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New York

President: Ms. Dautllari (Albania)

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United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Ms. Camara
United States of America	Ms. Kroecker-Maus

Agenda

Women and peace and security

Keeping the promises: the role of regional organizations in implementing the women and peace and security agenda in the face of political turmoil and seizures of power by force

Letter dated 4 June 2022 from the Permanent Representative of Albania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2022/457)

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The meeting resumed at 3 p.m.

The President: Before we begin, I would like to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than three minutes in order to enable the Security Council to carry out its work as expeditiously as possible. Flashing lights on the collars of the microphone will prompt all speakers to bring their remarks to a close after three minutes.

I now give the floor to the representative of Türkiye.

Mrs. Inanç Örnekol (Türkiye): We would like to express our appreciation to the Albanian presidency for convening us today to discuss this critical issue. We also thank the Secretary-General for his opening remarks, as well as the Executive Director of UN-Women, Ms. Bahous, and the other briefers for their insightful remarks.

The Security Council's landmark resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions under the women and peace and security agenda not only acknowledge the adverse impact of armed conflict on women and girls but also recognize the contributions of women to peace and reconciliation processes and the need to promote and protect the rights of women in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Although we have that solid, comprehensive framework in place, it is unfortunate that we are seeing its implementation either fall short or be completely cast aside during turbulent times marked by wars, military coups or the seizure of power by force. Recent events in countries such as Ukraine, Afghanistan and Myanmar have shown us vividly how the fragile gains of the women and peace and security agenda can easily be rolled back, as well as how the rights and well-being of women and girls can be violated with impunity.

While the primary responsibility for the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda rests with States, several Council resolutions acknowledge regional organizations and United Nations entities as key actors that play an important complementary role. That should also be seen in the context of broader cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in the prevention of conflicts and the maintenance of peace and security.

In that vein, we commend efforts to strengthen cooperation on the women and peace and security

agenda between the Security Council and regional organizations, in particular the African Union, through annual consultative meetings and regular briefings. We also welcome the contributions of regional organizations to the agenda, including their adoption of dedicated women and peace and security plans and strategies.

We are pleased to say that NATO is also actively engaged in women's empowerment and increased participation in conflict resolution, decision-making and peace processes. Türkiye has contributed to the development of a number of recently adopted NATO policies in the context of the women and peace and security agenda and continues to include a gender perspective in training for security personnel at the national level, as well as for international personnel in preparation for their deployment to NATO, United Nations and European Union missions and operations.

We all acknowledge that further efforts are required to fully implement the women and peace and security agenda. Those efforts should be persistent and collective, with a view to seeing more women gain positions of leadership and seats at the negotiating table, thereby enhancing their engagement in decision-making at all stages of peace processes.

How can we strengthen the role and the capacity of regional organizations to that end? Building on the experience of the African Union and NATO, Member States can appoint high-level women and peace and security representatives to drive implementation at the regional level. States can establish regional advisory bodies of women peace leaders so that they can systematically contribute to the conflict-prevention and peacebuilding work of regional organizations. Member States can also assist in building regional capacity for monitoring and reporting on progress in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

Last but not least, States can increase their engagement and interaction with international and regional human rights mechanisms to ensure full consideration of women's human rights — a central component of the women and peace and security agenda.

As we enter the third decade since the women and peace and security agenda was adopted, we need to refocus our efforts with a more inclusive and holistic approach to untap the agenda's full potential for building and sustaining peace. Let me assure the

Council that Türkiye remains committed to supporting all international and regional efforts to that end.

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

Ms. Gatt (Malta): I thank Albania for holding this open debate, and the briefers for providing a snapshot of the progress and successes, as well as the challenges, in advancing the women and peace and security agenda, and for making concrete suggestions in that regard.

Twenty-two years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda still faces numerous challenges across all four of its pillars, particularly concerning protection and participation. Malta welcomes the focus of today's debate, as regional organizations play a pivotal role in supporting the work of women peacebuilders and civil society organizations more broadly in a bid to develop more direct and effective strategies.

The latest annual report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2022/272) reiterates that sexual violence and violent extremism continue to disproportionately affect women and girls. Malta continues to fully support the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and recognizes the important work that her Office is doing, in particular its reporting on the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

Malta is concerned about the surge of violence in the Sahel and Lake Chad basin, where Boko Haram factions are responsible for brutal attacks on women and girls. In Afghanistan, the Sudan and Myanmar, unconstitutional takeovers have exacerbated underlying issues, including sexual violence. The need for regional cooperation, including in the areas of cross-border monitoring and response capabilities, is an urgent one.

Women and peace and security will be one of Malta's priorities when serving on the Security Council in the period 2023 to 2024. We will strive to further strengthen our women and peace and security commitments and find common ground in addressing existing gaps. States have the primary role in implementing the women and peace and security agenda.

Nevertheless, resolutions 2467 (2019) and 2493 (2019) also underline the important complementary role of regional organizations. We therefore urge regional and subregional bodies to continue implementing policies for women and girls affected by conflict-

related sexual violence, while actively promoting their full, equal and meaningful participation, in all of their diversity, in peace negotiations.

We encourage further cooperation with all related bodies, including the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the League of Arab States. Regional organizations can further advance the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda in a number of ways, including by supporting States in drafting national action plans and providing expertise, as necessary, for their implementation, adopting their own regional action plans and assuming mediation roles in peace processes in order to ensure that women are at the negotiating table.

Malta calls for the adoption of a gender perspective by all stakeholders when discussing the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. We cannot overlook the importance of gender equality in the achievement of sustainable peace and security. The Security Council should continue to show political will and sustained commitment to the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. Women have a crucial role to play in shaping the future of the societies they live in and must be at the negotiating table. By ensuring that, we will be giving long-term peace a significantly better chance.

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

Mr. Malovrh (Slovenia): At the outset, I would like to thank Albania for organizing today's debate and all the briefers for their informative contributions.

Prioritizing women's empowerment in peace and security settings must remain a continued effort. The full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace and security processes is essential to achieving long-lasting peace. It is conducive to building resilient societies and to more effective decision-making processes.

Regional organizations have an important role to play in complementing United Nations efforts to advance the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. In order to achieve the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), that agenda must become an integral part of our everyday work within both civilian and military structures.

Slovenia pays particular attention to education and training on women and peace and security. All involved in peace and security processes must be informed of women's role in peace-related activities. Our national experience has shown that increasing the number of female members of the Slovenian armed forces in crisis management processes and peacekeeping missions improves negotiation and mediation efforts. That is because women are better at building trust with local populations, marginalized groups, women, children and older persons in crisis areas.

We also welcome the Brussels Declaration on Actions towards Empowering Women in Conflicts, jointly issued by European Council President Charles Michel, UN-Women, Nadia's Initiative and the Dr. Denis Mukwege Foundation. In many conflicts, local and grass-roots women's organizations are most often the first responders on the ground. By working closely with such organizations, regional organizations can play an important role in supporting the efforts of women working on the front lines of the world's most intractable conflicts.

In conclusion, women must play a leading role in political processes, conflict resolution and the transition from conflict to peace, and the Security Council and its members must ensure that the voices of women are always included and amplified. Ensuring that we have a diversity of voices and that those voices are listened to and heard should be our priority. That is essential to the greater credibility, effectiveness and legitimacy of our work.

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

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): I recognize the representative of Putin's regime in the permanent seat of the Soviet Union. The pile of lies spouted by the Russian representative this morning will be used in future trials in which Russian war criminals and their accomplices will be prosecuted.

We thank Albania for convening this open debate and all the briefers for their comprehensive presentations. We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security. The women and peace and security agenda has always been of vital significance for Ukraine. In the circumstances of the Russian aggression, which has been ongoing since 2014, Ukraine adopted a national

action plan on women and peace and security and was the first United Nations Member State to do so during a situation of conflict. Russia's war on Ukraine has made it clear that our second national action plan, covering the period from 2020 to 2025, requires serious updates and adjustments to address the new security threats. Our commitment to implementing resolution 1325 (2000) remains the same, but our capacities have been undermined by Russia's invasion.

We are updating our national action plan against a backdrop of the Russian forces' destruction of civilian infrastructure and war crimes committed by Russian soldiers against women, particularly through the use of sexual violence as a weapon. An updated draft is expected in August, and we appreciate the assistance of the United Nations in the process. In a memorandum signed by Ukraine and the United Nations on 3 May, we identified key areas of cooperation to be included in the updated action plan. I would like to commend the efforts of Ms. Pramila Patten, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and her team in that regard. The practical steps to be taken include opening centres to assist survivors of wartime terror. The first will be opened soon in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund in one of the cities near the front lines.

As the Secretary-General pointed out today, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has forced millions of women and children to flee their country overnight. In general, they remain among the most vulnerable groups in any conflict situation, and Russia's war on my country is not an exception. It is important to maintain the focus on women and girls in all programmes involving humanitarian and economic assistance, protection from crime and political empowerment.

It is also alarming that Russia has continued its attempts to undermine the work of the Office of the Project Coordinator of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which has been instrumental in implementing women and peace and security projects. If Russia decides to break the consensus on the Office, it could close as soon as July. In that regard, we welcome the continued efforts of the European Union, the OSCE and NATO, as partners in the region, to strengthen support for women peacebuilders, human rights defenders, activists and gender-equality advocates. Ukraine also confirms its full commitment to furthering awareness and the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

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

Ms. Stoeva (Bulgaria): Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, and I would like to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

I would like to thank Albania for organizing this open debate on a topic as relevant as the role of regional organizations in implementing the women and peace and security agenda in the face of political turmoil and seizures of power by force. I also want to express my appreciation to the briefers for their presentations and for advocating and promoting the accelerated implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. As the briefers highlighted, women and girls are often the people worst affected by conflict, natural disasters or political turmoil. We are holding this debate against a backdrop of the Russian Federation's ongoing illegal, unprovoked and unjustified aggression against Ukraine, which has created millions of refugees, mostly women and children. In conflict situations, women and girls are the main victims of sexual violence. Their underrepresentation and even exclusion from the decision-making process represent a failure to use readily available potential that has shown itself able to contribute constructively to advancing peace and security.

