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Tuesday, 8 March 2022, 9 a.m.

New York

<i>President:</i>	Ms. Almheiri/Mr. Abushahab	(United Arab Emirates)
<i>Members:</i>	Albania	Mr. Hoxha
	Brazil	Mrs. Espeschit Maia
	China	Mr. Zhang Jun/Mrs. Gui Dan
	France	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
	Gabon	Mrs. Ngyema Ndong
	Ghana	Ms. Oppong-Ntiri
	India	Mr. Verma
	Ireland	Mr. Coveney
	Kenya	Mr. Kiboino
	Mexico	Ms. Delgado Peralta
	Norway	Ms. Juul
	Russian Federation	Mr. Kuzmin
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
	United States of America	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield

Agenda

Women and peace and security

Women's economic inclusion and participation as a key to building peace

Letter dated 1 March 2022 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2022/175)

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The meeting was called to order at 9.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Women and peace and security

Women's economic inclusion and participation as a key to building peace

Letter dated 1 March 2022 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2022/175)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Argentina, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Indonesia, Iraq, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, the Maldives, Malta, Morocco, Nepal, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, 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. Sima Bahous, Executive Director, UN-Women; Ms. Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director, International Monetary Fund; and Ms. Moussokoro Coulibaly, civil society briever.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I also invite His Excellency Mr. Silvio Gonzato, Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

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/2022/175, which contains a letter dated 1 March 2022 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

I now give the floor to Ms. Bahous.

Ms. Bahous: I thank Her Excellency Ms. Mariam Almheiri, United Arab Emirates Minister of Climate Change and Environment, and Her Excellency Ambassador Lana Nusseibeh for their leadership and for prioritizing a discussion on women, peace and security on the Council's agenda on International Women's Day. I wish everyone a happy International Women's Day.

When the pandemic emptied the Chamber almost two years ago, the Secretary-General called for a global ceasefire. There was hope that, in the face of a common enemy, there would be renewed international cooperation and that, instead of spending money on weapons, we would invest in science, health and social protection for all, especially for women and girls.

Instead, we got more military spending, military coups, seizures of power by force and a multilateral system against the ropes. This very Council has spent the past 10 days in multiple emergency meetings on the situation in Ukraine. As the Secretary-General has said, people demand peace. We must give peace a chance.

We also lost gains that took us decades to achieve, especially on gender equality. We have fewer than nine years to go until 2030, yet we are not on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

The coronavirus disease has further set us back across those Goals, including on gender equality, poverty and climate. International Women's Day is a day for reflection, renewed hope and increased action. Today, we have an opportunity to do things differently. It is clear to me, now more than ever before, that we need another model of leadership on this issue.

One of the least discussed elements of our agenda is women's inclusion in economic recovery as an essential element in our pursuit of peace. Study after study shows that investing in women's economic empowerment yields enormous dividends for both peace and prosperity, and that countries in which women are economically marginalized and shut out of the workforce are much more likely to go to war. We know that women are more likely to spend their income on family needs and make a larger contribution to recovery, and yet, large-scale reconstruction and investments after conflict are dominated by men and overwhelmingly benefit men, while exclusion, discrimination and antiquated gender norms keep women away from employment, land, property, inheritance, credit and technology. That script plays out across all conflict zones and situations on the agenda of the Security Council.

In Afghanistan, we are rightly concerned about humanitarian aid and frozen assets, but the consequences of a new gender apartheid include women's employment plummeting sharply since the Taliban takeover. In Yemen, enduring the world's largest humanitarian emergency, closing gender gaps in women's participation in the workforce would have increased Yemen's gross domestic product by 27 per cent. More than half of the World Bank's fragile and conflict-affected countries are in sub-Saharan Africa, where economic losses due to gender inequality stand at \$2.5 trillion. Not many conflict-affected countries have data on women's land ownership, but those with that data show that it remains very low. In Mali, it is just 3 per cent.

In Haiti, where more than 45 per cent of households are headed by women, the pandemic led to a 24 per cent decrease in women's employment. Yet, as in many other countries, the strategies to address the economic fallout of the crisis remain largely gender-blind. In Ukraine, humanitarian needs are multiplying and spreading by the hour. Among the nearly 1.5 million people who have fled, the majority are women and children. Here, too, we risk the backsliding of women's rights and women's access to employment and livelihoods.

Many of the women activists who have been invited to speak before the Security Council have told us that the private sector and private actors, including multinational corporations, are often part of the problem when they could be part of the solution. That is the case not just in extractive industries and large agribusinesses, but increasingly on telecommunications platforms. They have a major role to play in facilitating inclusion and preventing hate speech and targeted reprisals.

The solution, therefore, is clear. We need more engagement, greater accountability and shared responsibility. The Security Council can say much more about women's economic inclusion. Some of the resolutions that cover women and peace and security most comprehensively, such as resolutions on the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, have several paragraphs on economic security, development issues and the illegal exploitation of natural resources that tend to be gender-blind. The Security Council could use such resolutions to call for women's meaningful engagement and inclusion not only in peacebuilding, conflict prevention and recovery, but also in decision-making, as well as in the prioritization of women-led businesses, women

in front-line service delivery and support for the care economy in all reconstruction and recovery initiatives.

I welcome today's focus on the role of the private sector and private-public partnerships as an underexplored area for innovation. I would like to share two examples of global initiatives in the area of women and peace and security, where we invite the private sector to play a larger role in women's peacebuilding work.

One example is the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, which has funded more than 500 women's organizations in more than 26 countries since 2016. I am pleased that we have Ms. Coulibaly joining us today from Mali to share her invaluable perspective as a partner of the Fund. We put considerable effort into bringing the private sector along, both as donors and as pro-bono partners, but there is much more that can be done to multiply fivefold the financing for women's organizations in crisis settings by 2030, as requested by the Secretary-General.

Secondly, as part of Generation Equality Forum, we now have a Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, a multi-stakeholder initiative that aims to move the needle on the issue over the next five years. That includes strengthening social protection mechanisms, promoting women-owned social enterprises and businesses, addressing discriminatory legislation and practices that hinder women's economic empowerment and ensuring that gender equality is a priority in national, regional and global peace and development strategies. The Compact has 158 signatories thus far, including several members of the Council. However, we need to do more to reach out to multilateral development banks and the private sector.

There are many other ways in which private sector actors can be champions of change. If engaged meaningfully, they can play a positive role in creating sustainable peace in support of the women and peace and security agenda.

We have the blueprint and the business case to support women's economic inclusion. What we need now is the political will to pursue it. I look forward to working with the Council on the issue and to deepening our investments in women and peace and security.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Georgieva.

Ms. Georgieva: I convey my apologies for not being physically present with Council members, but I am so thrilled that, on International Women's Day, the Security Council has decided to concentrate on the role of women in peace and security.

I would like to explicitly recognize Her Excellency Ms. Mariam Almheiri for presiding over today's meeting. I would also like to express my gratitude to Sima Bahous for her leadership of UN-Women, her excellent remarks and our growing collaboration.

What we do today matters to the hundreds of millions of women living in conflict and fragility. It is an opportune time to reflect on the strength and power of women in the face of war and destruction. Tragically, in far too many places, that strength is being relentlessly tested. My heart goes out to all women bracing against the horrors of war, protecting their children, caring for the wounded and sacrificing for their countries, communities and families. Today, that is the fate of our sisters in Ukraine. We admire their courage. We share their pain. We stand with them. We support them.

We know that women bear disproportionately the devastation of wars, and yet we also know that women are the best hope for peace. In the words of Zainab Salbi, like life, peace begins with women. We are the first to forge lines of alliance and collaboration as conflict divides.

Today I would like to make three points.

First, crises, be they conflicts, pandemics or more traditional economic and financial crises, threaten to set back years of progress in gender equality, therefore slowing down progress in development. During the pandemic, globally twice as many women as men lost their jobs, owing to the kind of employment they hold, lost social protections and often the burden of childcare, care for family members — unpaid work.

Let us recall that women have a 20 per cent lower labour-market participation than men to begin with. We also have seen tremendous learning losses. We calculate that over the lifetime of the generations affected by the pandemic, \$17 trillion will be lost because of that lack of educational attainment. More dramatic is the fate of girls. We know that 20 million girls in developing countries may never return to school, and that means that they are excluded from life's opportunities forever — for the duration of their lives.

We also have seen during the pandemic gender-based violence rear its ugly head again. And, of course, we know that this leads to serious socioeconomic consequences; we have calculated those consequences.

But I also want to talk about the positive side. As dramatic as those effects are, we need to remember that overcoming them can be a massive injection of prosperity for countries. Empowering women and reducing gender inequality in fragile or conflict situations in particular can have powerful economic benefits. If sub-Saharan African countries reduced their level of gender-based violence to closer to the world average, they could see long-term gross domestic product gains of around 30 per cent — well-being for everyone.

That brings me to my second point. Gender equality is critical for growth, resilience and socioeconomic stability. It matters tremendously when women and girls can reach their full potential. They do better, their families do better, their countries do better, for the benefit of everyone. Our analysis shows that improving gender equality can increase economic growth quite significantly, strengthen the resilience of families, communities and countries, enhance financial stability and reduce income inequality. We know that societies with more gender equality tend to be more resistant to violence and conflict.

The equal participation of women in socioeconomic life is essential to preventing conflict and helping to transition out of fragility. When women participate in peace negotiations and in State-building processes, the prospects for building resilience and enduring peace and for inclusive and prosperous societies significantly improves. The Security Council has such an important role in promoting women's inclusion in peacebuilding.

Yet too often women remain underrepresented and excluded from decision-making processes. To change that, we need all hands on deck. We need international organizations, we need Governments, we need the private sector, as we heard, so that we can have a chance to reduce fragility by closing gender gaps to improve prospects for development.

That takes me to my third point: we all have responsibility to bear, and that applies to my institution, the International Monetary Fund (IMF). I want to report to the Council that we are relentlessly focusing on helping our members design and implement economic and financial policies to ensure greater resilience and growth. We are zeroing in on social spending, which

is an efficient and effective way to allow for better education for boys and girls, better health care, better social protections and, as a result, stronger societies.

We believe that a country-tailored approach is vital, so in our new strategy on gender that we will bring to our Board this spring, as well as in our fragile and conflict-affected States strategy, which we will present to the IMF Board tomorrow, we explicitly emphasize the role of gender equality. We see country engagement strategies based on contributions from society where the voices of women are heard, which is a major factor for us in helping our members deal with drivers of fragility such as gender equality, climate change, forced displacement and food insecurity.

We are very keen to work with our partners — humanitarian, development, peace and security actors; 25 per cent of our members are conflict- or fragility-affected States. We need to work with the Council and with everyone to be successful in those countries.

Let me conclude with this thought. Women and girls are themselves powerful agents of change. They help society transition from fragility to stability. They are the foundation for a better future for all; we saw that in peace processes from Northern Ireland to Colombia and in places such as Liberia, where a women's movement helped bring an end to the civil war.

I would say, therefore, to all women and girls to believe in themselves, to dare to reach their full potential. They have the power to forge a brighter future for our societies, for our economies, for our world. All the power in the hands of women means a prosperous world for all.

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

I give the floor to Ms. Coulibaly.

Ms. Coulibaly (*spoke in French*): I would like to at the outset to thank you, Madam President, for giving me this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the importance of women's empowerment for peace and security and the role that the private sector can play to support women in the building of peace and stability.

My name is Sidibé Moussokoro Coulibaly. I am the President of the Network of Women Economic Agents in the Ségou region of Mali. The network's goal is to promote women's and girls' rights and to support them in achieving economic recovery and in investing

in efforts towards peace and social cohesion in Mali. We have 7,847 women members, and we work with 120 women's organizations locally as well as various women's groups.

As all present are certainly aware, Mali has since 2012 been facing a security, institutional and economic conflict aggravated by the consequences of the coronavirus disease pandemic. As in the vast majority of conflicts, the complex crisis in Mali, which has lasted for so many years, has had disastrous consequences on the living conditions of the people, their communities and their families.

We know that without economic development, there can be no lasting peace. We also know that investing in women's economic empowerment generates short- and long-term social dividends and increases women's participation in decision-making and conflict resolution. During and after conflict, there is a sharp increase in the number of households managed by women. It is through their efforts that our communities and families have remained resilient and supportive despite the extremely difficult situation.

And yet women are still being left out. Like most of our sisters and daughters living in conflict-affected areas, we live in a context where socioeconomic constraints are still significant. Social and cultural norms are unfortunately used to justify harmful practices against women's rights.

