the Secretary-General's reports on sexual violence in armed conflict — attaches particular importance to the empowerment of women. Among other things, that commitment on the part of the Ivorian authorities has materialized in the creation of a Government department dedicated to the empowerment of women and the allocation of funds for financing micro-projects that help women. For example, a social programme adopted by my Government in January with a fund of F727.5 billion, equivalent to \$1.455 billion, places the empowerment of women at the heart of its priorities and reinforces actions already undertaken by the Support Fund for Women of Côte d'Ivoire, which has so far enabled 170,000 women to emerge from poverty by financing their projects.

In conclusion, my delegation urges all actors concerned to take all necessary measures for the

implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and the related subsequent resolutions 1889 (2009), 2122 (2013) and 2242 (2015), which enshrine the fundamental imperative of the role of women in conflict prevention and the restoration of lasting peace and stability.

Mr. Duclos (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank South Africa for convening today's meeting. We are also grateful for this morning's important, detailed and inspiring briefings.

Peru is firmly committed to the women and peace and security agenda, as we are convinced that the leadership and active participation of women as agents of peace in all phases of conflict have a significant impact. The statistics consistently confirm the advantages that the presence of women on the ground brings, particularly in interactions with host societies and in the effective implementation of peaceful ways of settling disputes. That is why we have been discussing the issue since 2000 with a view to establishing a progressive agenda and generating good practices in this area, from the historic original resolution 1325 (2000) to resolution 2493 (2019), which we have just adopted by consensus today. In that connection, we commend and highlight the efforts of the South African delegation to contribute to implementing the international commitments linked to this agenda. Nevertheless, we believe that there are still barriers and challenges to the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, and in that regard, we would like to highlight five central points on which we believe the Council should take sustained action.

First, it should continue to promote greater participation and empowerment of women in peace and national reconciliation processes through its mandates and to monitor compliance with them. The evidence is clear and shows that women's significant participation at all levels of political life reduces the probability of conflict and renders peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations and efforts to defend women's rights far more effective.

Secondly, it is essential to pay due attention to the root causes of conflicts associated with gender inequality and violence, as it facilitates a comprehensive approach to conflict situations. It is also important to take into consideration the different effects of conflict on the protection of women and girls.

Thirdly, with regard to the Secretary-General's recommendations in his latest report (S/2019/800), we

must redouble efforts to integrate gender specialists into political and peacekeeping missions in order to apply that perspective across every level of policy analysis, planning and implementation, including on economic empowerment. We are convinced of the advantages inherent in increasing the number of women Blue Helmets in peace operations, and we are committed to that cause.

Fourthly, it is important to highlight and promote active collaboration between missions and women's civil-society organizations. That also implies increasing the participation of women speakers from civil society in our meetings, as well as making detailed analyses of information from the field in cases that come under the Council's agenda.

Fifthly, we must encourage the effective use of the information and recommendations from the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security, which will enable us to better monitor and coordinate implementation activities, in line with resolution 2242 (2015). Peru is honoured to have held the responsibility of co-chairing the Group since 2018 and to have shared it with Sweden and Germany this year.

In conclusion, I want to affirm Peru's belief that in the current state of affairs, there is no more effective instrument for the promotion of peace and international security than the empowerment of women, which involves recognizing their leadership, promoting their participation in peace processes and ensuring that commitments are given concrete expression on the ground.

Mrs. Mele Colifa (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first like to thank Mrs. Naledi Pandor, Minister for International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, and Ms. Michelle Müntefering, Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany, for honouring us with their presence at this important debate. We would also like to extend a warm welcome to Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN-Women, Ms. Bineta Diop, Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security of the African Union (AU), Ms. Lina Ekomo, former Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Central African Republic, on behalf of FemWise Africa and the African Women Leaders Network, and Ms. Alaa Salah, civil-society activist and community leader. I thank them all for their informative briefings.

We applaud South Africa's initiative with regard to resolution 2493 (2019), on women, peace and security, which we have just adopted, as it is crucial to the advancement of the implementation of this important agenda.

Equatorial Guinea acknowledges the importance of gender equality and actively promotes the participation of women in all sectors. However, we note with concern the Secretary-General's latest reports on women and peace and security (S/2019/800) and on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2019/280). As the speakers' accounts have illustrated, despite the achievements that have been registered, there is still much to be done to ensure the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. In that regard, we support the Secretary-General's new strategy for achieving gender parity among uniformed personnel in peace operations by 2020, and we encourage continued support for efforts to implement it.