The full, equal and meaningful participation of women and girls in all aspects of life is crucial if we are to have peaceful, functional and prosperous societies. Ensuring such participation should be a priority for all of us at all levels, and regional organizations are instrumental in that regard. We commend all organizations that have adopted dedicated action plans on women, peace and security, which can be essential to providing disaggregated data and best practices, while ensuring the meaningful inclusion of women and a human rights-based approach.

Only through collective efforts can we really guarantee safe and enabling environments for women peacebuilders, human rights defenders and activists. Furthermore, regional organizations can and do play a role in capacity-building. Women negotiators, mediators and peacebuilders remain rare sightings. It is very important to ensure that women become an integral part of the decision-making processes on matters of security, and for that they need the necessary

skills. In that regard, we commend the work of all the briefers. Bulgaria attaches great importance to regional organizations and recognizes their critical role in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. This year we will prepare the mid-term progress report on the implementation of our national action plan on women and peace and security for the period 2020 to 2025. It includes a focus on cooperation with regional and subregional organizations on the women and peace and security agenda, including in South-East Europe and the Black Sea region.

As we confront the largest number of conflicts since 1945 and what the Secretary-General called an epidemic of coup d'états, it is clear that political turmoil and seizures of power by force are reversing the progress made on implementing the women and peace and security agenda. We ought to use the lessons learned to push even further. Meanwhile, we should continue to work together with regional organizations and civil society to better shape the way we address current global challenges.

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

Mr. Hauri (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I thank Albania for convening this debate, and the speakers for their briefings.

There is no lasting peace without women. Our Secretary of State stressed that at the recent meeting of the Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network organized by Switzerland and South Africa in Geneva. Yet political turmoil and seizures of power by force — in Afghanistan, the Sudan and Mali, to name but a few — as well as the Russian military aggression against Ukraine, have widened the gap between the normative framework of the women and peace and security agenda and the reality on the ground. We need to reverse that trend. I would like to share three thoughts on the role of regional organizations in that regard.

First, when power is seized by force women peacebuilders and human rights defenders see their hard-won achievements called into question and exposed to increased risks. They often show resilience and form tightly knit networks, as the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar noted this week in the General Assembly. Alongside the United Nations and Member States, regional organizations play a key role in protecting and supporting civil society, including through rapid, flexible and predictable funding.

Switzerland supports, among other things, the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, which brings together some 100 organizations.

Secondly, regional organizations have context-specific instruments to prevent the escalation of tensions and mitigate their root causes, as well as early-warning mechanisms. The full, equal and meaningful participation of women in those mechanisms and at all decision-making levels of peace processes is paramount. For example, with the support of Switzerland, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe published a tool kit for the integration of women in formal peace processes.

We also welcome the initiatives of other regional organizations in that field, such as the strengthening of the African Union's Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation. Cooperation between regional organizations and the United Nations should be deepened by strengthening gender expertise on both sides. Switzerland is committed to that.

Thirdly, we need to work more in networks and across geographical and institutional boundaries. At the Focal Point Network meeting held recently in Geneva, six regional organizations participated alongside representatives of Member States, the United Nations and civil society. Such meetings allow for the dissemination of good practices, capacity-building and the upscaling of initiatives developed at regional level.

The provisions of all resolutions related to the women and peace and security agenda must be fully implemented. The Security Council should reiterate that with one voice. As a future member of the Security Council, Switzerland will continue to promote synergies between the United Nations and regional organizations in order to make those objectives a reality.

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

Mr. Cho (Republic of Korea): My delegation would like to commend Albania for convening today's meeting on this significant issue.

Hard-won gains in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda are being increasingly reversed in many parts of the world, including Afghanistan and Myanmar, in the face of political turmoil and seizures of power by force. We are particularly appalled by the recent allegations

of rape and sexual violence in Ukraine following Russia's aggression.

Member States have the primary responsibility for the prevention of, and response to, conflict-related sexual violence, but the roles of regional organizations, together with international mechanisms, are also crucial in upholding the principles of the women and peace and security agenda. In that regard, we commend the 12 regional organizations that have adopted or are developing regional action plans on women and peace and security.

While further encouraging their efforts, I would like to make three points on the role of regional organizations.

First, regional organizations should be closely engaged in the work of the Security Council on early warning of conflict-related sexual violence. The Council needs to give due consideration to regional organizations' monitoring and analysis on the signs of sexual violence in such contexts as political instability, unconstitutional changes of power and rising militarism in regions.

Secondly, regional organizations should strengthen cooperation with national and local authorities to improve and reform legal and institutional frameworks in the area of women and peace and security. To ensure the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence, national and local efforts should focus more on the root causes of sexual violence, including harmful social norms and structural gender inequality. Regional organizations themselves should lead and encourage those efforts.

Thirdly, survivor-centred approaches should be adopted by regional organizations in preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence. Survivors should be heard, and their different needs should be respected in the reparation processes. Regional organizations should play a key role in upholding an inherently survivor-centred approach, which must start with listening to the voices of survivors.

Last year, the Republic of Korea established the third national action plan to implement resolution 1325 (2000). We committed to enhancing cooperation in the Asian region to promote the women and peace and security agenda. Korea has also contributed to the advancement of that agenda in Africa through its

contribution to the African Union Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department.

As a staunch advocate of the women and peace and security agenda and a candidate for non-permanent membership of the Security Council for the term 2024 to 2025, we will continue to redouble our efforts to advance the women and peace and security agenda around the world.

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

Mrs. Theofili (Greece): I would first like to thank Albania for organizing this timely high-level open debate on the role of regional organizations in implementing the women and peace and security agenda.

In the turbulent times we live in, the increasing number of armed conflicts and seizures of power by force have brought tectonic crackdowns on peace, security and democratic values, such as gender equality and the equal enjoyment of human rights by everyone. Unfortunately, women and girls are disproportionately affected by such security threats.

Against that backdrop, the role of regional organizations is critical in maintaining sustainable peace and security, while promoting gender-equal human rights protections and participation in peace processes.

Many regional organizations, such as the European Union, the African Union, the League of Arab States, NATO, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and others, have already adopted or are currently developing action plans or strategies on women and peace and security. Those regional policy documents should be implemented not only by the respective organizations but also by their member States in alignment with their national action plans on women and peace and security, thereby enhancing policy coherence at the national and regional levels.

At the same time, coordination among the various regional partners within the United Nations architecture can prove beneficial for achieving system-wide coherence and bridging national and international efforts to implement the women and peace and security agenda.

It goes without saying that almost all organizations consider maintaining peace and security at the regional

level a high priority. As a result, they have developed the know-how and the appropriate tools and mechanisms for mediation, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Regional organizations promote context-specific, tailor-made solutions to regional challenges threatening security and can also serve as safe environments for inclusive dialogue and meaningful cooperation between all relevant stakeholders, such as States, civil-society organizations and human rights defenders. The only way, therefore, to promote gender-equal participation in decision-making processes, as well as to generate effective gender-responsive policies, is through systematic gender mainstreaming across the organizational structure. Moreover, cross-regional collaboration, based on sharing best practices and the division of labour under the coordination of the Security Council, is likely to have a positive impact on the promotion of a culture of peace that places women and girls at the centre of international efforts, as well as on closing the gap between commitments and implementation.

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

Mr. Ćurić Hrvatinić (Croatia): Croatia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, and I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

I would like to thank the Albanian presidency, as well as Her Excellency Minister Olta Xhaçka and the briefers. Croatia joins the calls for the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent Security Council resolutions on women and peace and security.

In the context of military coups d'état, political turmoil and the seizure of power by force, women are often prime targets, with new patterns of violence creating increasing insecurity and inequality affecting them directly. Sexual and gender-based violence, already widespread, gains momentum in such situations and becomes an instrument of repression and political intimidation. Increased insecurity contributes to an atmosphere of fear, while women are often denied work and education. Even in such dangerous situations, women are bravely fighting for their rights. In Afghanistan, women have been protesting for months on end. In the Sudan, women were among the first to protest the coup d'état and are still playing a prominent

role in the street movement. Similarly, they were on the forefront of the revolution in the Sudan but have largely been sidelined in the formal political process in the aftermath.

Regional organizations can contribute through mediation and the prevention of conflict escalation, and can help bring women to the forefront. Various regional organizations have also developed frameworks to promote the protection of women and girls from human rights violations. Women are agents of change, as well as peacebuilders. We are all familiar with indisputable data showing that the inclusion of women in negotiations and peace processes produces a much more sustainable peace. Conversely, the exclusion of women from politics negatively affects the political dialogue and social balance in a country, potentially leading to turmoil.

Mere steps from us, on the United Nations lawn, there stands a monument, the Peace Monument. The statue of a woman on a horse is symbolically leading the nations of the world towards peace. That monument embodies the women and peace and security agenda. We should take inspiration from that powerful work of art and bring its message to life.

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

Mr. Maes (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Benelux countries — Belgium, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and, my own country, Luxembourg.

The Benelux countries fully align themselves with the statements made on behalf of the European Union and the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

We thank Albania for organizing today's debate on the role of regional organizations in implementing the women and peace and security agenda, and for its efforts to integrate that agenda into the Council's work. We welcome today's briefings and the Security Council's regular exchanges with regional organizations, which play an important complementary role in implementing the women and peace and security agenda on the ground. We must continue working together to implement the normative framework on women and peace and security. While we welcome the adoption of women and peace and security action plans by many regional organizations and several Member States, including the European Union, we believe that regional

organizations should further develop and implement policies, activities and advocacy for all women and girls affected by conflict. We believe it is essential to draw lessons from previous and current crises, and we would therefore like to make the following four observations.

First, we must work together to promote gender equality and the economic, political and social empowerment and participation of women, which are prerequisites for sustainable development, peace, security and justice. We call for the adoption of a rights-based approach, because protecting women's rights, including their sexual and reproductive health and rights, means protecting the rights of all members of society as a whole.