The activities and income of women economic operators have decreased and are unstable, and many of us have lost our capital and investments. We have difficulties in gaining access to factors of production, financing and stable employment. These difficulties are accentuated by the lack of financial resources adapted to the types of activities women economic operators engage in and to their specific needs as women economic operators, especially in the context of conflict. All these factors hinder our participation in public decision-making, including in decisions that affect us.

These challenges do not scare us. We are the pillars of our families and our communities. We play a role in building peace. Wherever we are active, we have invested in social cohesion within our communities, in local conflict-resolution initiatives, in receiving internally displaced persons and survivors of gender-based violence, in educating children and in raising awareness about non-violence and peace.

Our network works to facilitate connections with financial partners, including banks and microfinance institutions, and to ensure a dialogue between them and women so that their services are better adapted to our needs. A tangible example of this is the women's financing project, which has organized round tables with financial institutions in the Ségou region. From 2012 to 2019, dialogues between banks and microfinance institutions facilitated the granting of credit to 200 women to realize their business plans in seven localities of the Segou region, in the areas of agro-food processing, agriculture, marketing and crafts. This has enabled many beneficiaries to leave the informal sector to formalize their activities and become integrated under private sector umbrella organizations.

Thanks to their self-confidence and their contribution to their families and the local economy, they have gained recognition from their communities. Many of them are now members of local development and conflict-resolution committees, local gender committees, and some have been elected as commune councillors in their localities. This shows that by giving women a voice, by trusting them and by facilitating dialogue with financial partners — by mobilizing locally available resources — we can achieve remarkable results.

We recognize the contribution of the United Nations to the rights and empowerment of women in conflict-affected countries like mine. In particular, we salute the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund and UN-Women, as well as all the donors who assist us. The efforts remain insufficient, but we must recognize the importance of women's economic empowerment for peacebuilding and for protecting their rights and dignity.

We must also mobilize national and international private sector actors to encourage women's effective participation in economic development for a more inclusive and sustainable peace. Without economic empowerment, there will be less participation and leadership of women in decision-making and greater violence.

It is imperative that women's economic empowerment be integrated into resolutions, peace treaties and programmes for sustainable peace. It is therefore recommended that the United Nations, the international community and private sector actors do the following: facilitate women's and women's

organizations' access to sustainable and flexible financing that takes into account crisis contexts as well as access to equipment in the economic sectors where women are most active, keeping in mind that access to financing is central to us and can also be facilitated by setting up funds adapted to provide guarantees; assist Governments in the development and implementation of policies and programmes that promote women's economic empowerment by developing women-owned businesses and providing tax and procurement facilities, including periodic consultations between United Nations representatives, local women's organizations, women leaders and marginalized women's groups on the development of social and economic plans at the international, national and local levels; support dialogue between the private sector and women's organizations to better understand the structural challenges facing women in financing the building of multifunctional women's centres to serve as sites of production, training, digitalization and which counter obstacles to women's participation by offering such social services as schools and day-care centres for children and reproductive-health services; and finance advocacy activities by women's organizations to strengthen women's movements and their leadership and influence.

I am transmitting this message to the Council with all my heart. If members wish to support my country and build peace and stability in the world, they should help women participate in economic recovery for a more inclusive and sustainable peace. If women have income and create jobs, they will contribute to caring for their families, prevent conflicts, ease tensions, participate in young people's futures and create conditions for united, sustainable and inclusive peace and development. The Council should support us in having our voice heard where decisions are made because that is how we will build and affirm our transformative leadership in favour of peace. In Ségou, we say that someone's head cannot be shaved in their absence.

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

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Minister for Climate Change and Environment of the United Arab Emirates.

I am greatly honoured to preside over this open date today, in particular on the occasion of International Women's Day. I thank Ms. Sima Bahous for her insightful briefing and the work of

UN-Women. I also thank Ms. Kristalina Georgieva and Ms. Moussokoro Coulibaly for their briefings and for sharing their experiences, commitment and concrete recommendations on how the international community can strengthen women's economic inclusion in fragile settings. I offer special thanks to the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund for its dedication in supporting Ms. Coulibaly's participation today. I also welcome my fellow Ministers and thank them for joining us today.

As we have heard today, despite significant progress, persistent gaps and challenges in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda still hinder women's full, equal and meaningful participation. Women are critical to recovery and relief efforts, yet their inclusion remains undervalued and their access to opportunities, resources and markets remains limited. The McKinsey Global Institute estimated that global gross domestic product could increase by \$28 trillion — or 26 per cent — by 2025 by reducing gender gaps in the workforce and increasing presence in leadership positions, yet women are still excluded despite that vital potential for growth. Women must not only benefit from sustainable post-conflict recovery; they must be in the driver's seat as planners, decision-makers and implementers in all sectors of society to ensure sustainable peacebuilding.

Since the adoption of the landmark resolution 1325 (2000), the private sector's role in advancing collective public goods has increased exponentially. From combating climate change to responding to humanitarian crises and addressing pandemics and health emergencies, the private sector is a key partner. It would be self-defeating to minimize or neglect the private sector's role in realizing the transformative goals of the women and peace and security agenda. Public-private partnerships can leverage their unique and multidimensional roles in communities, not only to improve women's individual livelihoods, autonomy and self-sufficiency in fragile settings, but also to strengthen women's opportunities to engage fully, equally and meaningfully in their communities and to rebuild their nations.

The United Arab Emirates would like to propose four recommendations for Member States, the United Nations and the private sector to better empower and support women in conflict-affected settings.

First, in order to rebuild sustainable, inclusive and equitable societies, women and girls must be at

the centre of post-conflict economic reform efforts. That calls for greater inclusion of women and women's organizations in designing economic recovery plans, adopting enabling legal and regulatory frameworks and setting benchmarks to incentivize the allocation of resources towards women's economic inclusion. As a founding member of the Women Entrepreneurs Financing Initiative — a multi-donor trust fund — the United Arab Emirates has contributed \$50 million in support of around 300,000 women entrepreneurs gaining access to finance, market and networks in countries such as Iraq, Yemen and Ethiopia.

Secondly, all relevant stakeholders need to better understand and leverage the interplay with one another. For example, Member States, the United Nations and local women's organizations can play a critical role in connecting the private sector to local women in conflict-affected communities. They can ensure that trade delegations, business round tables and conventions include private sector representatives with aspiring women entrepreneurs from crisis-affected areas. Multi-stakeholder platforms, such as the Generation Equality Forum's Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, could support such links at the regional and local levels.

Thirdly, as the private sector benefits from stable and peaceful societies, so too must it contribute to the emergence of those societies. The private sector can effectively be part of that by integrating opportunities for social entrepreneurship, which would ensure that their operations benefit the communities' interests. That must include women's full, equal and meaningful participation, as that is a key pillar in ensuring sustainable peaceful societies.

Finally, we must ensure that women have equal access to all services that enable them to participate in the economy. Together, the public and private sectors offer a wide array of resources that support women's economic inclusion, such as access to digital technologies, capacity-building in financial literacy and vocational education. Throughout the past two years of the pandemic, we have seen once again that technology is a gateway to public spaces and markets. The digital divide risks undermining those opportunities. We must ensure that women enjoy access to that crucial tool in securing their livelihoods.

In conclusion, peacebuilding is a unique opportunity to re-evaluate priorities, redesign the social contracts

of communities ravaged by conflict and promote initiatives that bring about social change. That is not an issue that can be addressed solely by Governments or multilateral institutions or companies alone. It must be a collective effort, pursued in a consistent manner. The United Arab Emirates looks forward to continuing this discussion with our briefers, fellow Member States, the private sector and all relevant stakeholders.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defence of Ireland.

Mr. Coveney (Ireland): I am pleased to join you here today, Madam, under the Emirati presidency, on International Women's Day. We commend the United Arab Emirates, along with the Niger, Albania and Norway, for continuing the women and peace and security presidency initiative that Ireland formed with Kenya and Mexico last year. The continued focus on the women and peace and security agenda by members of the Council reaffirms its centrality to international peace and security. Cooperation among members is crucial if we are to protect and advance that agenda further.

My thanks also to the briefers: Ms. Coulibaly, whose perspective from her work on the ground was illuminating, Executive Director Bahous and Managing Director Georgieva.

The eyes of the world are currently on Ukraine and our thoughts are with its people, including vulnerable women and girls, who are facing trauma and hardship, huddled together in makeshift bomb shelters, trapped in cities brutalized by war or as refugees fleeing conflict and violence within Ukraine or crossing borders in their hundreds of thousands. The Russian Federation, through its decision to launch an unjustified and illegal attack, violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, has created a humanitarian catastrophe in Europe, the likes of which we have not seen for many, many decades. Ireland strongly condemns the Russian Federation's further invasion of Ukraine and its flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the core principles of international law.

We stand firmly with the people of Ukraine. Today, on International Women's Day, we want the women and girls of Ukraine to know that we salute their resilience and courage. The conflict is having a severe and

disproportionate impact on them. We stand with them now and into the future.

The international community and the Council in particular have a responsibility to act to uphold the rights of all women at risk due to conflict, wherever that conflict may be taking place. We must never forget or downplay that duty.

The topic of today's debate is an important one, and I would like to focus my intervention on three points: first, delivering on our commitments to the women and peace and security agenda; secondly, working together to realize those aims; and thirdly, strengthening the agenda's relief and recovery pillar.

First, to fulfil the promise of resolution 1325 (2000), we must protect and fortify the women and peace and security agenda. Let us be clear — women's rights are human rights. They are universal, interdependent and indivisible. Today's debate reminds us of the gaps that remain between the aims of the agenda and the reality that we see on the ground. Those gaps widened further during the coronavirus disease pandemic and afterwards. Women have been carrying disproportionate burdens across the board, as has just been pointed out to us by our briefers, and we know that women's economic empowerment is truly achievable only alongside their political and social empowerment as well.

We must acknowledge that advancing women's economic participation is not a panacea in itself. Twenty-one years on, the core of the women and peace and security agenda is seriously challenged, even at this Council table.

We gather here on International Women's Day. On this day last year, Mexico and Ireland co-hosted an Arria formula meeting on ensuring the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in United Nations-led peace processes. That meeting conveyed the clear message that women need to be directly and substantively involved in United Nations-led peace and political processes.

The past year has made clear that we have yet to achieve that objective. Regrettably, equality advocates still find themselves fighting to break down the societal and structural barriers that prevent women from assuming their rightful place at the negotiating and decision-making tables.

Shockingly, conflict-related sexual violence remains a weapon of war that is deliberately used.

Survivors still struggle for justice and for their rights to be supported in post-traumatic situations. We know how quickly gains, including economic gains, can be eroded when the political tide turns.

Today, we need only to look at the continuing erosion of women's rights in Afghanistan by the Taliban. Once more, women are being forced to argue for their basic human rights: their right to work, to education, to participate in civil and public life and to even move freely around their own country, all in the face of continued violence and intimidation.

In truth, the Taliban have broken their promise to protect women's rights and have disrespected the international community's calls to respect those rights. Despite that, local women peacebuilders, human rights defenders and other Afghan women continue to fight for their right to be heard and to participate, at times exposing themselves to grave peril in asserting those rights.

Ireland will continue to use every opportunity to amplify the voices of Afghan women. We must heed their words, including during the current negotiations on a future mandate for the United Nations in Afghanistan, and we will play our part in ensuring that.

This debate is the third on women and peace and security since October. Together with the presidency initiatives, it shows real promise that, together, we can reinforce this agenda. That is key to realizing the transformative change promised by resolution 1325 (2000).

Secondly, real progress does not occur in a vacuum either. It must bring all stakeholders along. The Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, of which Ireland and the United Arab Emirates are Board members, speaks to that imperative.

Ireland supports closer cooperation among the Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission, the Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action and all other initiatives and bodies dedicated to advancing gender equality and women's rights. We fully support the work of the Peacebuilding Fund. It is a highly effective, if all too modest, instrument. We recommend the increased percentage of the Peacebuilding Fund's investment in gender-responsive initiatives.

We also welcome increasing collaboration between United Nations agencies and international

financial institutions on peacebuilding activities. The International Monetary Fund's new Fragile and Conflict-Affected States Strategy will be an important part of those efforts.

Thirdly, relief and recovery in the wake of conflict is essential in building sustainable peace. Ireland knows from its own lived experience that recovery in the wake of conflict requires firm and concrete actions. The trauma and impact of violence are not simply forgotten with the onset of a ceasefire or the signing of a peace agreement.