As has been acknowledged many times in this Chamber, we all agree with the initiative to improve the quality and scope of the Security Council's work in situations of armed conflict. Under the presidency of Equatorial Guinea in February, the Council unanimously approved resolution 2457 (2019) on silencing the guns in Africa by 2020. The spirit of that resolution is broadly reflected in the goal of gender parity, in the objectives of the resolution we have just adopted and in resolution 2467 (2019), adopted in April under the leadership of Germany and intended to promote the prevention and elimination of conflict-related sexual violence. In that perspective, we reiterate the importance of strengthening the relevant training guidelines issued prior to and during peacekeeping operations to ensure the effectiveness of missions and the protection of civilians, especially the most vulnerable, from any abuse and its consequences.

In that connection, we recognize the impact that armed conflicts have on society's most vulnerable members, typically women and girls, who, despite often being the victims of horrible acts, have repeatedly demonstrated their ability to contribute, to peace and security efforts and to peacebuilding and prevention at every level. That is why we recognize United Nations efforts to support those crucial groupings and enhance their visibility, and to make clear the direct relationship between gender equality, resilience and conflict prevention. In that regard, we want to highlight the high-level visit to Afghanistan led by

Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and the joint trips with the AU to South Sudan, the Sahel, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Niger and Chad, and the visit to Cameroon in April this year. They serve to highlight the efforts of States to combat impunity, ensure accountability and achieve gender equality, while always respecting State sovereignty.

The Council has recognized the linkages between inequality, gender discrimination and conflict-related sexual violence, on the one hand, and violent extremism and terrorism, on the other. In our view, the equality required to tackle the root causes of conflicts and their increasing complexity goes well beyond gender equality. It also encompasses and reflects the need to ensure equality among States and the right of all States to sustainable development. For that reason, I would like to acknowledge the commitment and dedication to mainstreaming this agenda that have been shown by the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. We also want to encourage the strategic initiatives under the framework of cooperation agreement with the African Union Commission on preventing and responding to sexual violence in conflict in Africa, which are bolstered by the support of UN-Women, the African Women Leaders Network and FemWise-Africa.

Since Africa is the continent with the most peacekeeping missions, it needs the cooperation of the international community to ensure the implementation of Security Council resolutions, especially those relating to an agenda as important as women and peace and security. That cooperation will be particularly important for the adoption of the draft resolution on financing peacekeeping operations in Africa that is pending before the Council and which the Republic of Equatorial Guinea hopes to see adopted before the end of the year. Enhanced cooperation between the Security Council and the African Peace and Security Architecture of the African Union, which in turn strengthens subregional initiatives for the implementation of Council resolutions aimed at advancing the women and peace and security agenda, among other things, is an example of the kind of alliance that should receive continued and more predictable support.

I would like to take this opportunity, as Equatorial Guinea's membership of the Council draws to a close, to thank Council members for their leadership and commitment to the implementation of the women and

peace and security agenda. In 2020 we will celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the tenth anniversary of the founding of UN-Women, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the seventy-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations. In that regard, we urge Council members to continue working together to fully mainstream the role of women in conflict resolution, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and sustainable development.

Mr. Kuzmin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, we would like to express our gratitude for the convening of today's meeting. We thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his assessment of progress in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. We listened with interest to the briefing by Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN-Women, on the Secretariat's contribution to enhancing the role of women in preventing and settling armed conflicts, and the remaining challenges in that area, as well as to what the invited speakers had to say about their work on the ground.

Today's discussion confirms the relevance of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), adopted almost two decades ago. A very important part of the Council's work in implementing that resolution is enhancing the role and contribution of women in peace processes and their protection from the violence they continue to face in situations of armed conflict. It is chiefly women who are the victims of sexual violence, which is often used as a tactic of war. We are outraged by cases in which women are used as a kind of human commodity to raise funds for terrorist and criminal activities. We call on the specialized agencies of the United Nations system to coordinate more closely with the Security Council in order to stamp out abhorrent practices such as sexual violence and human trafficking in armed conflict.

We believe it is vital to avoid duplication in the work of the various organs of the Organization and to focus on situations that present an unquestionable threat to international peace and security, in accordance with the prerogatives of the Security Council. It is important to remember that the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission are also part of the efforts to advance the role of women, protect their rights and ensure gender equality.