Secondly, according to *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace*, the global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), the participation of women creates a 35 per cent increase in the probability of reaching a sustainable peace agreement that will last 15 years. In line with resolutions 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009), we urge all relevant actors, including all regional organizations, to take effective measures to ensure and increase the participation of women, in all their diversity, at all stages of peace processes, in particular through the active involvement of civil-society organizations. Particular attention should be paid to women human rights defenders and women peacebuilders to ensure they can operate in a safe environment and are involved at all levels of political decision-making processes.

Thirdly, we would like to highlight the importance of women mediators, while recognizing the valuable networks supported by regional organizations such as the African Union's FemWise-Africa network. Too often, women mediators are not included in formal peace processes. We believe they can play a key role in breaking the patriarchal silos of negotiations, and that regional organizations can promote the deployment of qualified senior experts. Regional organizations, working in concert with national Governments, could enhance the sharing of knowledge on where and how women can receive formal training to become mediators and share toolkits on how training can be developed at a national or regional level.

As the Secretary-General's annual report on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2022/272) emphasizes, recent unconstitutional power grabs have been followed by widespread insecurity, economic

shocks and human rights violations, including the use of sexual violence. Those violations have a disproportionate effect on women and girls, whether in Afghanistan, Myanmar, the Sudan or Mali. We are also witnessing such violations in Russia's war of aggression on Ukraine. Considering their convening role, regional organizations have a responsibility to ensure that concerns about human rights violations and abuses are reflected in specific provisions of peace agreements. Violations of international law should not go unpunished, and amnesties for sexual violence crimes are never acceptable. Today it is more crucial than ever to redouble our efforts to advance the women and peace and security agenda in cooperation with regional organizations. The Council can count on the Benelux countries' firm commitment and support in that regard.

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

Mr. Mabhongo (South Africa): We thank Albania for organizing this important open debate today. We take this opportunity to welcome the briefing by the Secretary-General delivered this morning, and we thank all the briefers for their insightful briefings.

South Africa aligns itself with the statement to be made by the representative of Germany as co-Chair of the Group of Friends of the African Women Leaders Network to the United Nations, and that made by the representative of Canada, on behalf of the Friends of 1325.

Allow me to highlight the following points in the context and purpose of today's debate.

First, South Africa reiterates its commitment to the women and peace and security agenda, as envisioned in resolution 1325 (2000) and all its subsequent resolutions. We remain guided by our own national action plan and the Regional Strategy on Women, Peace and Security of the Southern African Development Community, as well as the African Union Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. Those mechanisms aim to address the limitations to women's empowerment and their full and meaningful participation in socioeconomic and political processes. They also crucially advocate for women's rights and gender equality in peace and security matters. We must actively and decisively safeguard all the gains made on the women and peace and security agenda.

South Africa remains of the view that the women and peace and security agenda has one of the most comprehensive normative and institutional bases. However, the full and effective implementation of commitments is still lacking in specific areas, such as the underrepresentation, marginalization and exclusion of women in decision-making processes, negotiations and mediation efforts in peace processes and elections. We are concerned by the lack of access to sexual and reproductive health services, the rise in intimidation, reprisals and sexual violence and abuse against women and girls, including human rights abuses, in conflict and transition settings. Those elements were starkly highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2022/272) in March.

National Governments bear the main responsibility for implementing, and addressing gaps in the implementation of, the women and peace and security agenda. In addition, the role of regional and subregional organizations, including financial institutions, remains invaluable.

In that context, mainstreaming the women and peace and security agenda in the discussions of the United Nations and regional organizations pertaining to conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding is necessary in ensuring that challenges to the implementation of the agenda are addressed comprehensively.

In recognition of the existing challenges and potential threats that threaten to roll back women and peace and security commitments, South Africa wishes to make the following recommendations.

First, in safeguarding the women and peace and security agenda, it is important that Member States adopt institutional, policy and legislative measures that address discriminatory barriers against women so that they can have an equal opportunity to be part of planning and decision-making processes.

Secondly, there is a need to strengthen electoral bodies and judicial institutions so that they can hold perpetrators of human rights abuses and violators of international law accountable. Accountability and addressing impunity for violations can serve as a deterrent for further abuses and deliver justice to victims and survivors of abuses.

Regular exchanges with other regional and subregional organizations and the sharing of best

practices are crucial in addressing conflicts and preventing the escalation or emergence of new conflicts, including addressing the root causes that lead to those conflicts.

I conclude by urging collaboration with, and taking advantage of, the advisory and convening role of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council. We commend the efforts of the Council in inviting women peacebuilders to brief it, and we hope that their recommendations on women and peace and security find a place in the mandates of peacekeeping missions when they are discussed by the Security Council.

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

Mr. Massari (Italy): Italy welcomes the initiative of Albania to convene this high-level open debate, which allows us to reiterate our strong support for resolution 1325 (2000) and the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, and would like to make a few remarks in a national capacity.

Promoting the full, effective and meaningful inclusion of women in all spheres of public life and in the main decision-making processes is key to bringing about change and fostering peaceful coexistence. It is a task that starts in times of peace, involving local communities and grass-roots civil society organizations, and that helps to enhance the resilience of our societies and prevent conflicts. The women and peace and security agenda is not only a women's rights issue; it is primarily a security issue that concerns the whole of society. In the light of that, we uphold the importance of streamlining women and peace and security in all the relevant discussions of the Council.

Since the adoption of the historic resolution 1325 (2000), a great deal has been accomplished. We have strengthened awareness and developed a more robust policy framework, and new monitoring and reporting mechanisms are in place. However, 20 years later, women and girls continue to disproportionately bear the burden of conflict and turmoil and remain underrepresented or unrepresented in peace process efforts despite their constructive contribution to conflict resolution at the grass-roots level.

Allow me to pay tribute to all the women who live in fear for their own safety and that of their families in contexts of war and violence, particularly in Ukraine and elsewhere. They are mothers, daughters and wives, but they are also peacebuilders, human rights defenders, activists and community leaders, ready to contribute to shaping and directing the path to lasting peace. Their voices must be heard.

We must put women at the centre of all our efforts, working in a coherent way at the different and complementary levels — national, international and regional.

At the national level, Italy is currently implementing its fourth action plan on women and peace and security. In parallel, we continue to engage, together with our European Union (EU) partners, in the implementation of the relevant EU action plan for the 2019 to 2024 term.

We have strengthened our partnership with the United Nations system in favour of women and girls through increased core funding and policy commitments. We also firmly believe in the benefits provided by the presence of well-integrated female personnel in peacekeeping operations.

At the regional level, Italy launched the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, which has increased in scope through the years and contributed to the creation of the Global Alliance of Regional Women Mediators Networks, gathering voices from different regions of the world demanding to accelerate the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

In conclusion, we believe that the United Nations should be able to count on the fundamental contribution of regional organizations in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, seizing the opportunities offered by their proximity to the specific realities on the ground. There is plenty of evidence that, when women are meaningfully involved, peace talks are more likely to address root causes and yield more sustainable results. Rest assured that Italy will remain actively engaged in pursuing this goal.

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

Ms. Leendertse (Germany): I am pleased to speak on behalf of the Group of Friends of the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) to the United Nations, co-chaired by South Africa and Germany. We thank the Albanian presidency of the Security

Council for convening this open debate on women and peace and security, with a focus on the role of regional organizations. The theme of the open debate is timely given the focus by all of us on implementing the women and peace and security agenda following its 10 resolutions, which represent a robust normative framework on which we can base our actions.

We also thank the briefers for their insightful remarks. In the context of this morning's discussion, the Group wishes to highlight the following five points.

First, we strongly urge that the Council, in its work, deepen its efforts towards the full implementation of all global commitments on women and peace and security, including the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all aspects, at all levels and from the outset of peace and security processes.

Secondly, to ensure strong implementation, the women and peace and security agenda requires strong partnerships among the Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission, through its advisory and convening role, and regional and subregional organizations, including their regional financial institutions, in order to support women's organizations and peacebuilding initiatives. We urge all those actors and partners of the United Nations system to continue to support local ownership of peacebuilding efforts, as well as national and regional action plans, frameworks and mechanisms already in place.

Thirdly, the Group is pleased to inform the Council that, so far, the AWLN has established 29 national chapters across all five regions in Africa. While there is much work to be done, we are pleased that, through the African Union's regional and subregional organizations — such as the Economic Community of West African States, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the Mano River Union, the Southern African Development Community and the Economic Community of Central African States, which have their own regional mechanisms and regional action plans — have been able to support the acceleration of women and peace and security commitments in Africa.

The second Africa Forum on Women, Peace and Security, which took place in December 2021, underscored the need to enhance the monitoring and evaluation of continental frameworks and mechanisms.

We take this opportunity to echo calls made by the Peacebuilding Commission that Member States should

ensure adequate, predictable, sustainable and flexible funding for peacebuilding, which often supports the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda by regional organizations.

Fourthly, the Group reaffirms its full support to the United Nations and the African Union. The AWLN has innovatively operationalized resolution 1325 (2000) and its follow-up resolutions by working locally and regionally, focusing on local-level initiatives through the AWLN national chapters and conducting high-level fact-finding missions and amplifying the voices of women and girls silenced by the consequences of war. For example, in 2020 and 2021, the Network held virtual solidarity missions to Mali and Mozambique, highlighting and responding to challenges presented to women and girls in political transitions and by violent extremism, respectively.

Finally, the Group commends all regional and subregional organizations around the world for working to close the remaining gaps posing a challenge to the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and all its subsequent resolutions. We also urge enhanced coordination among them, including deepened cooperation with the United Nations.

In this endeavour, it would be remiss of the Group not to underscore the importance of continuously shining a light — not only on the plight of women, including civil society and peacebuilders around the world, but also on their constructive and essential contributions to gender equality in political governance, decision-making and security sector reform, as well as in their private life. We have also learned from their experiences and share best practices on the most pressing challenges disproportionately affecting women, including responses to the coronavirus disease pandemic.