We must support women to process and recover from the pain and wounds of conflict. The provision of financial supports and pathways to justice and health services is crucial to empowering women to respond to their trauma. That includes access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services and rights. Groups such as the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund are already doing critical work in that area.

We have also seen that public-private partnerships can make a difference towards relief and recovery, as, I think, you, Madam President, just mentioned. We should work more to integrate them into our own responses. We also need to see funding to fuel women's economic empowerment. Financing women-owned microbusinesses and providing educational scholarships can be transformative.

Local women's organizations and grass-roots women peacebuilders also play an essential role. We, the international community, must stand with them and support them. Doing so helps women to secure their rightful and active role in political, social and economic life. But we must ensure that such support comes from all of society, including national Governments.

As Europe has been plunged into war, we are hearing a chorus call for peace. We know that sustainable peace is not possible without women. The question today is not whether, but how — how we in the Security Council can work to ensure that women play their full, equal and meaningful role in international peace and security. The tide can turn towards a more equal world if the political will is there. I believe that it is. We at this table have a responsibility to ensure that the progress of recent decades is not allowed to slide backwards. The promises of the agenda must be made a reality.

The President: I now call on the Permanent Representative of the United States of America and member of President Biden's Cabinet.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): I welcome you, Madam President, and thank you for convening us here today to discuss this critical issue. I would like to welcome all the ministers and other guests who have joined us here today, and it is also great to see so many women around the table at this event. I thank our briefers for their powerful, insightful and enlightening remarks.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to talk about the women and peace and security agenda today without, as was noted by the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, Ms. Georgieva, and Foreign Minister Coveney, without acknowledging the horrific consequences for women of Russia's unprovoked, unjustifiable war of choice against the people of Ukraine. As in other conflicts, women are being forced to make unimaginable choices — being forced to flee their homes due to threats of imminent violence while they continue to support their communities, families and loved ones.

In particular, we must attest to the extraordinary pain of mothers during this terrible time — mothers who have been forced to give birth in bomb shelters; mothers who have been forced to pass their children, alone and terrified, onto crowded trains leaving the country; and the mother chasing after the blue blood-stained blanket that held her 18-month-old, now dead from Russian shelling. All those present have seen the images of their pain.

Of course, many women are bravely coming together to defend their homes, their communities and their country, and we stand with them today, as every day. Women are leading Ukraine's efforts through the new humanitarian catastrophe that Russia has unleashed, just as they have been critical to building a burgeoning democratic society over the past eight years in Ukraine.

If Russia ever chooses to return to dialogue and diplomacy, women must be meaningfully and consistently involved. After all, we know that woman's full, equal and meaningful participation is not just a moral imperative; it also increases the likelihood of securing a long-term and sustainable peace.

Women's participation is essential for growing economies. Our approach to women's economic empowerment must take into account the evolving context for work, and we must collaborate with the private sector, along with other partners, to ensure full and meaningful access for women today, as in the future.

One simply cannot expect to compete with the world without half one's workforce, and yet women are still forcibly kept out of the workplace. That attitude should be a relic of the past — one that I remember seeing first-hand.

When I joined I joined the United States Foreign Service in 1982, it was at a moment when the State Department was facing two lawsuits that directly applied to me: one for excluding black people and the other for excluding women. Nearly 40 years later, the State Department actively recruits and encourages black and female applicants. The results are remarkable, and we are so much stronger for it.

Despite this obvious truth, today women around the world still face economic exclusion. Such exclusion is particularly severe in fragile and conflict-affected countries — precisely the nations and economies that most need the full, equal and meaningful participation of their entire workforce. Research has shown that about 30 million fewer women than men of working age are in paid employment globally. Women who are in paid work are often engaged in low-paid and low-return activities, and very few women have the access and opportunities to become entrepreneurs and business owners.

Not only are women critically underrepresented and excluded from economic opportunities in fragile and conflict-affected countries, but their access to financial institutions also remains extremely limited. That has become more apparent with the impact of the coronavirus disease over the past two years. Such practices block women's access to capital. They often make women dependent on others for access to funds — even funds that they themselves generated. Those discriminatory practices against women's economic inclusion not only deny women their basic rights; they also fundamentally undermine efforts to create strong, safe and prosperous societies.

When you give women access to capital, financial services and job opportunities, it is not only the right thing to do; it creates a societal wealth and resilience, and that, in turn, generates long-term peace and

security. For example, in Senegal we have promoted economic resilience and resistance to radicalization by economically empowering 5,000 rural smallholders, 60 per cent of whom were women. They were women who were exposed to violent extremism, but were better able to resist it because they saw a better path forward.

That is the kind of approach we need to take on a larger scale, and we should pair such programmes with clear-eyed plans to address gender-based violence and enhance safety and equal access to relief and recovery assistance and opportunities for women and girls. That is all the more pressing, given the conflict into which so many women have been plunged in Ukraine. And, even while we focus on Ukraine, we cannot take our eyes off the challenges that women are facing elsewhere, such as in Afghanistan and Ethiopia.

Since the Taliban's takeover, Afghan women have seen decades of hard-fought progress rolled back almost overnight. We know that they are subjected to increased threats of violence, that their ability to engage in work and education has largely been stamped out and that shelters, protection services and survivor-support services are being shut down.

In Ethiopia and elsewhere, women have become the explicit targets, with rape even being used as a weapon of war against them. We cannot ignore that horrific tactic. The United States therefore remains fully committed to advancing resolution 1325 (2000) as a matter of international peace and security. Economic, social or political exclusion is antithetical to peace. We must continue to press the women and peace and security agenda forward because it is the right thing to do and because it is core to our charge of maintaining international peace and security for all.

The President: I now call on the Vice-Minister for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights of Mexico.

Ms. Delgado Peralta (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I warmly welcome Ms. Mariam Almheiri, Minister for Climate Change and Environment of the United Arab Emirates, and we thank her delegation for convening this debate, which coincides with the commemoration of International Women's Day. We are also grateful for the briefings by Ms. Sima Bahous, Executive Director of UN-Women; Ms. Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund; and civil society representative Ms. Moussokoro Coulibaly.

At the outset, Mexico expresses its solidarity with all the women and girls in Ukraine, whose lives have been drastically impacted in recent weeks by the invasion by Russia. We are aware of the vulnerable situation of those who have been displaced from their homes and have been forced to seek refuge in neighbouring countries, and we are concerned about the risks they run of becoming victims of sexual and gender-based violence.

We urge that all political dialogue ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of Ukrainian women in decision-making. I also reiterate the priority that my country accords to addressing the women and peace and security agenda with a comprehensive approach, underlining its foundation in the indivisibility and universality of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls in all their diversity, in line with resolution 1325 (2000) and our obligations enshrined in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other international instruments.

Conflict-prevention, peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts to achieve sustainable development everywhere require ensuring the economic empowerment of all women and girls, as they are key agents of change in achieving economic growth, rebuilding the social fabric and contributing to the stability of societies.

One of the structural barriers to gender equality at the global level are socioeconomic inequalities, entrenched poverty and the many intersectional forms of discrimination and violence, which limit women's access to financial resources, land use and holding and other productive assets. Those gaps, which are a profound reflection of patriarchal systems, misogyny and the unequal distribution of power in the world, also contribute to conflict and are more acute in contexts of fragility.

In particular, the coronavirus disease has disproportionately affected women as a result of the loss of jobs and, consequently, of income, in addition to an overwhelming level of unpaid care work that is historically and traditionally relegated to women and girls.

Accordingly, all conflict-prevention, peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts in the global context of recovery from the pandemic must ensure a gender focus in order to guarantee economic inclusion, reduce the gap and segregation in the labour market, and

create decent jobs with access to comprehensive social protection systems, including sexual and reproductive health services, which are imperative for building sustainable peace.

In that regard, we must listen to the voices of women in all their diversity, especially women belonging to traditionally excluded and marginalized groups. They must be included, without discrimination of any kind, in peace and decision-making processes. It is worrisome to see the growing backlash in various parts of the world against women's human rights and such fundamental freedoms as their physical and bodily autonomy.

The case of Afghanistan is one example. In the Afghanistan crisis, Mexico played an active role in its response to the refugee situation within the framework of its long-standing tradition of solidarity and support for people in need of humanitarian assistance, including women and girls, who were given priority. In particular, Mexico welcomed a group of five young Afghan women, who were part of the Afghan Dreamers team, and several members of their families. This group is known internationally for creating ventilators from used car parts for patients with coronavirus disease. They now have scholarships to pursue their studies. We have also welcomed journalists, activists, environmental activists, the President of the Afghan Access to Information Institute and other illustrious women from Afghan civil society.

With regard to public-private partnerships for the creation of conditions that enable sustainable peace and security, we must first and foremost stress the importance of private-sector actions focused on gender, intersectionality and human rights. Some actions that we propose include the following. First, investments could be made in existing financial mechanisms to support women's organizations and human rights defenders, who contribute to the climate of stability in their communities. Secondly, there could be support for women peacebuilders from the most disadvantaged groups, such as women with disabilities, women refugees, young women, female heads of households and women members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community. Thirdly, access to digital technologies of local women's organizations could be facilitated, as such technologies today can also contribute to the prevention of violence and the operation of early warning systems. Fourthly, women's community cooperatives or women-led businesses

in debates on economic recovery and post-conflict reconstruction could be promoted.

In 2021, the Generation Equality Forum, launched the Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, of which Mexico was a driving force. In addition to Member States, United Nations bodies, regional organizations, civil society organizations and private organizations participate in the Compact. The Compact seeks to accelerate the implementation of the women and peace and security and humanitarian agenda by developing actions in five thematic areas, including women's economic security and their access to resources and other essential services.

Mexico also recognizes the post-conflict recovery initiatives and programmes supported by the United Nations to promote women's economic empowerment and their participation in post-conflict economic recovery. As concrete examples, I would cite the commitment of the Peacebuilding Commission in the Great Lakes region, which has strengthened the role of women in peacebuilding efforts in the region, and the work of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, which has taken specific action to promote the economic empowerment of women ex-combatants.

Finally, support from peace missions should ensure that post-conflict peacebuilding processes include local women in all their diversity in relief and recovery processes. Women must be part of the solutions in their societies and contribute to public life, politics and decision-making at all levels. That is why dismantling barriers that also impede women's enjoyment of their economic rights and hinder their access to resources is more urgent than ever.

Mr. Verma (India): We thank the United Arab Emirates for convening today's open debate on this all-important issue. I would like to express my gratitude to Her Excellency Ms. Mariam Almheiri, United Arab Emirates Minister of Climate Change and Environment, for presiding over this meeting. We appreciate the insights provided by the Executive Director of UN-Women, Ms. Sima Bahous; the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, Ms. Kristalina Georgieva; and Ms. Moussokoro Coulibaly, civil society briefer, on this issue.

As we celebrate International Women's Day today, let me commence by recalling an exemplary contribution made by an Indian representative, Dr. Hansa Mehta, to the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights. Way back in 1948, she insisted on rephrasing the line “All men are born free and equal” to “All human beings are born free and equal”. Visionaries like her have brought us where we are today, congregated in the Security Council and deliberating on an extremely important theme: “Economic inclusion through partnerships”. This becomes more pertinent as the world order continues to grapple with a fragile post-pandemic recovery.

We must therefore strengthen our resolve to harness the transformative potential of resolution 1325 (2001), which for the first time linked gender equality and the maintenance of international peace and security and recognized women’s participation as being key to resolving conflicts and securing peace.

India’s development narrative has witnessed a transformational change, from promoting women’s development to entirely women-led development, and from being exclusively Government-led to having a multi-stakeholder inclusive governance model.

As the world’s largest democracy, India offers a unique template for gender-sensitive governance. More than 1.3 million elected women representatives, who constitute nearly 44 per cent of the total elected representatives, are leading political decision-making at the grass-roots level. India is one of the few countries to have had women at its helm as Head of State, Head of Government, Defence Minister, Finance Minister and External Affairs Minister.

On the question of socioeconomic empowerment, the need to devise an overall institutional framework, especially legal, to provide access for women to economic opportunities and partnerships is an essential prerequisite. Economic opportunities cannot be viewed in isolation from other socioeconomic factors, especially access to high-quality education. In this context, I would like to mention that India has taken numerous citizen-centric initiatives to take good governance practices right to the grass-roots level. In this, digital initiatives have been transformative in minimizing the gender divide. We have leveraged digital technologies to provide greater access for women to finance, credit, technology and employment.

We have opened online bank accounts for over 445 million people, of whom more than 55 per cent of account-holders were women. During the coronavirus disease pandemic, this initiative helped in direct benefit transfer to nearly 200 million women.