The Russian Federation calls for concentrating on specific measures in the interests of women in armed conflict. That particularly has to do with developing national action plans that should be specific to particular situations of armed conflict, which makes for instruments that are useful and effective instruments and not just another paper pronouncement. The adoption of such plans on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), especially when they are simply intended to meet reporting requirements and tick boxes, cannot serve as a criterion for assessing countries' policies on improving the position of women.

If the existing problems in this area are to be effectively resolved, women themselves have to be effectively involved. We are grateful to the Secretary-General in that regard for his continued attention to the problems of expanding women's meaningful participation and involvement of women in peacekeeping operations, peace negotiations and political processes in general. Russia is a stalwart partner of the United Nations in the business of preparing peacekeepers, including women, in certified training centres, and we are actively involved in that cooperation through the All-Russia Peacekeeping Training Centre of our Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Domodedovo, which also trains foreign specialists.

Today we supported the adoption of resolution 2493 (2019), prepared by South Africa, in our firm belief in the importance of protecting and promoting the rights of women in situations of armed conflict. However, we feel obliged to point out that the resolution contains a number of provisions that go beyond the Security Council's mandate. It is overloaded with issues relating to the protection and promotion of human rights, which the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council already deal with successfully and effectively. We urge the Security Council to adhere strictly to its mandate, and we do not support attempts to justify its interference in matters that are part of the remit of other organs.

In conclusion, we also feel obliged to share our assessment of the first years of the activity of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security, which is mentioned in the resolution we adopted today. We are compelled to conclude that that Group has not fully succeeded in becoming a coordinating link in the chain of the work in this area. It has been unable to avoid a certain degree of politicization in its work or to develop genuinely transparent and democratic procedures for reaching and adopting decisions, which is an

essential condition for sustaining dialogue between Governments on such an important subject. It will be crucial to address these shortcomings in order to meet the expectations of States that are dealing with conflict.

We are ready to cooperate constructively with all interested States on the harmonious promotion of the subject of women on the Council's agenda. In October of next year we will mark the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). We must reach that anniversary from a position of solidarity that demonstrates the Council's significant achievements and unity.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway.

Ms. Søreide (Norway): I am speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries — Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and my own country, Norway. I would like to thank South Africa for initiating today's debate and for bringing women peacebuilders to this Chamber.

To understand conflicts, we need to understand how they affect both women and men, and to solve conflicts, we need to mobilize women. Women and men have exactly the same right to take part in decisions concerning their future. As Nobel Peace Prize laureate Leymah Gbowee has so eloquently said, if women are not observers to conflict, why should they be observers to peace? We know that inclusive peace processes have better odds of creating lasting peace.

The Nordic countries welcome the emphasis in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/800) on women's meaningful participation in preventing conflict and sustaining peace. It is now critical to ensure a concrete and practical follow-up. We will do our part, nationally and multilaterally. The launch in September of the Global Alliance of Regional Women Mediator Networks was quite a milestone. The Alliance not only highlights the large number of women with substantial and varied experience in the field of peace and security, it also shows their commitment to participating in and leading such processes. We encourage other countries to join the Commitment 2025 initiative on women's inclusion in peace processes, which was launched during the United Nations high-level week in September. We also urge the Security Council to ensure that the situation and roles of women are reflected in its resolutions and mission mandates.

Inclusion is also about including a variety of women — rural and urban, young and elderly, differently abled, indigenous women and women of different sexual orientations. We are concerned about the widespread violence and repression that women peacebuilders and human rights defenders face, as well as the persistent impunity for such violence. These women's rights and security are essential to democracy and peace. Supporting women working on the front lines for peace is essential. Here I would like to highlight the work of the International Civil Society Action Network, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders.

Research continues to link gender-based violence and gender inequality to the level of a society's vulnerability to civil war and conflict. More must be done to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, including conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence. We must counter attacks on women's full and equal enjoyment of human rights, ensure sexual and reproductive health rights and strengthen services for survivors of sexual violence. We strongly support the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and welcome the International Fund for Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence led by Dr. Denis Mukwege and Ms. Nadia Murad. In my national capacity as Norway's Foreign Minister, I would like to announce that we will support the Fund. I would also like to draw the Council's attention to the recently launched Women, Peace and Security Index, which measures women's situations globally in three key areas — inclusion, justice and security.

Lastly, the handbook on prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence for use in United Nations operations is forthcoming. In fact, it should be available tomorrow.