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

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt): At the outset, I would like to congratulate Albania on its presidency of the Security Council. I would also like to express our deep appreciation for the organization of this open debate. Let me also thank the briefers for their invaluable remarks.

Egypt stresses the importance of implementing the full mandate of the women and peace and security agenda, as stipulated in the relevant resolutions, including achieving a balance between its four components — prevention, protection, participation and

relief and recovery — while taking into consideration the cultural and social specificities of each country in order to ensure greater participation by women in situations of armed conflict and countries emerging from conflict.

Egypt reiterates the importance of women's participation in negotiations and of building their capacity to be able to participate effectively in peace negotiations and peacebuilding. Egypt played a crucial role in the establishment of the Global Alliance of Regional Women Mediator Networks and has actively participated in the work of the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation and the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, as well as in the establishment of the Arab Women Mediators Network, which recently joined the Global Alliance. Egypt also joined the Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network, established by Spain, and participates actively in its meetings.

It is always worth mentioning that Africa was the first to place the women and peace and security agenda on the Council's agenda when Namibia took the initiative to do so, resulting in the drafting of resolution 1325 (2000). We believe that Africa has taken significant steps forward in order to ensure the effective implementation of the agenda in Africa by launching a continental framework to report on the agenda's implementation.

Regional organizations, such as the African Union and the League of Arab States, have a pivotal role to play, with the aim of enhancing the commitment of States to implement the women and peace and security agenda and providing them the necessary support through the international community, especially international financial institutions. It is of the utmost importance to create mechanisms for coordination among donors, partners and the executive bodies in order to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of the agenda, with a special emphasis on national ownership and engagement with national entities during the implementation process.

Egypt is currently developing its first national action plan on the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. However, we believe that it is not enough to merely adopt plans on the women and peace and security agenda. We must also mobilize the necessary resources to implement those plans and pledges, especially to African countries, upon their

request, in order to build their capacities in that regard and implement those ambitious plans, with special attention to be given to countries suffering from armed conflict or in post-conflict situations.

Moreover, His Excellency President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, President of Egypt, was one of the first leaders to join the circle of leadership initiative to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations operations. Egypt takes pride in championing the General Assembly resolutions on United Nations action on sexual exploitation and abuse since the Assembly's seventy-first session, the latest of which is resolution 75/321, adopted in September.

Let me conclude by stressing that women are the fundamental agents of change during the transitional period from conflict to development. The empowerment of women is a must for a healthy and coherent society aiming to reach sustainable peace.

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

Mrs. Kuzee (Namibia): Namibia thanks you, Mr. President, for organizing this open debate on the issue of women and peace and security. We are encouraged, as always, by the overwhelming support for this debate.

Resolution 1325 (2000) was borne out of the need to promote women's participation in efforts and processes aimed at pursuing peace and security, the prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls and the protection of women in conflict and non-conflict situations, including in the context of unauthorized seizures of power.

Documented evidence demonstrates that, although peace is more long-lasting with women's meaningful participation in peace, security and humanitarian processes, that value does not consistently translate into women's inclusion or participation in peace negotiations and implementation mechanisms.

Regional organizations play a critical role in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda as a whole and, in that regard, I commend the important leadership of the African Union in advancing the women and peace and security agenda and embedding its impact.

Allow me to share some key points that my delegation considers critical to the successful engagement of regional organizations.

High-level political commitment is essential — not only for countries to effectively implement the women and peace and security agenda, including through their own national action plans, but also in the effective implementation of regional or subregional action plans.

We must maintain a common understanding of global women and peace and security norms, while at the same time focusing our approaches on regional and local contexts that extrapolate women and peace and security commitments and promote women's leadership.

Regional organizations must share best practices with subregional organizations, as their efforts have the potential to be mutually reinforcing. There is also value in national institutions supporting regional organizations. A case in point is the Women's International Peace Centre, launched in Namibia in 2020, which is set up to strengthen regional and international innovation to advance the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda and enhance the capacity of national, regional and international actors in multidimensional peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

Working with civil society remains essential to effective regional, national and local implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. It is therefore important to have mechanisms in place to link civil society with regional and subregional organizations.

Regional organizations should focus their targets and indicators on areas in which they have direct influence — for example, by setting targets for women's meaningful participation in peace processes under the auspices of those organizations. Regional organizations must also improve information-sharing among themselves and integrate early-warning systems for conflict prevention into their regional frameworks in order to enhance effective preparedness and responses to conflict.

Finally, the protection of women's rights and the importance of their participation and leadership in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction cannot be overstated. Regional action plans have a catalytic effect, by encouraging the development of national action plans and dovetailing the work of individual Member States. Regional and subregional organizations have a convening power

that individual Member States may not have in the field of conflict resolution — that power must be positively exploited.

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

Mr. Marschik (Austria): Austria welcomes the briefing delivered by the European Union (EU) Ambassador for Gender and Diversity, Ms. Stella Ronner-Grubačić. We also align ourselves with the statement delivered by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

This morning, we heard from our briefers — five highly impressive women leaders from regional organizations — that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are deprioritized far too often when a State is confronted with armed conflict, political turmoil or the seizure of power by force. Apparently, the normative power of the women and peace and security agenda, which is enshrined in 10 resolutions of the Security Council, fades when Governments switch from normal to emergency mode. As was made very clear earlier today, that is irresponsible and counterproductive, and it has to change.

At the Security Council's annual open debate on women and peace and security held in October every year, the report of the Secretary-General sheds light on the significant gaps in the implementation of the four pillars of the women and peace and security agenda. The participation of women in truce and peace negotiations is marginalized. The protection of women and girls from gender-based and sexual violence is inefficient. And the heinous crime of conflict-related sexual violence, including mass rapes, persists. The prevention of those forms of violence is insufficient due to a lack of accountability.

Relief and recovery efforts and the nexus between humanitarian aid, development assistance and peacebuilding lack a dedicated gender lens. Too often, local women's rights and grass-roots organizations do not receive the necessary funding, despite the fact that they move quickly from community programming to the provision of crucial humanitarian services when conflicts begin. In short, the challenges in implementing the women and peace and security agenda globally are numerous and need the continuous focus of the international community, in particular the Security Council.

Austria commends Albania for its efforts to keep the spotlight on the women and peace and security agenda in the Council by convening today's debate, which focuses on regional and subregional organizations. After having listened to the briefers and other speakers, it seems that the main conclusion we can draw from today's debate will be that the international community needs regional organizations to bolster the women and peace and security agenda.

Regional organizations and the Council should collaborate in localizing the women and peace and security agenda and extending it from the Council via regional intergovernmental bodies to the level of local policies. In those efforts, the role of civil society, especially women's rights organizations, must be fully taken into account in terms of both planning and implementation. Regional organizations can strengthen the accountability of their members with respect to the women and peace and security agenda by keeping track of national implementation. When a member is faced with political turmoil, a regional organization can step in to offer mediation, protection and relief and recovery efforts.

Let me conclude with two examples of efforts of regional organizations that we support.

In Eastern Africa, Austria has been a long-standing partner of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to strengthen IGAD's peace and security programme. Austria also supports the efforts of the African Union to contribute to peaceful resolutions of conflicts in Africa.

In the context of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine, Austria supports all efforts by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to bring the war to a rapid end, including through parliamentary diplomacy supported by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's newly appointed Special Representative for Parliamentary Dialogue on Ukraine, Mr. Reinhold Lopatka of Austria.

Those are just two examples of many other excellent regional and subregional efforts that can serve as a model for best practices in terms of how we can contribute, through regional organizations, to the women and peace and security agenda. We look forward to further strengthening our efforts in that regard at the local, regional and global levels.

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

Mr. Espinosa Cañizares (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to congratulate Albania for the transparent manner in which it has presided over the Security Council in the first half of the month of June. I commend the variety of topics included on the Council's agenda, including the situations in Libya, Mali and Yemen, as well as briefings on the work of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (see S/PV.9058) and the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (see S/PV.9062), to name only a few. I also note the open debate on accountability held on 2 June (see S/PV.9052), which is also pertinent to today's debate.

I thank the briefers for their presentations this morning.

I also wish to highlight the leadership of the non-permanent members of the Council in promoting the women and peace and security agenda. That agenda is no longer confined to the commemoration of resolution 1325 (2000) every year on 31 October and the commemoration of International Women's Day every year on 8 March — instead, it is now mainstreamed within the Council's monthly agenda.

My delegation admires the role played by the Council's elected members in that regard, and we hope that those efforts will be increasingly reflected in the agenda's implementation on the ground, with the support of regional and subregional organizations. During its term on the Council for the period 2023 to 2024, the women and peace and security agenda will also be one of Ecuador's priorities.

Cooperation with regional organizations, as provided for in Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, is a concrete tool that promotes the effectiveness of the Security Council's efforts. In the case of conflict zones, regional organizations can foster greater effectiveness of efforts to reach peaceful settlements of disputes through confidence- and capacity-building, as well as verification and monitoring, all of which remain relevant to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and are mutually reinforcing.

By guaranteeing a stable environment, in particular a zero-tolerance approach to gender-based violence and sexual abuse against women, States can facilitate the participation of women in crisis response efforts

and can strengthen social cohesion, development and prevention at the local, international and regional levels.

On the other hand, not only does the seizure of power by force impact the rights of women, but all attempts to break the rule of law also undermine the situation of the civilian population, especially women and children. That is why we firmly condemn all acts of violence.

I would like to highlight the fact that special political missions have been cooperating with regional organizations to achieve greater inclusion and enhance the implementation of commitments undertaken in relation to women and peace and security. We must promote and strengthen regional action plans in that area, which also benefit from the contribution of civil society organizations, particularly women's organizations.

During the Fourth Committee's interactive dialogue on special political missions held on 3 June, my delegation addressed Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, specifically in preparation for today's debate. We asked her to elaborate on the additional specific support that the Security Council and the General Assembly require in order to improve regional cooperation for efforts to further the women and peace and security agenda. The response we received was direct and concrete. There are a number of undertakings and mechanisms that can be advanced, but greater investment and resources are needed, and for that, political will is essential. We share that opinion, and therefore today we would add that strengthening cooperation to reinforce accountability systems is imperative if we are to deter bad actors and prevent any loss of ground.