Through the Mudra scheme, the Government provides collateral-free loans to encourage entrepreneurship and self-employment. About 70 per cent of its beneficiaries are women-owned and -operated enterprises. Women have consequently become economically empowered and are providing employment to others as well.

To open up these economic opportunities, equal access to education is fundamental. I am happy that a large number of women in India are taking up education in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine. In fact, for decades now, our girls have outnumbered boys in our medical schools.

We now have women in important positions of responsibility, not just in businesses, but also in the areas of science and technology. Women scientists have played a vital role in research and development in various field, including the technology industry. In fact, women are playing an important part in furthering India’s space research and missions. About 27 per cent of the key executive positions in spearheading the Mars Orbiter Mission were led by Indian women.

Commissioning more women police officers and women peacekeepers can be a game-changer in our collective response to tackling conflicts. The Council may recall the deployment of the first-ever all-female formed police unit for United Nations peacekeeping in Liberia in 2007 by India. The unit’s decade-long service in Liberia resulted in a threefold increase in female recruitment in the Liberian National Police and an overall reduction of crime. It had a salutary transformational impact on the fabric of Liberian society and brought women to the forefront of political and legislative decision-making.

However, it is also pertinent to acknowledge that women have also suffered disproportionately, in the face of violent extremism, conflicts and terrorist attacks. That calls for the collective endorsement of a zero-tolerance approach by the Council against terrorism. Ensuring that women continue to have a stake in peace processes in conflict zones is essential to securing the long-lasting solutions to which we aspire.

We need to identify and eliminate barriers to women’s optimum participation in the political process and in decision-making, if we are to meaningfully address their socioeconomic empowerment. Neither of those two aspects can be seen in isolation. In order to foster synergy between the two, democracy, pluralism and rule of law are essential prerequisites. In that

context, we continue to underline the importance of inclusive and representative governance in Afghanistan, with the meaningful participation of women, as well as the protection of women's rights, in accordance with resolution 2593 (2021).

A strong normative framework for the women and peace and security agenda is an absolute imperative. It can be strengthened only by increasing our collective partnerships for greater women's economic inclusion. Member States should undertake measures to ensure the elimination of violence against women and strengthen their participation in peace and political processes, thereby contributing to women's economic inclusion.

India is committed to engaging with all its partners to work towards the mainstreaming of women and peace and security considerations for building inclusive, peaceful and resilient societies. India's experience of enhancing women's leadership across sectors will continue to guide our actions.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): I welcome you, Madam President, to the Council and thank you for chairing today's debate.

Our briefers and speakers so far have eloquently highlighted the importance and the value of women's economic inclusion for maintaining peace and stabilizing peace in post-conflict settings. Today's debate is timely, as we grapple with the challenge of recovering globally from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, whose economic impacts fell disproportionately on women and girls, and risks, without effective intervention, having a long-term effect.

Our theme today is partnerships. May I highlight three of them.

The first, as Ms. Coulibaly highlighted, relates to the critical role of funding. The Government of the United Kingdom is committed to working with partner Governments, multilateral corporations and the private sector to support women in fragile economies in playing an equal role in the economy to access the benefits of trade, globally, and to establish economic partnerships as levers for equality. For example, in Jordan, where women face the compound effects of conflict, displacement and the impact of COVID-19, the development programmes of the United Kingdom provide cash transfers to refugees and at-risk Jordanian women. More generally, the United Kingdom and its

Group of Seven (G-7) partners are leading the way in mobilizing public and private investments to advance gender equality and address persistent gaps in women's economic opportunities, such as access to digital and financial assets.

Through the 2X Challenge: Financing for Women, launched during the United Kingdom's presidency of the G-7 last year, British International Investment and our partners committed to investing more than \$15 billion over the 2021-2022 period to advance that agenda in developing countries. Such work includes supporting flexible working practices, access to leadership opportunities, financing and affordable products and services. However, in a context where only 25 per cent of women in fragile States have bank accounts, we also need to consider innovative interventions, such as microcredit loans.

Secondly, we are partnering to promote policies designed to promote women's inclusion, and their full and meaningful economic participation. We particularly welcome the theme of gender and climate at this year's session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which is an opportunity to highlight the role women can play in advancing the climate change agenda after the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Glasgow, and ahead of the COP to be held in Egypt.

In addition, the United Kingdom has committed with G-7 partners to new targets to get 40 million more girls in school and 20 million more girls reading by 2026. Overall, our vision is that all girls should get 12 years of quality education.

Thirdly, we seek to strengthen partnerships here at the United Nations and here in the Security Council in support of women's economic, social and political inclusion, while drawing on the experiences we have heard about. I join others in highlighting the particular reversals that the women of Afghanistan have suffered since August. As we discuss the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, we will prioritize returning Afghan women to their full meaningful inclusion in Afghanistan's economy and society.

The United Kingdom welcomes today's debate, which has underlined why economic inclusion should be an integral part of a holistic approach to the women and peace and security agenda, but I cannot finish

without stating the obvious. Economic inclusion is no protection against bullets and bombs.

That has been made horribly clear over the past 13 days, and just yesterday, we witnessed Russian shelling kill a Ukrainian mother and her two children, as they sought to evacuate the city of Irpin. They were not the first casualties. Tragically, they will not be the last. Men, women and children, Russian as well as Ukrainian, will continue to suffer until Russia ends this brutal and unprovoked war.

I thank you, Madam President, for convening today's debate.

Mr. Kiboino (Kenya): Kenya commends the United Arab Emirates for organizing today's timely open debate, as we mark International Women's Day. We are pleased to see you, Minister Mariam Almheiri, presiding over the meeting.

We also welcome the Ministers and other guests who have joined us today. We thank all briefers for their perspectives, particularly on the recommendations that point to the tools, mechanisms and partnerships needed to support countries transitioning from conflict and conflict and post-conflict situations to build more inclusive, secure, equitable and sustainable societies.

There is no doubt that women bear a disproportionate impact of conflict. However, cultural and structural inequalities often limit women's capacity to participate equally, fully and meaningfully in peace and economic processes within their societies. Kenya therefore urges for enhanced strategic collaboration with local leaders, including local women's networks and policy formulators, particularly in transition settings, to ensure that gender-responsive measures are put in place in the areas of asset distribution and access to socioeconomic opportunities, resources and markets.

Kenya continues to advocate for investment in women peacebuilders in fragile and conflict-affected settings. We also continue to affirm the importance of the economic inclusion and integration of women, including ex-combatants, refugees and victims of conflict, to ensure long-term stability, economic resilience and social cohesion.

At the national level, Kenya has seen the benefit of having a development framework, Kenya Vision 2030, operating alongside our Women Economic Empowerment Strategy and Women's Empowerment

Index, which promote women's inclusion in the economic development of our country.

At the regional level, the principle of inclusive financial systems and the recognition that gender equality is a critical pillar for advancing the development of the African continent continues to shape the vision of "The Africa We Want". The appointment last month of Ms. Nardos Bekele Thomas as the first woman Chief Executive Officer of the African Union Development Agency of the New Partnership for Africa's Development demonstrates the Union's commitments to accelerating the empowerment of women.

Today the African Union International Women's Day couch talk convened to mark this occasion under the theme "Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow: innovative solutions for financial and economic inclusion for African women."

We urge the relevant United Nations organs and agencies to remain seized of the outcomes of such discussions as they relate to the sustainability of peace and development.

Such milestones should be recognized, celebrated and supported as critical partnership opportunities not only for women's economic empowerment and security but also for women's agency in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, particularly as it links to peace and development.

That said, much more remains to be done. In that regard, I will briefly highlight six action points that we deem necessary in efforts to ensure women's economic inclusion and participation as key to building peace.

First is the prioritization of women's integration into national economic frameworks and domestic industries for economic sustainability. That necessitates securing resources, the enactment of relevant laws and policies, and the development of clear and practical programmes that advance gender equality in all sectors of public life.

Second is the expansion of and enhanced access to digital platforms to ensure women's financial and economic inclusion. We in Kenya have seen how financial technology services such as mobile money transactions have reinforced equity in economic empowerment.

Third is enhanced technical and vocational training through partnerships between local women entrepreneurs and peace and development agencies and international and regional financial institutions,

to augment financial literacy and women's economic empowerment with inclusive and peaceful societies.

Fourth is having an integrated response to socioeconomic transformation, including having women be part of the formulation of integrated national financing frameworks that focus on financing national sustainable development priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals at the country level.

Fifth is to ensure that analysis is brought into national policy discussions and that that analysis is also reflected in the formulation of implementation indicators on the ground, particularly in monitoring progress in the area of inclusivity and the financing of local women peace actors.

Sixth is the use of the advisory role of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). In that context, Kenya welcomes the submitted advisory from the PBC on the Commission's Gender Strategy Action Plan indicators. The Commission's engagement with and support for national and regional efforts to promote women entrepreneurs and women's economic empowerment are part of the important benchmarks of peace- and nation-building.

In conclusion, I reaffirm Kenya's commitment to investing in women's full and effective participation in all aspects of public life, in keeping with our women and peace and security commitments.

Mrs. Ngyema Ndong (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I welcome this high-level meeting because it echoes one of the priorities of Gabon's international advocacy, namely, the resilience of women in fragile States and in conflict situations, together with the primary role that they should play at all levels of peace processes, from conflict prevention to post-conflict recovery, including mediation, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

I thank Ms. Sima Bahous, Executive Director of UN-Women; Ms. Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund; and Ms. Moussokoro Coulibaly. I would be remiss if I did not mention Ambassador Biang, who is very committed to the HeForShe movement.

The topic that we are discussing today is of particular interest to my country, which recognizes that strategic trans-sectoral partnerships at the local, regional and international levels are very useful tools to promote the women and peace and security agenda, in particular when it comes to the economic inclusion of women

and their full participation in conflict-prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery efforts.

It is clear that mobilizing the international community to acknowledge women as key actors in peace processes has gradually reached a significant level of resonance. Nonetheless, my country remains concerned by the fact that 21 years after the adoption of the milestone resolution 1325 (2000), on the women and peace and security agenda, women continue to be very hard-hit, particularly in fragile States and in conflict situations.

The global context today, which is characterized by many crises exacerbated by the pandemic, only underscores this. Advocacy for women's empowerment, their economic inclusion and their participation must be expanded at all levels in societies, especially conflict-affected societies, and must spread to all regions of the world.

The crucial equation that we need to resolve in most cases remains that of the lack of opportunities and economic resources, which very frequently undermine the leadership role and capacities of women and prevents them from fully participating in the various decision-making processes. That is something that can be very clearly seen in the most recent report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2021/827), which underscores the fact that in countries in conflict, women, who represent a substantial part of the informal sector, were the most hard hit by the economic consequences of the coronavirus disease pandemic. That terrible reality calls our attention to the scope of the efforts that need to be undertaken by the international community to strengthen the resilience capacity of women through economic inclusion — it being understood, of course, that combating economic inequality goes hand in hand with crisis-prevention strategies and economic recovery.

With three high-ranking women at the head of our highest institutions — specifically, the Prime Minister, President of the Senate and President of the Constitutional Court — as well as various other outstanding women at the helm of key ministerial departments, Gabon is, in Africa, the epicentre of leadership of women as agents of change and peacemakers. In my country, women are fully involved in shaping the future of their societies and are a major asset for the stability and lasting peace, which make a Gabon attractive as a country.

From our experience, we deem it obvious that providing women with their rightful central place in time of peace is a catalyst not only for their empowerment but also for providing an impetus to socioeconomic and political progress by preparing them for the peaceful settlement of differences that could emerge in future. Gabon remains steadfast in advocating the inclusion, participation and resilience of women, fully aware that their full participation in all stages of conflict-prevention, conflict-resolution and peacebuilding processes contributes to a more sustainable peace.

We call for the continuation of efforts initiated and agreed upon at global, national and local levels for a comprehensive and inclusive implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and its related resolutions, as well as for a better integration of the gender dimension in peacebuilding efforts. We are convinced that strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations, particularly with regard to the coordination of their actions taken on the women and peace and security agenda, could contribute significantly to better consideration of the gender dimension in responses to conflicts and in United Nations peacekeeping mandates.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize how fundamental it is to create synergies of action, establish strategic partnerships with women leaders at all levels and create flexible funding mechanisms to support women's peacebuilding initiatives. Indeed, it is well understood that promoting women's empowerment, through education and employment — and thereby their economic inclusion — is to foster their resilience and invest in building sustainable peace.