We are focusing a lot of our attention on resolutions. I think we need to focus equally on the implementation of resolutions. With the support of a non-governmental organization, the Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, and others, South Africa was able to secure language on the full implementation of former resolutions in resolution 2493 (2019), which we adopted today. While we want to see stronger commitments to safeguarding and enabling women human rights defenders and peacebuilders, their role is now recognized, as are States' responsibilities towards them. We were a sponsor of resolution 2493 (2019) and

congratulate South Africa and the Council on reaching a consensus vote.

In conclusion, the Nordic countries call on the Security Council to preserve and build on the cross-regional consensus that has been a trademark of the women and peace and security agenda. There should be full agreement around this table on the simple fact that women's participation is needed to achieve sustainable peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden.

Ms. Linde (Sweden): The adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) in October 2000 was a true milestone. It reformed the way we see and conduct conflict analysis and engage in peacekeeping. It was an answer to generations of women who had been neglected as peacemakers, negotiators, mediators and parties to conflicts. Since then, deepened commitments by the United Nations system and Member States, along with important local, regional and international initiatives, have moved the agenda forward, but we still have a long way to go.

I would like to thank South Africa for organizing today's debate and for the strong focus on implementation. As portrayed in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/800), the challenges are profound. To deliver more sustainable results, we need leadership that keeps women's rights and participation at the top of the agenda, as well as the implementation of concrete steps that matter in the field and accountability to make sure that decisions are acted on. I would like to elaborate briefly on each of those three components.

First, strong leadership is key to achieving full integration. As Member States and as an organization, we in the United Nations must take concrete steps forward in 2020. We must counter attacks on women's human rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, and we must defend our multilateral achievements. Resources need to be committed and messages need to be clear.

Secondly, with respect to implementation, practical measures must be taken by national Governments, multilateral institutions and individual missions. A gender perspective should influence our work, what we talk about and our next steps. We need a gender perspective in conflict analysis and the inclusion of sex-disaggregated data in all reporting. We welcome

the renewed commitments made by the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) to adopting an integrated gender perspective in all of its work, and we fully support the suggestions presented by the Chair of the PBC to the Security Council today.

Thirdly, with regard to accountability, we need clearly defined responsibilities to implement the full women and peace and security agenda. Follow-up is essential to ensuring that analysis and data reflect realities on the ground. Member States must have strategies for women's participation in peace processes and decision-making bodies. The prevention and prosecution of conflict-related sexual violence must be central to peace efforts. I particularly want to stress the role of civil society. During Sweden's time on the Security Council, more representatives of civil society were invited to brief the Council than ever before, which resulted in more inclusive and better-informed discussions. Yesterday, in our Multi-stakeholder Forum on Women, Peace and Security, civil-society organizations expressed great concern about the fact that progress on the women and peace and security agenda is slowing down. They also stressed worries about evidence of increased hostility towards members of civil society in this arena, especially women human rights defenders. Member States, and Security Council members in particular, should take concrete steps to implement decisions and include civil-society representatives as partners. Not the least of these aspects is civil society's untapped potential for playing a role in preventing conflict through early warning.

As we speak of the importance of civil society and strong political leadership, I would like to highlight the recent developments in the Sudan. As we heard from Ms. Salah, Sudanese women's strong participation was critical in the movement for change. We are encouraged

by the emphasis on women's participation by the new Government. We should all stand ready to support the Sudanese people as they move forward on that path.

It is impossible not to mention what is happening in north-east Syria. After years of defending their homes and our countries against the terrorist sect Islamic State/Da'esh, the women and men that make up that region's ethnic and cultural mosaic are now suffering the consequences of the Turkish military offensive. We know that women are among those hardest hit by conflict, but in the fight against Da'esh they have also been the ones fighting on the front lines. That is especially true for Kurdish women. We have a moral obligation to stand up for them in times like these. After more than eight years of conflict, for which the Syrian regime bears the overwhelming responsibility, Syria and the region need peace. Sweden reiterates its support for the United Nations-led political process, the only path that can lead to sustainable peace.

Finally, let me express my appreciation for the specific commitments in the Secretary-General's report (S/2019/800). Many of the recommendations Sweden put forward after two years as a non-permanent member of the Security Council are addressed in the report. I am proud of Sweden's contribution to the women and peace and security agenda during our time on the Council. Let me assure the Council that Sweden will continue to champion these issues in close coordination with members and other partners.

The President: There are still a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting. Given the lateness of the hour, I intend, with the concurrence of the members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.20 p.m.