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

Mr. Chatrnúch (Slovakia): We thank the Permanent Mission of Albania for organizing this meeting. Slovakia acknowledges and welcomes the progress that has been made since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) towards achieving the meaningful participation of women in peace and security processes. In taking account of the fact that we are currently dealing with the greatest number of conflicts since the end of the Second World War, it is crucial that all stakeholders affirm their strong support for the equal and full participation of women in all efforts to establish and maintain international peace and security, while adopting and supporting concrete and targeted measures to that end.

We believe it is essential for the Security Council to continue to systematically and consistently advance, advocate and promote the women and peace and security agenda in all its work. Women contribute to ending conflicts, restoring shattered communities and sustaining peace. It is therefore necessary to equip them with essential skills, including relevant training, connect decision-makers with women leaders and ensure women's full participation in all relevant decision-making processes. This must be grounded in the hand-in-hand principle, and fostering cooperation between the United Nations and other organizations is therefore a vitally important issue.

We fully agree with the conclusion of the Secretary-General's September 2021 report (S/2021/827) on women and peace and security that national action plans have the potential to be important tools for guiding implementation efforts. We were pleased to see that besides the 98 countries and territories that have adopted dedicated action plans on women and peace and security, 12 regional organizations already had regional strategies or plans in place. We would like to take this opportunity to call on other relevant stakeholders to follow that approach in order to strengthen and advance the efforts to address the meaningful participation of women.

We want to stress that women not only contribute substantially to conflict prevention and resolution but are also still particularly affected by conflict situations. In that respect, we are horrified by the allegations of conflict-related sexual violence perpetrated by Russian forces, including gang rape and rapes committed in front of children, which we find particularly deplorable. Slovakia calls for an immediate cessation of Russian military activities in Ukraine and the unconditional withdrawal of all Russian troops from the entire territory of Ukraine.

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

Mr. Kulháněk (Czech Republic): First of all, let me thank the Albanian presidency of the Security Council for convening this timely and important meeting. With the number of conflicts in the world increasing, it is all the more important to discuss effective ways to implement the women and peace and security agenda. After all, the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and girls at all stages of peace processes and security efforts, as well as the protection of women and

girls' rights, is among the most effective tools we have for ensuring the sustainability of peace.

It is abundantly clear that in following through on our promises, we must make consistent and concerted efforts at the national, regional and international levels to fully implement resolution 1325 (2000) and all subsequent related resolutions. The Czech Republic is in the process of implementing its second national action plan for the period from 2021 to 2025. We would like to commend all Member States and regional organizations that have developed their respective action plans on women, peace and security. Let me encourage others that have not yet done so to join us. In general, from our perspective, there are three areas where urgent action is needed.

First, we have to strengthen our efforts to prevent, respond to and prosecute cases of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict situations. In that context, regional organizations have a special role to play in early-warning protection, monitoring and the collection of evidence. The survivors of such heinous crimes throughout the world, including of the Russian atrocities in places such as Bucha and Borodyanka, among others, deserve closure and justice. In that regard, we welcome all efforts undertaken by international entities such as the International Criminal Court, civil-society organizations and State actors to collect evidence of the sexual and gender-based violence that is reportedly being systematically perpetrated by Russian armed forces in Ukraine. Even one case of rape is one too many. We believe that accountability is the best means of prevention.

Secondly, we have to ensure a safe and enabling environment for the full, equal and meaningful participation of all women and girls, including representatives of women's civil-society organizations and human rights defenders. Women-led organizations are often at the forefront of crisis response. Yet they are being sidelined and lack sufficient funding. Moreover, they often face reprisals and harassment both online and offline, which is unacceptable. In that context, regional organizations should ensure that women have a seat at the table at all stages of conflict resolution, peace processes and peacebuilding. We applaud the Secretary-General on achieving gender parity among his senior leadership, and we call on all other organizations to follow suit.

Thirdly, we need relevant data and expertise to identify areas where we have to redouble our efforts and make them more context-specific. Gender advisers and gender-responsive conflict analysis are essential to integrating a gender perspective into our interventions and deliberations.

I want to conclude by reminding us all that we the Member States have committed time and again to the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. The mandate exists. Let us work together so that women and girls in all their diversity can contribute to and enjoy sustainable and lasting peace.

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

Ms. Bassols Delgado (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain is very grateful for the convening of this open debate on women and peace and security, which is an integral part of Spain's feminist foreign policy. At the same time, it is a cross-cutting and crucial dimension of the work of the Security Council, with which we share the goal of promoting women's participation in peace processes.

The seizure of power by force through coups d'état, wherever it happens in the world, is generally compounded by a deterioration in respect for human rights, which affects women and children in particular. The protracted use of force exponentially increases the risk of sexual violence, as we have unfortunately seen many times; respect for that nexus is therefore more necessary than ever.

We must empower women in times of peace so that their vulnerability is less in times of violence. We must empower women peacebuilders, women mediators, women journalists, women politicians, women human rights defenders and women working on humanitarian projects to contribute to the establishment of fundamental political frameworks for peace and prosperity in their countries.

The implementation of the women and peace and security agenda requires, in addition to the development of a gender dimension in peace operations, the important commitment of civil society as a key actor to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in mediation and peace negotiation processes. There will be no lasting solution to any conflict if women are not involved in the peace negotiations. There will be no

lasting peace if the rights of women and girls are not included into the political framework for peace.

Those principles are clearly reflected in resolution 1325 (2000) and the important Commitment 2025, launched by Finland and Spain at Headquarters in 2019. We all know that peace processes that are inclusive and ensure women's participation and leadership always yield results that are more stable and sustainable.

Spain understands that international regional organizations are key agents for a better dialogue with civil society in their member countries, as they have the knowledge, experience and human capital necessary to ensure greater effectiveness of the programmes and public policies related to the women and peace and security agenda.

For Spain, cooperation at the multilateral level serves as a catalyst to effectively support the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, in particular at the local level. It seems more important and necessary today than ever before to translate the agenda into concrete and effective programmes.

I would like to highlight today, by way of example, the cooperation and excellent relations between Spain and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), an organization that brings together, among other countries, the countries of the Western Sahel, in which the women and peace and security agenda is of paramount importance.

In December 2021, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Spain signed a memorandum of understanding with ECOWAS on cooperation in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. It was then proposed that the funds be managed through the ECOWAS Centre for Gender Development. The programmes to which they will be allocated are already being identified.

Part of the funding will go to the projects of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) Women's Platform, which aims to facilitate the mainstreaming of a gender-based approach and the priorities of women and girls into the initiatives and activities of the G-5 Sahel, thereby contributing to the development and stability of the region. ECOWAS's support in programme development and implementation will undoubtedly help ensure that the work of those women has a real and significant impact on the ground.

Spain wishes to express its continued support and firm commitment to the women and peace and security agenda. You, Madam President, can always count on us to ensure that every day the enormous gap is reduced between what has been achieved on paper in the resolutions and its real and effective implementation on the ground.

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

Mr. Koba (Indonesia): I would like to thank Albania for convening this debate. I also thank all the briefers for their informative briefings.

The role of regional organizations and mechanisms is vital in supporting the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. Three months ago in this Chamber, Indonesia highlighted the need for the Security Council to enhance its engagement and collaboration with regional initiatives on the women and peace and security agenda (see S/PV.8989). I am happy that today we are able to do that.

Allow me to highlight the following points.

First, it is important to promote and accentuate the significant achievements and progress of the women and peace and security agenda at the regional level. Over the past several years, we have witnessed many success stories in the implementation of women and peace and security initiatives at regional and national levels. Regional initiatives can often take the lead on global work on the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

For example, in our region in 2020 Indonesia established the Southeast Asian Network of Women Peace Negotiators and Mediators. Today we are working under that umbrella with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar to help empower women and youth in Myanmar's peace and development process. We believe the Council can play an important role in promoting good practices of the Secretary-General's women and peace and security initiative. Indonesia believes that positive approach will be impactful to motivate and encourage the wider implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

Secondly, regional initiatives are important building blocks of the global initiative. Regional organizations are best placed to understand the culture, needs and challenges related to implementing the women and peace

and security agenda in the region. In South-East Asia, for example, women and girls constitute almost half of the total population, while among the total population of women more than 280 million are young women. Therefore, the women and peace and security effort must take into account and encourage the meaningful participation of both girls and young women.

Indonesia is one example of the Peace Village initiative. That initiative focuses on the participation of girls and young people in sustaining peace and related challenges in the region. Such initiatives can be important complementarity and building blocks to global initiatives on women and peace and security.

Thirdly, the Council should continue to support close interregional initiatives on women and peace and security. Based on our experience, cross-regional cooperation on women's involvement in peace has great potential to accomplish the women and peace and security agenda.

Since 2019, Indonesia has been consistent in strengthening dialogue with Afghanistan on the women and peace and security agenda, including with the participation of Afghan women. That has enabled Indonesia to continue to stress to the current political authority the need to ensure the protection of women's and girls' rights, even during the current difficult times. That includes our continuous interaction with the authority on the need to ensure girls' right to education.

Our experience has shown that women and girls hold promising capacities and can be a tremendous asset for international peace and security. Against that backdrop, Indonesia calls on the United Nations to intensify its partnership with such women's regional peace networks.

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

Mr. Szczerski (Poland): I would like thank Albania for organizing today's open debate. My appreciation goes also to the briefers for their insightful remarks and their work to translate the women and peace and security agenda into reality.

We welcome the focus of this debate. We share the view that the enormous challenges currently witnessed in global politics have resulted in the increased relevance and role of regional organizations. They are often best positioned and equipped to understand and

react adequately to the root causes of armed conflicts in their respective regions.