Mrs. Broadhurst Estival (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset I would like to acknowledge the commitment of the United Arab Emirates to implementing the women and peace and security agenda. I would also like to thank the Executive Director of UN-Women, Ms. Sami Bahous, for her presence and briefing, as well as the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, Ms. Kristalina Georgieva, and the civil society representative, Ms. Moussokoro Coulibaly, for their powerful testimonies.

First of all, I would like to reiterate our condemnation of Russia's aggression against Ukraine and express my support and solidarity with the Ukrainian people, and especially, on this 8 March, with Ukrainian women and girls, who are already suffering the full consequences

of this war while working every day to enable their families and their country to cope with it.

The coronavirus disease pandemic has also reminded us that the rights of women and girls are never fully achieved. Its economic impact has been particularly heavy for women, who are very present in the sectors most affected by the crisis as well as in informal and precarious employment. It is therefore essential that our efforts to build back better are based on the equal, full, substantial and effective participation of women in the economy.

In Afghanistan, since it took power by force, the Taliban has been responsible for an increasing number of abuses, including against Afghan women activists, and unacceptable violations of women's rights. The exclusion of Afghan women from the political, social and economic life of the country is an affront to the human conscience. France condemns these abuses and the eviction of women from socioeconomic life. We support all Afghan women who are fighting for the respect of their dignity and their rights. Through them, France pays tribute to all women rights defenders acting throughout the world.

These examples and recent events remind us that a rights-based approach cannot be overlooked. Respect for rights remains the cornerstone of the women and peace and security agenda. In this regard, we encourage the holistic implementation of the pillars of the agenda, combining rights and economic inclusion. Only such a comprehensive approach can build a peace that is sustainable, just and inclusive.

For its part, France will continue to promote an ambitious and resolute feminist diplomacy and place the participation and inclusion of women at the heart of all its cooperation projects. Accordingly, during the French presidency of the Group of Seven in 2019, we supported women's entrepreneurship in Africa through the Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa initiative, in association with the private sector. France will also promote the follow-up of commitments made during the Generation Equality Forum, co-organized with Mexico, UN-Women and civil society.

We call on all stakeholders to commit to ensuring the implementation of the Global Acceleration Plan for Gender Equality and its \$40 billion in financial commitments, as well as the Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, which has been mentioned several times in my colleagues' statements.

In the Security Council, we will also continue to actively promote the effective implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

Mrs. Espeschit Maia (Brazil): I congratulate Her Excellency Minister Mariam Almheiri and the presidency of the United Arab Emirates for organizing this very timely and pertinent debate. I also thank the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Ms. Kristalina Georgieva, the Executive Director of UN-Women, Ms. Sima Sami Bahous, and civil society representative, Ms. Moussokoro Coulibaly, for their insightful briefings.

As the world celebrates International Women's Day today, the Security Council must keep exploring new ways to move forward in the implementation of all pillars of the women and peace and security agenda. Brazil has joined the Niger, Norway, the United Arab Emirates and Albania in a shared commitment to making women, peace and security a top priority and to ensuring its implementation in concrete and tangible ways.

We believe that public-private partnerships can indeed play a very important role in boosting women's full, equal and meaningful participation in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction, enabling and empowering women to act as positive drivers of change. According to the World Bank's *Pathways for Peace* study, women's economic inclusion, particularly in the labour force, is a rational and cost-effective conflict-prevention strategy. Moreover, women's grass-root efforts are an example of how low-cost local intervention can fulfil important roles, including conflict mediation. Women's economic inclusion is also critical in post-conflict reconstruction and economic recovery, and it can be a major driver of lasting peace.

Nonetheless, as mentioned by Ms. Georgieva, labour markets across the world remain divided along gender lines. Female labour-force participation continues to be lower than male participation, gender-wage gaps are high, and women are overrepresented in the informal sector and among the poor. In many countries, legal restrictions persist and constrain women from developing their full economic potential. Research also shows that, during conflicts, women may increase their participation in labour markets and improve overall household welfare. However, once the conflict ends, they face pressure to put up with such

household work as caring for injured male relatives or orphaned children and to leave their paid work.

On different occasions, women briefers to the Security Council have called for more financing for women's organizations on the ground to enable them to exercise their unique potential in supporting women and girls in remote conflict areas. UN-Women has also reminded us that project planning and financing often neglect the specific needs of women and that, for decades, there has been chronic underinvestment in women's empowerment, which has hampered progress in women's rights and gender equality.

Brazil will continue to do its part by applying a gender-sensitive approach to international humanitarian assistance. We believe that international financing should aim at promoting gender equality as a catalyst for lasting peace, but also focus on financing initiatives to ensure women's long-term economic security and well-being. In the Security Council, we can also work through various complementary strategies, first, by carefully drafting and revising peacekeeping mandates so that they are more explicit in their role in promoting women's economic inclusion and empowerment, in line with resolution 2242 (2015). Without targeted mandates, it is very unlikely that United Nations operations will contribute to women's access to opportunities, resources and markets on the ground.

Secondly, we must also ensure that women's voices are heard in the context of special political missions. Women can be pivotal in proposing peacebuilding activities that will result in the long-lasting empowerment of local women and girls. In that regard, Brazil would like to recognize the women and peace and security policy of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and its Gender, Peace and Security Unit in its effort to ensure gender mainstreaming in all peacebuilding projects.

Thirdly, we must continue to support the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in its commendable efforts to promote women's economic inclusion and participation. We praise the PBC's expertise in that regard, as well as its decision to allocate at least 25 per cent of the Peacebuilding Fund's resources to projects aimed at empowering women and young people.

I recall that, during the 2020 review of the PBC Gender Strategy, Brazil suggested that the Security Council should receive and consider advice from the PBC, including recommendations from local women

leaders, prior to every renewal of peacekeeping operation mandates. Brazil also recommended that the PBC monitor and report on the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. We are still of the view that a strengthened relationship between the Council and the PBC would greatly influence the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda as a whole.

More than 20 years after resolution 1325 (2000) was adopted, women still face the grave security and humanitarian consequences of military actions decided primarily, if not exclusively, in decision-making processes in which they did not take part. Women and girls must finally be systematically and meaningfully included in the decisions that affect their daily lives. Brazil hopes that the Security Council will continue to discuss with partners, such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, in order to assess how private partnerships can help bridge the gap in promoting women's economic inclusion and participation in conflict-affected settings, including by investment allocation and participation in peacebuilding trust funds.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): I thank you, Madam, for presiding over this meeting. I also express our appreciation to the United Arab Emirates for organizing this debate to shed a light on some integral parts of the women and peace and security agenda that are often overlooked, namely, relief, recovery and prevention.

We are happy to see a concrete realization of the shared commitments on women and peace and security that we have prioritized together with the United Arab Emirates, Ireland, Norway and Brazil.

The date of today's debate could not have been better chosen. Let me join other speakers in wishing everyone a happy International Women's Day. Unfortunately, for many women across the world, that day is anything but happy. They suffer from conflict, hunger, economic and social exclusion, displacement, violence, poverty and health crises.

Today, our first thoughts and our hearts go out to the women in Ukraine, who are suffering from an unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression, the shelling and bombing of their homes and the presence of hostile foreign soldiers and tanks in their streets. Russia's war of choice is ravaging a proud, independent nation and causing a humanitarian crisis that needs no description. Women in Ukraine are suffering and

struggling, but they are also resisting and fighting for their country and for their freedom. We pay tribute to them.

As of yesterday, 1.7 million people had been forced to leave Ukraine, most of them women and children, as well as the elderly and people with disabilities. Countless more have been displaced within the country. Today, they number more than 2 million — all in just two weeks.

We commend the work of United Nations entities, women's organizations and other civil society organizations in supporting humanitarian efforts on the ground, as well as to ensure, at best, a gendered perspective to humanitarian aid. All of that could have been and can still be avoided. We call on Russia to stop the aggression, withdraw its troops from Ukraine and go home.

We must redouble efforts to address gender inequalities, women's human rights violations, sexual and gender-based violence and exclusion from peace efforts and decision-making, wherever they may occur. Women remain excluded from public life and education in Afghanistan, where huge achievements are being unravelled; women and children are suffering from the never-ending wars in Yemen and Syria; women are being sexually abused in Tigray and South Sudan; women are being forcefully displaced in Ukraine and Myanmar; and women are being jailed for their activism in Belarus and the Sudan.

The empowerment of women, the strengthening of gender equality and guarantees of women's human rights in fragile settings can help transform vicious circles into virtuous ones by preventing conflict and ensuring peace with inclusivity and through development. Women must have their place at every table in decision-making processes, whether peace processes, peacebuilding activities, economic and pandemic recovery, business enterprises or democratic processes. How can we continue to contemplate that the potential of half the world's population remains unexploited, when we know very well how much it could bring?

Women's economic inclusion and participation in the context of conflict prevention and recovery from crises have rarely been explored in the Council. We need to start looking at the women and peace and security agenda more broadly and find new and innovative ways

to fully implement it while also following a human rights-based approach.

Financing has come out as a core issue in moving the women and peace and security agenda forward, while all stakeholders must play their role. To close the financing gaps and promote financial inclusion, I have two proposals.

First, we should build stronger partnerships with international financial institutions, as we heard from the International Monetary Fund this morning, and the private sector. Partnerships are crucial to increasing women's equal access to quality financial services, such as credit, savings, insurance and payment systems through better regulation, technology and financial literacy. At the same time, women-led enterprises and small businesses can play a key role in improving equality and access.

Secondly, we should support the non-governmental organizations (NGOs), industry associations and corporations advocating for policies and programmatic solutions that enable women's economic participation in conflict-affected areas. Access to funding needs to be simplified, administrative barriers dismantled and NGOs, women human rights defenders and peacebuilders trained in how to apply for grants. Actors at the grass-roots level can often make a big impact on the ground and have a multiplier effect, but their capacities to receive and absorb funding are often limited. That needs to change. In that regard, we welcome the work of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, which has already disbursed hundreds of funds to small women's organizations.

(spoke in French)

Allow me to say a few words about the situation in my own country.

Albania has made significant progress in the empowerment of women and achieving gender equality at all levels. The World Economic Forum *Global Gender Gap Report 2021* ranks Albania twenty-fifth out of 156 countries, highlighting major progress in the area of political empowerment and economic participation and opportunity. One of the policies we are most proud of is the integration of gender into all stages of public budgeting at the central and local levels, making Albania the first country in the region to include gender budgeting as a tool to promote transformative financing

for women's equality and empowerment. Albania stands ready to share its experience.

In November, together with the French Development Agency and the World Bank, we began implementing a major project to the tune of €51 million, aimed at supporting and promoting more inclusive and equitable growth by addressing the factors that deprive women of economic opportunities equal to those of men.

The economic and social empowerment of women remains a major challenge for the economic development of any country. It is enough to recall that, depending on the country, between 20 and 50 per cent of the potential gross domestic product is lost due to women's limited access to the labour market.

I would like to conclude by saying that it is high time to finally go beyond words and commitments. We can no longer afford to waste time in realizing the potential of women as actors of peace and prosperity. Security, peacebuilding, economic development and progress for all are at stake.

Mr. Zhang Jun (China) *(spoke in Chinese)*: I welcome you, Madam President, and thank you for presiding over today's meeting. I also thank Executive Director Sima Bahous, Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva and Ms. Moussokoro Coulibaly for their briefings.

China applauds the initiative of the United Arab Emirates to focus today's meeting on women's economic inclusion and participation. Women's economic empowerment is an important part of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a sine qua non for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and a fundamental guarantee of the steady and sustained advancement of the women and peace and security agenda. Women's economic empowerment requires not only political commitment, but also concrete actions.

In war-torn South Sudan, the burden of supporting a family falls disproportionately on women. In the Wau region of Western Bahr-el-Ghazal, traditional weaving skills for making handicrafts have been passed down from generation to generation. However, many local women are hampered by the lack of sewing equipment. Last month, the Chinese Embassy in South Sudan donated 100 sewing machines to the local community. Better-equipped women in Wau are now sewing tirelessly, hoping that their hard work will bring food

to the table, pay for their children's tuition and earn a bright future for the country.

In 2017, Niyibaho Berthilde, a woman from Rwanda, received training in China on *juncao*, or fungus grass, technology, a method of circular production involving plants, animals and mushrooms. After returning to Rwanda, she started her own *juncao* business and created more than 30 jobs. Furthermore, she also organized *juncao* training courses for tens of thousands of farmers, most of them women, including single mothers, helping to lift more people of the local community out of poverty.