Europe has the longest and most significant record of building collective security institutions at the regional level. In that regard, NATO, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union and the Council of Europe continue to play prominent and influential roles in conflict and post-conflict environments. We are glad that all those organizations have duly recognized the significance of the women and peace and security agenda for conflict prevention and resolution and have taken active steps to promote it and make it a reality.

Poland, as this year's OSCE Chairman-in-Office, is a strong advocate of the practical approach to the women and peace and security agenda, both in the workings of the organization and in the implementation of its activities. In that spirit, Poland has decided to give financial support to a number of projects implemented by the OSCE that aim to increase the number of women employed in sectors traditionally reserved for men, such as the energy sector and State security services, thereby strengthening women's participation in policymaking and in bodies dealing with water management and conflict resolution that focus on Central Asia and Afghanistan. We also commend the initiative of the OSCE Networking Platform for Women Leaders, launched in December by OSCE Secretary-General Helga Maria Schmid. The informal platform brings together mediators and experts involved in peace processes in the OSCE region in order to exchange experiences and best practices. In addition, we would like to highlight that the OSCE takes its commitments seriously, ensuring that supervisory positions related to security issues, such as positions of special representatives and heads of field missions, are entrusted to women. One such example is Olga Skripovskaia, who leads the largest team of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine in Donetsk.

The sustainability of the progress achieved so far in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda remains a priority. Furthermore, in view of the tragic events affecting Ukraine and Afghanistan, where the Taliban is effectively excluding half of the population from public life, as well as other conflict-affected societies all over the world, our determination to take more decisive action and go beyond the standard commitments under the women and peace and security agenda should be stronger. Poland believes firmly in the

value of regional security cooperation. We support the cooperation of all Europe-based regional organizations with the United Nations, as contact between them contributes to global and regional stability.

I would like to once again reiterate that close ties between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations are essential to ensuring the availability of a variety of tactics and solutions to global challenges. Just as the war in Ukraine has changed our approach to global security, it is similarly important to change our commitment to the women and peace and security agenda. We need more credibility, more practical engagement and more visibility. Poland stands ready to further support such cooperation so that it can fulfil its unquestionably untapped potential.

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

Ms. Sudhidhanee (Thailand): At the outset, Thailand would like to express its appreciation to Albania for convening today's open debate to advance the women and peace and security agenda. We also want to thank all the briefers.

Thailand is fully committed to the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda and welcomes the focus of our discussion today on the role of regional organizations. In this interconnected world, peace and security challenges cannot be overcome through national or even global efforts alone. Cooperation at the regional level is also important. As the birthplace of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and one of its founding members, Thailand attaches great importance to the role of ASEAN in particular and regional organizations in general in promoting peace and stability, and by extension to effective and mutually reinforcing regional multilateral partnerships. Recognizing women as agents of change and contributors to a peaceful and prosperous community, ASEAN has placed the women and peace and security agenda high on its agenda. In 2017, ASEAN's leaders adopted a joint statement on promoting women and peace and security in ASEAN that emphasizes the importance of women's full, equal and effective participation at all stages of peace processes. It also recognizes their indispensable roles in peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution and post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation.

Like other ASEAN member States, Thailand deploys women peacekeepers to United Nations peace

operations, while the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting is working on an initiative to enhance a support mechanism through capacity-building and the sharing of knowledge and experience. The ASEAN-United Nations Plan of Action 2021-2025 also aims to promote the women and peace and security agenda as a multilateral approach to sustaining regional and international peace and security. Areas of cooperation include conflict prevention and mediation, women's peacekeeping and peacebuilding and strengthening women's leadership and meaningful participation, as well as preventing violent extremism and trafficking in persons, ending conflict-related sexual violence and strengthening legal protection for women human rights defenders. On the basis of those regional policy frameworks, I would like to share some of Thailand's contributions in advancing the women and peace and security agenda at the regional level.

First, during Thailand's chairmanship of ASEAN, at the ASEAN Regional Forum in 2019 the ASEAN Regional Forum Ministers adopted a joint statement on promoting the women and peace and security agenda, of which Thailand was a sponsor. In a follow-up to the statement, Thailand, together with Indonesia and Canada, chaired an ASEAN Regional Forum workshop on women and peace and security in 2021 that provided a platform for discussing ways to advance the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as future trends, including the implications of the coronavirus disease pandemic and other emerging challenges.

Secondly, Thailand has also supported the ASEAN Women for Peace Registry, which was established in 2018 as a pool of women experts in peace processes in the region. Thailand's representatives at the Registry are actively engaged in developing a programme on women in peace processes under the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation. One of the programme's key components is capacity-building for women peace actors in the region.

Thirdly, Thailand also played a leading role in developing regional guidelines and procedures to address the needs of victims of trafficking in persons, in support of the implementation of the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

In conclusion, translating the women and peace and security agenda into concrete action on the ground

requires political will at all levels — national, regional and global — and close coordination between them. Thailand and ASEAN stand ready to work in concert with the international community generally and the United Nations in particular to promote gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and their engagement for sustainable peace and stability with the region and beyond.

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

Mrs. Narváez Ojeda (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am very pleased that my first statement in this main organ of the United Nations as Chile's Permanent Representative relates to the topic of women and peace and security. It has long been a primary focus of Chile's multilateral foreign policy and will be a priority in President Gabriel Boric's Government's development of its feminist foreign policy. I thank the Albanian presidency for convening today's open debate. I also want to highlight the initiative of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group in putting this topic on the Council's agenda, and I thank the briefers for their important contribution to today's discussion.

Chile aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, and reiterates its commitment to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and the nine subsequent resolutions on the matter.

It is worrying that in 2020 women accounted for only 23 per cent of the representatives in peace processes led or co-led by the United Nations. Moreover, the percentage of peace agreements with gender-based provisions stands at only 28.6 per cent. In that regard, Chile promotes the strengthening of regional and international cooperation to bring about structural changes to ensure the full and meaningful participation of all women at all levels of decision-making, the empowerment of all women, the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence and access to justice for victims and survivors, as well as accountability for the perpetrators.

At the regional level, Chile is a founding member of the Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network. Similarly, we are a co-founder of the Regional Network of Mediators of the Southern Cone, a forum for cooperation established to ensure an increase in the number of women receiving gender-sensitive mediation

training to enable them to participate in peace talks and mediation amid humanitarian crises or in conflict and post-conflict situations. Our country was also a pioneer in Latin America in drafting an action plan in 2009 for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Subsequently, a second action plan was drawn up, and a third one is currently being developed to ensure women's participation in the contexts of negotiation, mediation, peacebuilding and peace consolidation.

The current political circumstances, particularly the invasion of Ukraine, and the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war are equally a reminder that the theme of today's open debate must remain at the forefront of our efforts for a fairer world without violence. The safety of women, girls and boys and the setting up of, and strict respect for, humanitarian corridors in situations of war must be the focus of our collective efforts. We count on the support and cooperation of international organizations to meet the commitments of the women and peace and security agenda and to expedite the full, equal and meaningful participation of women, in all their diversity, in all decisions that involve them.

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

Mr. Lam Padilla (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Guatemala thanks Albania, in its capacity as President of the Security Council, for convening this open debate. It is undeniable that the issue of women and peace and security is becoming increasingly important to address in the Council. We also thank the briefers for their briefings.

Resolution 1325 (2000) was adopted by this organ more than 20 years ago, and progress in its implementation continues to be limited. While States have adopted national measures for the full implementation of that resolution and its 10 related resolutions, such as the national action plans or the various networks of focal points to address the issue, there are still challenges that we must overcome.

The Secretary-General's most recent annual report on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2022/272) of 29 March indicates that several recent unconstitutional takeovers were followed by widespread insecurity, economic crises and human rights violations, including the use of sexual violence before, during and after such events to subjugate and humiliate opposition groups and rival communities. The report also notes that some of

the actors who took power had been involved in patterns of conflict-related sexual violence for several years.

In the light of that, Guatemala believes that regional organizations are among the key actors in charge of implementing the women and peace and security agenda. Specifically, as stated in resolution 2242 (2015), while the main implementation role lies with States, regional organizations and United Nations entities play an important complementary role.

The role of regional organizations is also mentioned in the body of resolutions focusing on conflict-related sexual violence. For example, through resolution 1820 (2008), the Council urged regional and subregional bodies to consider the development and implementation of policies, activities and advocacy for women and girls affected by conflict-related sexual violence.

Also in 2013, resolution 2106 (2013) requested that, where appropriate, regional organizations, as well as the Secretary-General and Member States, ensure that mediators and envoys engage on issues of combating sexual violence, including civil society and groups of women and survivors of sexual violence, ensuring that such concerns are duly reflected in specific provisions of peace agreements.

Guatemala wishes to highlight the important role that women can, and should, play in peacebuilding. There is an important link between the full and meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention and resolution, reconciliation and reconstruction activities to ensure the effectiveness and long-term sustainability of such activities.

In conclusion, the international community must remove barriers that impede the strengthening of women's role in decision-making processes in conflict prevention and resolution and peacebuilding. There remains a need to increase women's representation at all levels of decision-making in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution.

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

Mrs. González Hernández (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, my delegation would like to thank your Permanent Mission and Security Council presidency, Madam President, for having convened this open debate and for giving Member States the opportunity to exchange information, as well as discuss

some of the best practices and lessons learned and make recommendations regarding the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, with an emphasis on the regional aspect.

My delegation associates itself with the statement of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, and wishes to make some reflections and share progress in its national capacity on the issue that brings us together.

In that regard, this is also an opportunity to convey to the members of the Council our concern about the most recent report of the Secretary General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2022/272) in March of this year, which underscores that, more than 20 years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), there are still challenges that must be addressed in order to fully improve the situation of women and girls in those difficult situations. The report also highlights practical ways to promote progress in improving gender equality in peace operations.

For Uruguay, regional organizations are a fundamental component that can not only contribute to concrete improvements on the ground, which can translate into women's greater participation in conflict and post-conflict negotiation processes, but also, in particular, identify the most serious problems affecting women and girls in in situations of conflict and systematic violence.