In Kenya, a young woman named Concilia Owire is one of the first female locomotive drivers of the Mombasa-Nairobi Standard Gauge Railway. With a safe solo driving record of more than 140,000 kilometres under her belt, Concilia enjoys celebrity status among Kenyans. She bears witness to how that railway, built by China, has given young people like her not only jobs, but also opportunities to learn skills. She is proud of doing her part in modernizing Kenya's transportation sector.

The stories of Concilia, Niyibaho and women in Wau have shown us the wisdom and the potential of women, as well as the transformative impact of economic empowerment on women and their families, as well as their communities. They have also demonstrated the enormous prospects for women's participation in the peace and development of all countries.

At the same time, we must recognize that the ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and increased regional turbulence threaten to set back the existing commitment and investment in development issues. In addition, the gains of women's economic empowerment are at risk of being reversed and women in conflict areas are facing greater challenges. The international community should step up its efforts and act in coordination in order to inject new impetus into the global cause of women's development.

First, we should invest more in development. The international community should actively assist the reconstruction of conflict areas, especially important infrastructure that is vital to the national economy and people's livelihoods, such as roads, bridges, water and electricity, so as to bolster the physical foundation for women's development. Greater earmarked investment is needed in women's and girls' health, education and training with a view to enabling women's economic

participation, increasing their employment and lifting them out of poverty.

We should also help women to overcome the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, increase the availability and affordability of vaccines in conflict areas and safeguard women's rights to life and health.

Secondly, we need to build partnerships. Women's economic empowerment should be incorporated into the overall framework of international development cooperation through enhanced North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation. We should promote the flow of talents, funds and technology to developing countries and to areas that contribute to women's development. To that end, the private sector should play a greater role in order to create more opportunities for women's economic participation.

The International Monetary Fund and other relevant organizations should, where appropriate, inject liquidity into developing countries, including post-conflict States, and encourage member countries to voluntarily channel a share of their allocated special drawing rights to fragile States in order to help stabilize the economies of the recipients and improve the livelihoods of priority groups, such as women.

In September last year, during the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, President Xi Jinping proposed a global development initiative, which seeks to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieve stronger, greener and healthier global development (see A/76/PV.3, annex VI). We are confident that this initiative will be a major boost to the achievement of gender, equality and women's economic empowerment.

Thirdly, we should maximize the role of the United Nations. Development should remain a priority area of the United Nations. We must bridge the development gap faced by women in conflict zones and make women-related goals and targets an early win of the 2030 Agenda. The United Nations Development Programme, UN-Women and other agencies should focus on supporting women's economic empowerment, invest more in long-standing issues, such as poverty eradication for women, and make a difference in addressing new challenges, such as the gender digital divide. When discussing women and peace and security issues, the Security Council should balance the four areas of prevention, protection, participation and relief

and recovery and address the chronic underinvestment in reconstruction and recovery.

Just now, some colleagues mentioned the current situation of Ukrainian women. We support the United Nations in accelerating and coordinating humanitarian operations to effectively ensure the security of the lives and property of Ukrainian civilians, including women and children, meet their basic needs and keep humanitarian corridors safely open. We also call for the further stepping up of diplomatic efforts so as to put an early end to the conflict.

Today is International Women's Day. It is of special significance for the Security Council to hold an open debate on women and peace and security on this day. Allow me to extend my best wishes to all female colleagues present here today and to all women in the United Nations family. I wish them a happy holiday. I would like to mention in particular that, in China's Foreign Service, all the female diplomats are highly capable, fully dedicated and very active. I am proud of them.

I would now like to cede the floor to Mrs. Gui Dan, a young female diplomat of the Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations, to complete this statement.

Mrs. Gui Dan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Of late, there has been a catch-phrase on Chinese social media, which says that one can always count on Chinese women. It is a tribute to China's national women's soccer team, which won the Asian Football Confederation Asian Cup last February. Moreover, it captures the role of Chinese women, who hold up half the sky. In fact, in today's China, more and more women are becoming champions in their respective sectors.

On the front line of the battle against the pandemic, we work as medical professionals and safeguard people's lives and health. In the fight against poverty, we are a pioneering force contributing women's power to China's historic elimination of abject poverty and the realization of sustainable development. We are also active in political life. The active participation in political deliberations of women of all ethnicities is one of the most impressive features of the annual sessions of the National People's Conference and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

At the same time, China supports women from all countries on their journey towards a better future. We held high the torch of the Olympic Winter Games that

just concluded in Beijing. Beijing 2022 was the most gender-equal Olympic Winter Games in history.

We are tasked with the noble mission to maintain world peace. More than 1,000 female Chinese peacekeepers have served in blue helmets and have brought hope to people in conflict areas. As I speak, we are exploring the universe, Wang Yaping, a female Chinese astronaut, is orbiting Earth and fulfilling the dream of hundreds of millions of women. As for me and my colleagues, we will continue to further contribute our voices, wisdom and proposals here at the United Nations. In the great cause of promoting human peace and development, the Council can always count on Chinese women and China.

Mr. Kuzmin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We express our gratitude to the United Arab Emirates presidency of the Security Council and you personally, Madam Minister, for organizing today's debate. We have listened with interest to the statements by Ms. Sima Bahous, Executive Director of UN-Women; Ms. Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund; and Ms. Moussokoro Coulibaly.

We emphasize the relevance of discussing the role of women in social and economic cooperation as a key element of peacebuilding. Unfortunately, this area of cooperation has often been unjustifiably silenced and relegated to the background. The Russian Federation calls for additional measures to strengthen the role of women in the social and economic development of States. Measures to strengthen women's economic potential, create the conditions necessary for developing women's entrepreneurship and increase their access to financial and material resources, markets, modern technologies and intellectual property are greatly needed.

The most important areas of international cooperation must be overcoming poverty, women's development and expanding access to education and decent work. The practice of applying coercive unilateral measures against States is absolutely unacceptable. It is clear that such actions primarily affect the interests of women in the social and economic spheres. Those issues must be the focus of the Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and other United Nations bodies in consistently implementing the women and peace and security agenda.

This year's 8 March commemoration of International Women's Day is taking place against the

backdrop of pivotal events on the world stage. For eight years, the so-called Western world has been indifferent to the murder of women and children in Donetsk and Luhansk by the Kyiv junta and their persecution by Ukrainian radicals and neo-Nazis in the eastern and south-eastern parts of Ukraine. It coyly looked away so as to not notice the Ukrainian policy of the total eradication of the Russian language, culture and Russian-born Ukrainian citizens.

For some reason, none of them furrowed their brows or spoke in a somber theatrical voice as women and teenagers were burned alive at the trade union building in Odesa, to the applause and cheers broadcast live on Ukrainian television channels. For an entire eight years, they showed their absolute indifference and total detachment as cities and towns in Donbas were bombed and shelled by aircraft, artillery, multiple rocket launchers, while a complete blockade was imposed.

The Kyiv regime got away with everything, but that could not go on indefinitely. Peace will be restored in Ukraine for the sake of women, children and families.

More than 20 years have passed since the Security Council adopted resolution 1325 (2000). The conceptual principles of the document, based on the four pillars of prevention, protection, participation and strengthening peace in situations of armed conflict are as relevant today as ever. Our goal is not to undo the joint gains made in women's issues or eclipse the valuable political cooperation on this agenda item with heated political battles. Russia has been and remains ready to cooperate.

Ms. Juul (Norway): I want to thank the United Arab Emirates Minister for Climate Change and Environment for organizing today's open debate. It is indeed in line with our shared commitments to making the women and peace and security agenda a priority during our presidencies. And on this International Women's Day, let me recognize and express our full support for the many women peacebuilders and human rights defenders who continue the fight for women's rights in conflict and crisis. I also want to thank the Executive Director of UN-Women, the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund and Ms. Moussokoro Coulibaly for providing important contexts to our discussion today.

The implementation of the relief and recovery pillar of the women and peace and security agenda can be transformative and help connect our goals for peace and gender equality. Ensuring women's economic

rights requires their participation in decision-making processes, mechanisms and institutions, including economic and financial ones, and access to and control over resources on equal terms with men.

For a country in crisis or conflict, ensuring women's economic rights can be a means to achieving development, stability and long-term peace. Yet it is often in fragile and conflict-affected countries where women face the most severe economic exclusion, as well as where their participation is most critically needed. We have seen that clearly, for example, in Afghanistan.

Women face unique and intersectional challenges to economic inclusion and rights during conflict and post-conflict recovery. According to the latest edition of the global *Women, Peace and Security Index*, displaced women and girls face a higher risk from all forms of gender-based violence and economic marginalization, including barriers to accessing jobs and livelihood opportunities, resulting from intersecting factors affecting their rights and agency. Forced and early marriage and the absence of legal identification were among the largest contributors to poverty in households headed by displaced women. That perpetuates a negative cycle, further underlining the need to consider all efforts through a gender lens.

We are deeply concerned about the particular impacts that the Russian aggression in Ukraine is having on Ukrainian women and girls.

Let me share a few reflections on this debate's guiding questions.

First, conflict and crises can disrupt traditional norms and create opportunities for women. It is imperative that these opportunities be reflected in the gender provisions of peace agreements, reforms and new legislation. It is also why broad and inclusive consultations with a diversity of women are vital to both the design and implementation of peacebuilding, demobilization, reintegration, recovery and economic programmes at the national and community levels.

Secondly, participation remains key. The Security Council, all United Nations presence in the field, including United Nations peace operations, and Member States should insist on women's direct influence in decisions that affect their lives and future. Their economic needs and rights must be safeguarded. This includes in the delivery of humanitarian assistance

and recovery efforts, as well as decisions about natural resource management and gender-responsive budgeting.

Thirdly, partnerships with the private sector offer underutilized opportunities. The private sector provides jobs, including in war and crisis economies, and can boost women's participation in the labour force. They are vital partners for bridging the digital divide and bringing innovative solutions to complex problems, such as payment solutions, or addressing energy poverty, where there are ample opportunities for gender-transformative approaches.

Conflict and crises do not lessen the need to focus on women's participation and rights, including economic rights; quite to the contrary, economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights are inextricably linked. Inclusion requires both creativity and solid commitment, and we are ready to work broadly with all partners to implement all pillars of the women and peace and security agenda.

Ms. Oppong-Ntiri (Ghana): Let me begin by thanking you, Madam President, for convening this open debate, which provides an opportunity to exchange views and perspectives on the advancement of the women and peace and security agenda, especially on the day we commemorate the International Women's Day. We also wish to express our appreciation to Ms. Sima Bahous, Ms. Kristalina Georgieva and Ms. Moussokoro Coulibaly for their briefings.

At the open debate on protecting the participation of women in peace processes (see S/PV.8949), held under the Norwegian presidency in January, Ghana indicated that women involved in peacebuilding efforts were drivers of the positive change we all desire and, therefore, deserved to be protected by the Security Council, the international community at large and the Member States to which they belong. Today, as the United Nations organ with the primary responsibility for maintaining global peace and security, we are called upon to exchange views on how the women who so excellently support the work of peace in communities far and wide can be protected, not only from reprisals and harm, but also from economic exclusion and marginalization, which tends to impede their capacity to be fully effective as actors for peace.

The economic exclusion of women places severe restrictions on their capacity to effectively participate in peace and security initiatives as the institutional and sociocultural obstacles women continue to

face reinforce their marginalization. In conflict situations and post-conflict environments, threats to the meaningful economic empowerment of women are intensified and become almost insurmountable. It is therefore necessary that we focus policy actions towards a reversal of this trend, as it will ultimately lead to the ability of women to meaningfully contribute to the advancement, progress and stability of their communities and the strengthening of their leadership roles and capacities in peacebuilding efforts.

Two decades since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2001), the collective agenda to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace and security processes demands a renewed impetus and the strengthened resolve of all stakeholders.

Ghana is delighted at the existence of multinational and multi-stakeholder initiatives, such as the Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, which seek, among others, to ensure women's economic security, as well as enhance their leadership roles across peace, security and humanitarian sectors. The existence of such broad and extensive platforms holds enormous promise for fostering the active participation of Governments, the United Nations, regional organizations, the private sector and international corporations in the economic empowerment of women in peacebuilding. Such partnerships are indispensable in the realization of the economic inclusion of women in various aspects of peacebuilding.

Multilateral financing mechanisms, such as the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, which continue to dedicate significant portions of investments towards gender equality and women's empowerment all over the world, are some examples of the strides we stand to achieve when all relevant stakeholders in the women and peace and security agenda pool their resources and efforts for the greater good.

Organizations, such as the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), have ensured the incorporation of crucial aspects of the women and peace and security agenda into their strategic objectives. For example, Agenda 2063 of the African Union and ECOWAS Vision 2050 are examples of long-term regional and subregional goals that have rightly identified the need to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment in all spheres of public engagement, and therefore require

the support of the international community towards a seamless implementation.

In addressing more specifically the focus of today's open debate, Ghana will make the following four points on how the United Nations, the Security Council, regional organizations and Member States can ensure a more systematic cooperation and coordination geared towards the economic inclusion of women as a key to sustainable peace.

First of all, the Security Council should reinforce its support for platforms, such as the Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, which rallies together United Nations Member States, regional organizations, civil society groups and the private sector to foster women's economic security and leadership. Such partnerships should be harnessed by the Security Council and the United Nations at large as a means of enhancing public and private-sector participation in financing peace and post-conflict recovery. The private sector has the capacity to play a bigger and useful role in peacebuilding by offering logistical support, financial assistance, discounts and pro bono support to women peacebuilders as part of their corporate social responsibilities.

Secondly, it should be recalled that the Secretary-General's 2021 report on women and peace and security (S/2021/827) called for the urgent reduction in military spending and an increase in investment in peacebuilding, education, health and other programmes. A downward adjustment in the overall global military expenditure would ultimately lead to the channelling of much-needed funds into initiatives that are beneficial to the women and peace and security cause. Regrettably, the present global situation is likely to lead to countries increasing their defence spending, with an adverse impact on this objective. We must therefore recommit ourselves to this objective, especially in many other places of the world where this contribution would make a positive difference.

Also, at the national level, it is incumbent on Governments to develop and implement policies that further enhance women's economic empowerment and continue to provide a clear framework for addressing inequalities deeply rooted in their societies. It is absolutely necessary to develop these national gender policies, guided by key stakeholder inputs and with the participation of both Government and non-governmental

agencies, development partners, traditional authorities and the media.

Finally, effective bilateral cooperation, as well as collaboration across regional organizations on the women and peace and security agenda is crucial for accelerating the economic empowerment of women in peace and security. As part of their development cooperation efforts, countries and supranational institutions with sufficient financial and technical capabilities should enhance partnerships with their less endowed counterparts, especially through funding and the provision of technical support for women's empowerment initiatives. That is especially crucial in regions facing threats from terrorism and violent extremism, such as the Sahel and coastal West Africa, where women's economic empowerment is absolutely central to building community resilience and preventing radicalization and recruitment.

If women have been able to achieve so much with negligible or no resources, we can only imagine what they will do with more. Therefore, ensuring the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peacebuilding requires enhanced partnerships, collective efforts and strategic approaches towards their economic empowerment. As a representative of Ghana once stated in the Council, we owe it to women in peace and security all over the world to convert mere rhetoric into concrete action.

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

I now give the floor to the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the Maldives.

Mr. Khaleel (Maldives): I would like to thank the United Arab Emirates for convening this timely debate on advancing the women and peace and security agenda today, on International Women's Day. I would also like to thank our briefers for their invaluable insights.

Conflicts have deep and far-reaching consequences for all of society. However, women in particular lose access to employment opportunities, natural resources, basic legal protections and essential needs, such as food, water, health care and education. We are therefore strongly encouraged by the commitment of the United

Arab Emirates presidency to advancing the women and peace and security agenda.

Since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the Council has adopted nine resolutions that reflect significant collective advancement on the issue. However, let us not become complacent. There remains much to be done.

The Maldives fully ascribes to the notion that women's inclusion and participation are fundamental to our efforts to build a durable, peaceful society. Furthermore, we recognize that when conflicts, disasters and other crises strike, our responses in the immediate aftermath and in the process of long-term recovery must proceed in a manner that pays particular attention to and places focus on the situation and needs of women and their full and meaningful inclusion in decision-making.

In a small country like ours, natural disasters can wipe away decades of development gains in the blink of an eye. The 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami was devastating for the Maldives and, in that awful experience, we recognized that women were on the front lines, often bearing the heaviest burden in its aftermath. Although some extreme events are unpredictable, we know that climate change will continue to increase our risk of storms, flooding and water and food insecurity. Those situations create environments in which women are marginalized, but also where terrorism and other threats to security can fester.

For that reason, the Maldives and other small islands have been sounding the alarm about the fact that addressing climate change is fundamental in building a peaceful society. As Secretary-General Guterres rightly stated last year, climate change is an aggravating factor for instability, conflict and terrorism. Therefore, we must take urgent action to address that threat multiplier and driver of conflict.

It is not just in conflict situations where we must better focus on women, but in all spheres. Over the past two years, the coronavirus disease pandemic and other humanitarian crises have exacerbated existing gender gaps, often unravelling decades of progress made towards gender equality. Clearly women have borne the brunt of the economic fallout from the pandemic. In response, the Maldives provided an income support allowance to workers who lost their jobs, placing particular emphasis on those women who worked in the

informal sector and lacked formal contracts. However, we know that more can be done.

As we emerge from seemingly the worst of the pandemic, we can redesign our recovery policies to advance gender inclusivity. We should work to strengthen partnerships with local stakeholders across all levels, especially women's groups, to more quickly identify and better understand the challenges women face on the ground and their underlying causes. We should also work to find ways to better integrate international partners and public and private partners into those various settings so as to lay the foundation for enduring peace and security. Some of the areas where we believe partnerships can prove useful include the timely and robust collection of data on women's economic participation in conflict settings. That will help us to better understand the challenges women face.

To ensure action on the ground that is responsive to women, we need the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in leadership roles. Without the adequate representation of women in decision-making processes, we risk creating laws, policies, budgets and conflict responses that fail to adequately respond to the needs of almost half the world's population. Research demonstrates, and our experience has confirmed at first-hand, that women's voices in political decision-making, communities, parliaments and peace negotiations are essential to supporting and sustaining prosperous and peaceful societies.

The Maldives has always been committed to promoting women's empowerment. The Administration of President Solih places high importance on having women in decision-making and executive positions. We have taken action to that end by adopting legislation to allocate 33 per cent of council seats to women in local elections. A third of the ministerial posts in the current Cabinet are held by women. For the first time, we have female Supreme Court justices and a woman leader for both the Judicial Services Commission and the Human Rights Commission. In a historic first, in April last year we elected women to one-third of the local council seats. Those changes will strengthen women's voices in our decision-making process and help us ensure more responsive and inclusive Government policies.

We believe that empowered women empower society. Only through the full and meaningful participation of women in all facets of decision-making and implementation can we ensure that we can build an

enduring, peaceful society and advance the women and peace and security agenda.

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

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, and all women present in the Council today on the occasion of International Women's Day. I would also like to thank the United Arab Emirates for organizing today's open debate on women's economic inclusion and participation as a key to building peace.

I would like also to thank Ms. Sima Bahous, Executive Director of UN-Women, for her briefing, as well as all other briefers.

Last October, under the Egyptian presidency of the Peacebuilding Commission, an ambassador-level meeting was held to discuss the role of women in peacebuilding. The meeting focused on the pioneering role of women in building peace and achieving lasting peace. It is a role that is as important as carrying weapons in an attempt to resolve conflicts. It is a role that encourages caring for families and providing sustainability in life. History has taught us that women are our best bet in order to build peace, enhance societal stability, achieve development and realize prosperity.

Last November, under the Egyptian chairmanship of the African Peace and Security Council, the Council held a meeting on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. In Africa, we have had many successes with women mediators and peacebuilders because we believe in their vital role in achieving development and preventing wars and conflicts while promoting coexistence.

Egypt is currently elaborating its first national plan of action for the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. Egypt is endeavouring to provide the resources necessary to implement the plan and would like to emphasize that ownership and national priorities are at the base of the successful implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

The Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development provides an important platform for discussions among the various partners on how to enhance the participation of women in peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts. The Forum discusses the various challenges and opportunities related to the participation of women and makes recommendations

on how to enhance the contribution of African women in peacebuilding operations.

To follow up on the implementation of the Aswan Forum conclusions, the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding in Africa has been organizing debates with international and national partners in order to discuss how to promote the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda in the light of the new realities imposed by the pandemic by enhancing the leadership role of women in conflict prevention and the achievement of sustainable peace.

To conclude, Egypt reiterates that it will continue to implement the women and peace and security agenda and emphasizes that it will not recognize any outcomes that are not consensual, fall outside the United Nations framework or do not have a mandate from the main United Nations organs, based on our belief that we must safeguard the intergovernmental aspect of the United Nations, enhance consensual values and build on the common grounds of all Member States.

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

Mrs. Frazier (Malta): I begin by thanking the United Arab Emirates for having convened today's open debate. Malta aligns itself with the statements to be delivered on behalf of the European Union and of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, and would like to make a few additional remarks in its national capacity.

At the outset, we express our full solidarity with Ukraine and its people in these dark times and condemn the loss of life and human suffering caused by Russia's unprovoked aggression, which is also placing women and girls at increased risk of sexual and gender-based violence. Malta welcomes the actions being taken by women's organizations and other civil-society representatives in support of humanitarian efforts and echoes the appeal made by the UN-Women Executive Director to ensure women's full, equal and meaningful participation in decision-making processes and humanitarian responses, including civil-society representatives.

International Women's Day should not be a symbolic day: it should be the way we live. Men and women can do far more to stand up for women than just celebrating this day. Malta firmly believes that including women in peace and security processes

brings better outcomes. Having women at the peace table strengthens accountability for implementation. Women's participation also makes peace more durable and is essential to address the disproportionate impact of conflicts on women and girls in all their diversity.

As is evident not just in Ukraine but also in Afghanistan, Syria, Ethiopia and Myanmar, women are also often the most impacted by crises resulting from conflicts and pay a higher price for the devastation, including multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, increased gender discrimination and violence. They remain largely excluded from participating in peace processes despite overwhelming evidence that women's involvement in both peacebuilding and mediation leads to more lasting and positive peace.

Meanwhile, Malta acknowledges the critical role that women have played and are playing in coronavirus disease response efforts and the importance of inclusive decision-making to sustainable and effective responses, as well as the differentiated social and economic impact of the pandemic on women. In that regard, we call for increased emphasis to be put on providing women with skills to become gainfully employed and participate more actively in their societies. Amending laws in communities that do not yet allow women to inherit and own land would likewise be a step in the right direction.

Finally, we encourage efforts to enable women's full, equal and meaningful participation in all aspects of peace processes and their implementation. That is a key priority for Malta, which, as promoter of effective multilateralism, places gender equality, women's empowerment and the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda at the centre of our partnerships with multilateral and regional partners.

Important strides have been made since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), and we continue to stress that the four pillars of the women and peace and security agenda should not be discussed in silos. Malta reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding and stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

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

Mr. Hilale (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank the United Arab Emirates for having convened

this important ministerial debate, which coincides with International Women's Day, on 8 March. I welcome the presence of Ms. Almheiri, Minister of Climate Change and the Environment of the United Arab Emirates.

As we celebrate International Women's Day, I wish to recall the primary role and the crucial contribution that women make to peace, security and stability. Indeed, women are and remain the nucleus and the very core of our societies. Guaranteeing their full economic, social and political inclusion and participation is vital. At the same time, we must build their leadership capacity. That is how we will guarantee resilience and lasting peace.

Today's debate is a timely one indeed, as we mark the decade of action for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in difficult circumstances owing to the coronavirus disease. As we find ourselves halfway through that decade, we need to correct course when it comes to the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda and make more progress. We need to mobilize adequate resources to ensure the effective economic participation and empowerment of women. Doing so involves ensuring balanced progress on the four pillars of the women and peace and security agenda. As part of such efforts, the Kingdom of Morocco has always staunchly defended the economic empowerment of women to ensure lasting peacebuilding efforts, particularly in Africa.

Morocco believes that while it is true that they can be no peace without development and there cannot be any development without peace, women, and this needs to be underscored, are the main architects of peace. Morocco firmly believes in the power of partnership to guarantee adequate and effective financing for peacebuilding at a global level. We also stress the need to make use of all levers for international cooperation: North-South cooperation, South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation all are vital in that regard.

Our goal is to achieve win-win synergies while at the same time ensuring full respect for the concept of national ownership. We have partnerships with the private sector, the young and civil societies, which ensure lasting peacebuilding efforts because such efforts fill critical gaps and foster post-conflict recovery. The contribution of the private sector to peacebuilding is vital, particularly in Africa. In Africa there are young women and men who are dynamic entrepreneurs, working hand in hand to promote peace and making a lasting contribution to stability on their

continent. That reality is all the more important insofar as local businesses are often managed by women across several vital sectors that contribute to building peace on a daily basis. In developing countries, the private sector also generates 90 per cent of jobs, finances 60 per cent of all investments and provides more than 80 per cent of Government revenues, which indicates the central role of women in the economic life of our societies.