In line with resolution 2242 (2015), we agree that regional organizations can complement the efforts of States and, given their experience in their respective regions, provide tailor-made recommendations and promote exchanges among the various actors at both Government and civil society levels. Similarly, under resolution 1820 (2008), regional organizations can make efforts to include certain issues in policymaking by States — important elements that can be overlooked in setting other priorities.

Similarly, in the case of the Americas in particular, regional organizations may be useful in identifying regional approaches.

Strengthening regional positions, with the guidance and support of organizations that are familiar with the field and the particularities of the regions, therefore provides an opportunity to promote exchanges and, above all, to encourage the learning of good practices taking place in the regions.

The African Union stands an example of success, which has led not only to greater collaboration among countries, but also to women's more active participation in all stages of the process. We understand that, together with regional organizations, the Americas could also benefit from such an experience.

In that regard, in relation to the region, as was mentioned earlier by the representative of Chile, we also highlight the launching, in March 2021, of the Regional Network of Women Mediators of the Southern Cone, comprising Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay. It is a pioneering project that seeks to give visibility to the important work done by women to prevent conflicts in their communities and strengthen the social fabric through the exchange of experiences, good practices, lessons learned and the promotion of joint actions with other regional networks of women mediators and international organizations.

My country is currently awaiting administrative approval to launch its first national action plan on women and peace and security. Given the experience of other countries in the region in implementing such commitments, their experiences are very useful.

In addition, in the context of the Elsie Initiative, Uruguay is one of the first countries in the world to have completed its studies on barriers to the deployment of women in peacekeeping operations, known as Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations reports, at the level of both its armed forces and its national police. In that regard, Uruguay is willing to share the results of those exercises, as well as its good practices resulting from policies aimed at overcoming that situation.

Finally, I would like to say that, while there is still a long way to go, we understand that, through the various bodies of the United Nations system, South-South cooperation can be fostered for the sharing of best practices and training at the regional level.

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

Mr. Kadiri (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): It is a real pleasure, Madam President, to see your friendly country, Albania, preside over the work of the Security Council for the month of June. At the outset, my delegation would like to thank the Albanian presidency for organizing this open debate on an issue of the highest importance — women and peace and security.

I also thank all of the briefers for their pertinent and informative presentations.

Aware of women's contributions as critical mechanisms to sound an early warning on social tensions, of their sensitivity to threats to personal, family and community security and of their fight against extremism in local discourse, as well as of their role in mediation, Morocco participates actively in a number of initiatives, such as the promotion of mediation in the Mediterranean, launched by Morocco and Spain, the training of murshidats and women preachers and the holding, in Morocco, of an international conference on women and peace and security.

In addition, Morocco recently adopted a national action plan on women and peace and security. The plan is part and parcel of the royal initiative for the promotion of gender equality as a foundation of a just, democratic and egalitarian society. In that connection, His Majesty King Mohammed VI has stressed that

“[t]he issue undoubtedly requires an overall renewal through a profound transformation of archaic mindsets and collective conscience. It requires that women be given the opportunity to become involved in all aspects of the life of the nation.”

The submission of Morocco's national action plan on women and peace and security is not a mere formality. On the contrary, it is a concrete manifestation of Morocco's determination and commitment to gender equality and its conviction that the women and peace and security agenda is an essential component of the maintenance of international peace and security.

The women and peace and security agenda makes women agents of change and equal partners in decision-making processes. It has the potential to be transformative because it recognizes that development cannot be sustainable unless it is inclusive, that peace cannot be achieved if women do not participate and that security cannot be complete if it does not take into account the needs of women and girls, particularly the most vulnerable.

Unfortunately, we still live in a world where women are affected, now more than ever, by humanitarian crises, armed conflicts and natural disasters. The gap between words and deeds is therefore widening. Conflicts have devastating consequences all over the world, particularly for women and girls, as they are most often the targets of sexual and gender-based

violence and exclusion from political processes to establish peace and bolster security. The coronavirus disease pandemic has amplified their vulnerability and the risks they face.

The efforts of Morocco to achieve the objectives of the women and peace and security agenda are part of its action to promote a multilateralism that is based on action, that goes beyond mere declarations of intention, that is translated into concrete initiatives to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable and that is guided by the evolving current threats to international peace and security. The road map for the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda must be guided by those evolving threats. It is therefore critical to strengthen international and regional cooperation in capacity-building and the training of women in preventive diplomacy, mediation, peacekeeping and the prevention of violent extremism, as well as to create synergies between the women and peace and security agenda, the human rights normative framework and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Morocco actively participated in the launching of the African Women Leaders Network in New York in June 2017. Morocco welcomes that the Network has since been able to create a continental force of women leaders that contribute to the transformation of Africa, in line with the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In December 2019, the Network launched its Morocco chapter in Casablanca. The chapter seeks to strengthen women's leadership at all levels of decision-making in the political, economic and public spheres. Its work is focused on several areas — the empowerment of rural women, political participation, peace and security, young women's leadership, financial inclusion and social mobilization.

In conclusion, Morocco remains committed to working together with the United Nations, regional organizations and partners in order to advance the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda as part of its national action plan. Women are the most vulnerable and targeted members of the population in conflict situations. Their participation in peace processes improves the likelihood of conflict resolution, promotes lasting peace agreements and boost national reconciliation and socioeconomic reintegration.

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

Mr. Khandamishvili (Georgia): At the outset, I would like to express my appreciation to the Albanian presidency for convening this important and timely meeting. I also thank the briefers for their insightful presentations.

Regional organizations play a crucial role in conflict prevention and resolution and in post-conflict recovery, as well as in the implementation of the resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions, as they offer a valuable platform for sharing best practices and proposing solutions to the existing challenges.

In that regard, I would like to reaffirm Georgia's commitment to integrating gender perspectives in decision-making, protecting the rights of women and promoting their meaningful participation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, in line with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Today, as we gather to discuss the women and peace and security agenda, Russia's unjustified, unprovoked and premeditated full-scale military aggression against Ukraine continues, bringing with it devastating humanitarian consequences and immense suffering for the civilian population, especially women and girls. Particularly outrageous are reports about Russian forces perpetrating sexual violence as a weapon of war against women and girls. In that regard, it is imperative that accountability be ensured and justice be served for those gross violations through all available international legal instruments.

The ongoing military aggression against Ukraine, as well as the continued occupation and creeping annexation of the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali, blatantly violate the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and undermine the rules-based international order, thereby jeopardizing regional and global security.

Despite persisting challenges, Georgia is sparing no effort to increase women's participation in areas pertaining to international peace and security, including through engagement with relevant regional organizations. Since 2021, with the aim of promoting gender-equality in institutions and increasing women's participation in politics and electoral processes, Georgia has been participating in a project through the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe entitled "Capitalizing on the Human Dimension Mandate to Advance Gender Equality". The project includes up to 40 different programmes for

representatives of the Parliament, local municipalities and the Government Administration.

Georgia actively cooperates with the relevant mechanisms of the Council of Europe related to various aspects of gender equality. We contribute to the work of the Council of Europe's Gender Equality Commission, as well the independent Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.

At the national level, based on key findings, recommendations and consultations with regional organizations and civil society, the Government of Georgia is finalizing its fourth national action plan on women and peace and security for the period 2022 to 2024. The plan constitutes the Government's approach to integrating gender perspectives in the security sector and in decision-making processes by using a gender lens in peace negotiations and by promoting the meaningful participation of women and girls in conflict prevention and resolution.

At the Geneva International Discussions and the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms, the delegation of Georgia regularly raises issues related to the needs and priorities of women internally displaced persons and conflict-affected women.

I take this opportunity to highlight that, on 17 June, the President of Georgia will host the Tbilisi Women's International Conference — Leaders on Conflicts, Peace and Security, which will gather women leaders from all over the world to discuss their role in fostering peace and security.

In conclusion, let me reaffirm Georgia's commitment to advancing the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda at the national level and to promoting its implementation within regional and international forums in order to contribute to strengthening the role of regional organizations, especially in the current challenging environment.

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

Mr. Larbaoui (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the delegation of Albania on its presidency of the Security Council during this month and to wish it every success in discharging its mandate. I would also like to commend the efforts of the United States during its presidency of the Council last month.

The topic we are discussing today is of paramount importance. The implementation of the women and peace and security agenda is a key component of international and regional efforts to achieve lasting peace, given the crucial role of women in that regard. However, unconstitutional changes of government undermine the capacity of States to guarantee women's security and stability. The effective and meaningful participation of women in political activity and all other aspects of life is a cornerstone of any policy that seeks to strengthen stability and achieve sustainable development, or to address the effects of unconstitutional changes of government and the resulting disruption of political discourse and dissolution of constitutional institutions, which threaten to reverse previous gains, especially those related to women's empowerment.

The delegation of Algeria stresses the need to develop comprehensive strategies on gender equality and women's empowerment in order to ensure women's participation in peace and security operations, as well as in political processes. The protection of women during conflict and post-conflict situations must also be ensured, including by supporting the substantive presence of women at all levels and in all aspects of life.

My delegation would like to touch upon several points contained in the important concept note circulated by the presidency (S/2022/457, annex).

Resolution 1325 (2000) serves as a benchmark for Member States and regional organizations in developing programmes for the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, as well as for the elaboration of action plans and strategies at the regional and national levels that effectively address its four pillars. Such strategies should take into consideration regional and national specificities and demands so as to guarantee the harmonization of policies and ensure transparency and accountability with respect to the safety and security of women.

In view of the negative impact of unconstitutional changes of government on States' security and stability, the then Organization of African Unity (OAU) adopted the 2000 Lomé Declaration on the framework for an OAU response to unconstitutional changes of Government, which requires that the membership of any country subject to such unconstitutional changes be suspended. The Lomé Declaration also stresses, in principle IV, the promotion of political plurality and all forms of participatory democracy, including by

enhancing the role of civil society and ensuring gender balance in political processes.

That approach, which was later reaffirmed by the African Union, was enshrined a few days ago in the Malabo declaration on terrorism and unconstitutional changes of Government in Africa, which calls for “a strong response and deepening democracy and collective security”, including synergized efforts to create an environment conducive to effective participation of women in political processes.

The League of Arab States has made considerable strides in enhancing the role of women in conflict prevention and the peaceful settlement of disputes, including by providing women with the necessary tools to participate in mediation processes by effectively implementing the women and peace and security agenda in the Arab world.

Algeria believes in the importance of women’s participation in the context of the African Union and supports their effective participation in negotiations on conflict prevention and mediation at all levels. Consequently, Algeria was a pioneer in the creation of FemWise-Africa, the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation in the framework of peace and security in Africa, and hosted the Network’s first general assembly in 2017.

We commend all actions taken by regional and international organizations to implement the women and peace and security agenda. We stress the need for cooperation and coordination among them, especially between the Security Council and the African Union, including the latter’s Peace and Security Council.

Algeria is honoured to organize an annual high-level seminar on peace and security in Africa in the city of Wahran. Its aim is to support Africa’s voice in the Security Council. Within the context of the League of Arab States, Algeria also made a significant contribution to establishing an emergency committee on the protection of women in armed conflict, which led to the creation of the Arab Women Mediators Network in February 2020.

In conclusion, given the importance of the topic we are discussing today, it is clear that the women and peace and security agenda cannot be discussed from only one perspective but is part of a comprehensive vision that aims to empower women in all aspects of life, while ensuring their safety and stability. That can

be achieved only by addressing the internal and external factors that cause political crises and by intensifying efforts to ensure that no one is left behind or deprived of sustainable development.

The implementation of the goals of resolution 1325 (2000) requires synergized efforts at all levels in a spirit of international solidarity. Unfortunately, on many occasions such solidarity has been limited when it comes to addressing the socioeconomic aspects of conflict prevention and the achievement of lasting security for the international community.

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

Mr. Mainero (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): In resolution 1325 (2000), the Security Council recognized for the first time the central role that women must play in conflict prevention and resolution. Since then, the world has become more aware of the positive contribution of women in conflict situations and why their meaningful participation in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding processes is essential.

However, significant gaps in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) persist. More than 20 years have elapsed since its adoption, and yet very little progress has been made. Despite the advances made at the level of the normative framework, those achievements are not reflected on the ground. The role of national Governments and regional organizations is crucial in closing those gaps.

The exclusion of women has become particularly prominent in the context of military coups and the seizure of power by force. We have witnessed the abrupt interruption of national commitments to women and peace and security, including through the dismantling of gender-based policies. In the context of military coups or the seizure of power by force, regional organizations, with their experience in mediation and conflict prevention and resolution, can have a positive impact on the protection, promotion and implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

Regional organizations are often the first to react to a crisis, engage the parties concerned and guarantee the protection of civilians. They are in a unique position to build confidence and promote dialogue among the parties, as well as to offer support through mediation and reconciliation.

Regional organizations play a fundamental role in advancing the women and peace and security agenda. That is why, in the regional context, the Argentine Republic has promoted the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in various forums. Specifically, we promoted the inclusion of the topic of women and peace and security on the agenda of the Southern Common Market, as well as at the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Against that backdrop, we would like to highlight the Santiago Commitment, adopted in 2020, whereby the parties agreed to promote measures to ensure the full and effective participation of women at all levels and at all stages of peace processes and mediation, conflict prevention and conflict resolution initiatives.

Argentina also advocated the establishment of the Regional Network of Women Mediators of the Southern Cone, launched in Buenos Aires in March 2021 by the Ministers of the member countries of the Southern Common Market. The Regional Network is a pioneering project in Latin America and the Caribbean that highlights the important work done by women in preventing conflict in their communities and strengthening the social fabric and ways of preventing conflicts through dialogue and mediation. The initiative also represents a contribution by the countries of the Southern Cone to achieving the aim of creating more just, inclusive and peaceful societies that is Sustainable Development Goal 16. The women and peace and security agenda must be a priority not only for the Security Council but the entire United Nations. Women are agents of change and pillars of their communities. Argentina remains committed to realizing that vision and views the women and peace and security agenda as an integral part of efforts for peacebuilding and security.

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

Mr. Poveda Brito (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela welcomes the convening of this important open debate to address the role of regional organizations in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, and in particular their approach in the context of political unrest and the seizure of power by force. That is an especially relevant issue today, given the many cases of foreign intervention and destabilization, as well as political

exploitation — of human rights issues and of the natural social and economic challenges that every nation has to deal with — in order to overthrow Governments and alter the constitutional order of sovereign and independent countries that refuse to yield to foreign blackmail, pressure and coercion.

Our country is a faithful defender of the Charter of the United Nations and has historically advocated total respect for and adherence to the principles and purposes it enshrines, including the promotion of friendly and cooperative relations among States, based on mutual respect and the recognition of their sovereign equality and the inalienable right of their peoples to self-determination. It is therefore an increasingly urgent ethical and moral duty to make those values more visible every day as ideals and as commitments to be translated into concrete political action. In that regard, after thousands of years of exclusion, women's progress on rights issues and the increase in their active and sustained participation in political activity at all levels — in addition to their contributions to the prevention and resolution of conflicts at different stages and the maintenance and consolidation of peace — must be a priority on the agenda of multilateral and regional organizations in the same way it is in terms of the cross-cutting realization of national public policies in Venezuela and in itself represents a definitive means for the effective realization of the three pillars of the Organization.

The effort to build Latin American unity that our region has made in recent years, despite its differences, is based on a firm commitment to women's advancement and political, economic and social participation in an environment that — although it is not involved in bitter armed conflicts — has fallen prey to other systemic forms of aggression as the consequence of poverty, destabilization and other forms of interference that not only claim women, girls and other vulnerable populations as their main victims but also jeopardize public policies promoting their continued inclusion and guaranteeing their rights.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has repeatedly condemned in numerous international forums the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures, which constitute one weapon of multipronged warfare that exploits human rights issues, financial systems, humanitarian assistance, supply chains, information and communications technologies, access to universal health care, education and countless other infrastructure

systems necessary to a State's sustainability and development, with the goal of imposing a single thought system through a hegemonic political bloc. One of the main and most harmful results of such cruel and inhuman policies of aggression, among many others, is its effect on States' political stability and the setbacks it brings in rights previously gained, including women's rights. That is something we have seen so many times, in particular with regard to attempted coups d'état, failed and successful assassinations, funding, logistical support and safe havens for mercenary and terrorist groups and worse forms of intervention, including from the Latin American and Caribbean region. We demand a full and definitive end to those criminal aggressions.

My country supports the efforts of the United Nations, all regional and subregional organizations and the States leading in the area to strengthen the women and peace and security agenda, as we are aware of the complexity of the challenges that remain on the horizon. Meanwhile, we want to take this opportunity to reaffirm firmly and categorically our condemnation of sexual exploitation and abuse in all cases, including within international organizations, while reaffirming zero tolerance for such crimes and the vital importance of bringing all those responsible to justice.

In conclusion, Venezuela reiterates that it will continue to work to promote and strengthen the agenda for women's advancement and empowerment at all levels and in all arenas — including in regional organizations and other political cooperation forums to which we belong, such as the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States — while reaffirming and actively defending women's full participation, ensuring their human rights, equal opportunities and equity and combating the feminization of poverty, all of which are crucial to building true peace and represent urgently needed measures in the struggle for the emancipation and definitive transformation of our peoples and the realization of the ideals enshrined in the Charter. It is a commitment to which Venezuela will continue to dedicate all the resources it commands, despite the constant attacks and obstacles imposed by foreign Powers, while remaining faithful to its historical vocation to promote the possibility of a better world, with greater prosperity and inclusion for all.

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

Ms. Baptista Grade Zacarias (Portugal): Portugal aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the European Union and by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security.

In my national capacity, I want to focus on the commitment to respect for all women and girls' human rights and their protection and fulfilment, and to underline the importance of women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace negotiations, peacebuilding and peacemaking. In that regard, I would like to stress the importance of including and mainstreaming the women and peace and security agenda within military doctrines, formative frameworks and practices of State and non-State actors. That is equally important at both the national and regional levels. We must do more and be mindful of all women and girls whose fundamental human rights are under attack. We must support them in their plight and take stock of some of the direst situations, such as in Yemen, Afghanistan and Myanmar, and in Ukraine following the Russian invasion.

Sexual violence as a weapon of war and a method of intimidating civilian populations must be brought to an end. It is paramount to fight impunity, reprisals, promote prevention and ensure accountability, bringing women into decision-making processes, diplomacy and political dialogue. Regional organizations must integrate those aspects into their work. That is also our commitment in the scope of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, which in 2021 adopted an action plan for the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, which is aligned with its strategic plan on gender equality and women's empowerment.

For its part, Portugal is implementing the third edition of its national action plan on resolution 1325 (2000), based on three main objectives: prevention, protection and participation. As a result of its long-standing commitment and action over the years, Portugal has included the women and peace and security agenda and a gender-equality perspective into its operational and strategic documents, namely, in its development cooperation, defence, security and justice sectors.

As an outcome, I would like to highlight that our development cooperation devotes more than one third of its bilateral assistance — about 35 per cent — to initiatives promoting gender equality and

women's empowerment. We believe that approach contributes to implementing the women and peace and security agenda with a focus on prevention, namely, in contexts where political and social stability might face challenges, by building resilience and helping to further strengthen the role of women in society.

That is also a priority for Portugal as a current member of the Peacebuilding Commission, in which we have been highlighting the need to support the action of women peacebuilders at the grass-roots level in a way that is aligned with and feeds into the respective national priorities. In achieving that objective, the

support of regional organizations can also play a considerable catalytic role.

As this debate comes to an end, I want to thank you, Madam President, for bringing this matter into the Security Council. Let me assure you that Portugal stands ready to continue to push for the women and peace and security agenda — both nationally and internationally — not only by advocating it but also by implementing it from an integrated and horizontal perspective.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.