Let me conclude with three observations. First, more than 20 years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) a status report on its implementation should be prepared, with particular attention to the current landscape of women's economic inclusion and participation.

Secondly, as part of such a review, clear and precise markers should be established to assess the root causes of gaps and chart progress in closing the gap in women's economic inclusion and participation in conflict and post-conflict situations. These should be subject to a periodic follow-up in the Secretary-General's annual reports, which could incorporate views shared by Member States.

Thirdly, in the current context of the abatement of the coronavirus disease, it would be appropriate to examine the best ways to use various existing United Nations initiatives for the promotion and economic participation of women in peacebuilding situations.

Finally, the Kingdom of Morocco believes that the current global context is largely ripe for making a significant difference, particularly by taking advantage of the Secretary-General's recent *Our Common Agenda*. Indeed, being able to ensure the full inclusion and economic participation of women to unleash their full potential for conflict prevention and peacebuilding necessarily, I would even say imperatively, creates the right conditions for resilience and lasting peace.

I again offer my warmest congratulations to all the women of the world on their International Day.

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

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): As we celebrate International Women's Day today, I deliver this statement with deep sorrow in my heart, thinking of all the women who today are fleeing, threatened by cold, hunger, war and violence, in Afghanistan, Ukraine, Myanmar or elsewhere.

And yet, women are actors, driving forces and indispensable peacebuilders, and despite the fact that they pay too high a price, they must not be confined to the role of potential victims of conflict. In 2009, in its resolution 1889 (2009), adopted under the presidency of Viet Nam, the Security Council was visionary in placing for the first time a decisive emphasis on the role of women in reconstruction. The full, equal and meaningful participation of women in emergency relief, reconstruction and peacebuilding remains fundamental to this day.

We thank the United Arab Emirates for organizing today's debate and the briefers for their very precious contributions. Many times in my professional life, I have had the opportunity to meet women entrepreneurs who are impressive bridge builders — in Mozambique, Egypt, Nepal, and in my own country. When I asked them what the main obstacle to their full participation in political and peacebuilding processes was, their answers were as diverse as the women I met. Yet, on many occasions, the answers were also surprisingly short and clear: "poverty".

Is this surprising? It is not. Economic empowerment is an important driver for increasing women's participation in peace processes. It is only through a certain economic independence that we will be able to fully realize our potential for creativity, efficiency and networking for peace.

Let me highlight three points. First, Switzerland's national action plan emphasizes economic empowerment as an important factor for women's effective participation in political and peace processes. We invite all countries to develop their national action plans and to include a focus on economic empowerment. This empowerment must be done with full respect for human and fundamental rights, as they are universal, indivisible and interdependent.

Secondly, strengthening the socioeconomic position of women is a key issue for Swiss cooperation. For example, we support women running small- and medium-sized businesses in many regions of the world. Improving the socioeconomic position of women in their communities broadens their scope for social and political engagement.

Thirdly, we welcome the priority the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) gives to funding initiatives that promote the empowerment of women. Switzerland has supported the PBF for many years. We

are also a signatory to the Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action Compact. This Compact, which can also be joined by academic institutions and the private sector, is a good example of modern and effective multilateralism.

Alongside the national action plans, the role of international cooperation and the work of the United Nations, what is the role of the Security Council and what can it actually do? In fact, it can do a great deal. To improve partnerships—the topic of today's debate—the Council must promote networks, which it can do during field visits by meeting with women peacebuilders. It can also invite them to brief the Council. It can also increase its cooperation with regional organizations, international financial institutions and civil society.

Our commitment to the women and peace and security agenda must at the same time be a commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Synergies between the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission must be intensified.

Switzerland will continue and strengthen its commitment to the full implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. As a candidate for the Security Council, my country strives to continue to be a plus for peace and a plus for development.

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

Mr. Ishikane (Japan): I would like to express my appreciation to the United Arab Emirates for convening today's important debate on women and peace and security, with a focus on women's economic inclusion and participation. I thank Ms. Sima Bahous, Ms. Kristalina Georgieva and the civil society representative for their briefings.

First of all, I would like to express our grave concern at the deteriorating humanitarian situation in and around Ukraine, including the dire impacts on women and girls, caused by the Russian aggression. While hoping for a restoration of the status quo ante bellum in Ukraine at the earliest, we must also keep in mind that surviving a crisis is but the tip of the iceberg of the vast women and peace and security agenda.

Women must be at the centre of all our efforts to build peaceful and resilient societies, capable of solving issues through peaceful means and free from any temptation to change the status quo by force. Participation of women is key to conflict prevention,

which requires long-term, comprehensive, context-specific measures, including empowerment and proper institution-building under effective partnership among stakeholders.

To better explain what I mean, I would like to share a concrete example. Japan recently supported a UN-Women-led project in the Lake Chad region aimed at empowering women affected by violent conflict prompted by Boko Haram. UN-Women partnered with the Sasakawa Africa Association, a Japanese civil society organization that has been supporting smallholder farmers in Africa for over 30 years. In this project, in collaboration with local authorities in Cameroon and Nigeria, Sasakawa provided training to women farmers in climate-smart agriculture and in income-generating marketing skills to ensure that they will be economically empowered. The success of this project depended on combining the expertise and support of UN-Women, civil society organizations and local authorities.

Effective partnership requires effective complementarity, and the first step to realize such complementary relationships is to enhance the sharing of information and increasing the interactions among various stakeholders—civil society organizations, academic institutions, the private sector, and of course, Governments and United Nations entities—particularly in a conflict-affected environment. The Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, to which Japan is a signatory, could serve as a useful platform for strengthening cooperation under multi-stakeholder partnerships.

We urgently need tangible actions that different public and private partners can undertake to support gender-responsive, community-based approaches in a sustainable manner. Japan is committed to playing its part in that endeavour.

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

Mr. Rae (Canada): I am pleased to speak on behalf of the 56 States members of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace, and Security.

On this International Women's Day, we would like to express our solidarity with all women peacebuilders, human rights defenders and advocates for gender equality who are tirelessly working to build peace, defend rights and implement the women and peace and security agenda. We hear them. We call on all Member

States to protect and promote the rights of women and girls rights everywhere. We also call on all Member States and partners to ensure women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace, political and security decision-making processes at all levels, in line with resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions.

We express our full solidarity with all women and girls in Ukraine and deplore the loss of life and human suffering caused by the situation arising from the aggression by the Russian Federation. We are deeply concerned about the distinct impact of violence on women and girls in Ukraine, many of whom have been displaced or forced to seek refuge in neighbouring countries — 2 million and counting. The current situation places women and girls at increased risk of sexual and gender-based violence. We must integrate a gender perspective into the delivery of humanitarian assistance and ensure that their needs are fully taken into account and that all their rights safeguarded and respected.

It is clear that women face persistent barriers to economic empowerment and security, particularly during times of crisis. This is a serious human rights issue that impedes women's participation in peace processes and public life. In conflict-affected countries such as Afghanistan, Syria and Yemen, there are significant gender gaps in employment, with women less likely to be in paid work and with limited access to social protection systems and public services. Women's financial and digital inclusion is also systematically lower in those settings. That has been further exacerbated by the disproportionate impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic on women.

We encourage Member States to increase their support for human rights-based initiatives that advance gender equality and women's economic empowerment and security. That includes support to civil society and women-led organizations, as well as to Member States to improve women and girls' safe and equitable access to quality education, training and capacity-building.

We encourage the Security Council to recognize, as it addresses conflict and post-conflict situations, the importance of women's economic inclusion not only for women themselves, but also for their families, their communities and their countries' economic security and well-being. That is as an essential enabler of meaningful participation, sustainable peace and economic recovery in post-conflict settings. We also encourage the Council to strengthen its cooperation

with other United Nations entities, as well as regional and subregional organizations, to better promote women's economic inclusion in fragile, conflict and post-conflict settings.

We recognize the role that the private sector can play in increasing women's economic participation. We encourage increased cooperation among all partners and take note of a number of multi-stakeholder initiatives, including the Generation Equality Forum and its Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Assistance.

We must remind ourselves today and every day of our responsibility to apply a human rights-based approach and to fully implement the women and peace and security agenda for women and girls around the world. We must do our utmost to ensure their full, equal and meaningful participation and to protect them at all times from sexual and gender-based violence.

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

Mrs. Theofili (Greece): I wish everyone a happy International Women's Day.

This year, International Women's Day is not a time for celebration. The present situation in Ukraine presents the gravest challenge to the rule of international law in the twenty-first century. We must take this opportunity to reaffirm our full support to Ukraine and its people. Ukrainian women are showing resilience and courage.

Relief and recovery from conflict and conflict-related violence have the transformative potential to promote gender-equal economic inclusion and participation. In that vein, the focus on the economic empowerment of women in post-conflict reconstruction not only prevents further conflict and violence, but also paves the way to economic stability, growth and long-lasting peace.

Nonetheless, the beneficial role of women post-conflict economic relief and recovery is underestimated due to persisting gender stereotypes, as well as discriminatory norms and practices. At the same time, serious threats, such as fragility, gender-based violence, climate change and pandemics disproportionately affect the security of women and girls in conflict affected areas, affecting their equal inclusion and participation in decision-making processes.

In that regard, the full implementation of the women and peace and security agenda and its four

pillars is of utmost importance, as it provides a for a holistic and gender-responsive approach to conflict prevention, relief and recovery. That process should involve enhanced partnerships with the public sector, civil society organizations, local women and human rights defenders, including journalists and especially women journalists. Accordingly, mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment in the work of the United Nations on conflict prevention requires gender-inclusive political and economic reforms aimed at gender-equal participation in governance.

Greece focuses on enhancing women's economic inclusion and participation in order to foster their overall empowerment and accelerate substantive gender equality. That is well reflected my country's national action plans on gender equality and on women and peace and security. Furthermore, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Assistance are valuable tools in that regard.

Finally, I would like to stress that substantive gender equality and women's empowerment, including economic empowerment, is definitely a human rights issue. It should concern us all, as it is both a security and development imperative in order to build peaceful, resilient and inclusive societies.

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

Mr. Hmoud (Jordan): Today, we celebrate all women and girls, their achievements, contributions and spirit of steel with a determined will to make the world a better place. I wish everyone a Happy International Women's Day.

I would like to congratulate the United Arab Emirates on acceding to the presidency of the Security Council for this month and for convening this timely meeting to discuss the women and peace and security agenda. Thanks are also due to the briefers for their invaluable contributions to the debate.

Since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) 21 years ago, women still face challenges that hinder their full, active and meaningful participation in the economy. Studies have shown that increasing women's economic empowerment leads to direct benefits for women and their communities, thereby moving the wheel of economic growth, and that low women's participation in the formal labour markets impedes economic growth and the reduction of poverty.

Women reportedly make up only 21 per cent of the labour force and contribute with 18 per cent of the overall gross domestic product of the Middle East and North Africa region. A socioeconomic fallout of the coronavirus disease is that women's employment in the Middle East and North Africa region has dropped by 4.1 per cent compared to 1.8 per cent for men.

Jordan, which is committed to advancing the women and peace and security agenda and changing the status quo, has adopted a five-year women's economic empowerment action plan, aimed at increasing women's participation in the labour force rate to 24 per cent by 2025. In addition, our commitments to the efficient implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) has led to introducing a series of amendments to Jordanian laws and regulations, which are focused on enhancing and increasing the participation of women in economic decision-making, the labour market, eliminating wage discrimination and promoting flexible work.

National action plans are critical tools in advancing national responses. Through our national action plan 2018-2021 and our national women's strategy 2020-2025, we affirm our commitment to achieving the meaningful participation of women. In addition, such plans promote a community culture that recognizes gender needs, the importance of gender equality, countering social stigmas, providing an enabling environment specific to women's economic empowerment, providing access to entrepreneurship and finance, with a focus on technology-enabled services, and what may be considered to attract more Jordanian women in rural areas to engage in employment in the agricultural sector. As a host country to one of the highest number of Palestinian and Syrian refugees in the world, the national action plan of Jordan encompasses women refugees, who directly benefit from such a plan and the related strategies.

Finally, distances shrink and differences fade when it comes to women's economic empowerment. It is time to fight the good fight for our principles and values to make them law and attain the full implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, with women's empowerment at the centre of our efforts.

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

The meeting was suspended at 12.25 p.m.