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<i>President:</i>	Mr. Parham	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	Austria	Mr. Heissel
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Somdah
	China	Mr. Pan Jingyu
	Costa Rica	Mr. Guillermet
	Croatia	Ms. Čačić
	France	Ms. Gasri
	Japan	Mr. Teruuchi
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Belkheir
	Mexico	Mr. Ochoa
	Russian Federation	Mr. Chernenko
	Turkey	Mrs. Bademli Angel
	Uganda	Mr. Mugoya
	United States of America	Ms. Phipps
	Viet Nam	Ms. Hoang Thi Thanh Nga

Agenda

Women and peace and security

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 1820 (2008) (S/2009/362)

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The meeting resumed at 3.10 p.m.

The President: I wish to remind all speakers, as my colleague Ambassador Sawers did this morning, to limit their statements to no more than five minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate their texts in writing and deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I now give the floor to the representative of Finland.

Mrs. Schroderus-Fox (Finland): Finland fully aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union. Given the importance of our topic today, I want to add some further remarks on the Secretary-General's first-ever report on sexual violence (S/2009/362).

It is our firm conviction that we must all endorse the application of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) to their fullest extent. Conflict situations remain a severe threat to the lives of women and children as conflicts develop without front lines and violence erupts suddenly. Women and children, and sometimes men, are raped and sexually abused during and in the aftermath of armed conflicts.

A year ago, this Council took a major step forward by condemning the use of rape and other forms of sexual violence as a tactic of war in armed conflicts. The Council highlighted the link between safeguarding international peace and security and the struggle against sexual violence. The international community has begun to recognize the seriousness of this grave challenge to peace and security. The real test lies in translating resolution 1820 (2008) into working practices on the ground.

Systematic rape in conflict leaves devastating wounds on society for decades. It should be considered a weapon of war and, as such, an integral part of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. Reintegration compensation should not be processed if this tactic of war continues. This was one of the issues stressed at the women's leadership conference convened in Monrovia in March 2009 by the Presidents of the Republics of Liberia and Finland.

It is of the utmost importance that the victims of rape and sexual abuse have access to legal process and

that perpetrators be prosecuted and convicted. We must end the impunity of perpetrators. As noted by the Secretary-General in his report, the strict enforcement of a policy of zero tolerance, both by national authorities and by all international actors engaged in humanitarian, crisis management and peacebuilding activities, is essential. The international community and the individual States concerned need to pursue ways to ensure adequate protection, health care and counselling for the victims.

We must also remember that women are not merely victims in conflicts; they are active agents in solving and ending conflicts and leading society through the healing process. We cannot afford to ignore their leadership, knowledge, capacities and commitment.

Women should be involved in decision-making processes at all levels. To make this a reality, more women must be in high-level positions in decision-making, both nationally and internationally. Involvement in negotiation processes must be based on true participation and the possibility of influencing negotiations.

Opportunities for women's participation should be a part of the earliest stages of planning and preparing a peacekeeping mission. Furthermore, the number of female civilian and military personnel in United Nations peacekeeping and political missions should be increased, especially in leadership positions. Women's engagement in peacebuilding and reconstruction through non-governmental organizations should receive greater support.

We must urgently put into practice the commitments of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008). The Secretary-General's report gives valuable recommendations for action. We must give hope to all victims who suffer from these horrific crimes of war and make sure that we efficiently prevent violence and deliver justice.

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

Mr. Barriga (Liechtenstein): Mr. President, we would like to thank you for organizing today's debate on women and peace and security, an important topic on which we have seen significant institutional progress in recent years. Nevertheless, the relevant country-specific reports of the Secretary-General draw

a grim picture of the realities on the ground. We continue to witness the increasing victimization of civilians in armed conflicts and sexual violence since the adoption of resolution 1820 (2008). The number of such incidents has increased in countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic.

We are therefore engaged in a timely debate, and we welcome the Secretary-General's report (S/2009/362) and the recommendations contained therein. We hope that this debate will take us a step further towards the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) within the United Nations system. We would also like to take this opportunity to emphasize that the use of sexual violence as a method of warfare to achieve military ends must be considered a matter of international peace and security.

The implementation of resolutions 1820 (2008) and 1325 (2000) is a complex and multisectoral undertaking. We must build on the lessons learned in connection with resolution 1325 (2000), with regard to both the participation and the protection agendas. Consequently, we support the creation of a specific capacity within the Secretariat to effectively contribute to the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) by coordinating the respective activities of the various actors in the United Nations system.

It is clear that acts of sexual violence cannot effectively be prevented without obtaining and analyzing the relevant data. Given the complex nature and sensitivity of data collection, we strongly support the Secretary-General's call for all United Nations actors to respect the ethical and safety standards of the World Health Organization for researching, measuring and collecting data on sexual violence. Such data should be systematically collected and analysed by highly qualified and trained United Nations staff. United Nations experts should work in close cooperation with other relevant bodies to develop better prevention strategies and support services for survivors.

Resolution 1820 (2008) also requires the Secretary-General to present proposals for the effective collection of information pertaining to the use of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict. We also support the Secretary-General's recommendation on the immediate establishment of a commission of inquiry to investigate violations of international

humanitarian and human rights law in certain ongoing conflicts. The proposed commission would report to the Security Council and be supported by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The goal would be to ensure accountability, bring the perpetrators of such crimes to justice and prevent the commission of similar crimes. The primary responsibility in this respect must lie with the State concerned, and the involvement of international mechanisms and institutions must occur only where national judiciaries are not available or unable to effectively combat impunity.

In this respect, the central role of the International Criminal Court (ICC) must also be taken into account. The ICC, which has already proven to have a preventive effect on the ground, plays a key role in the fight against impunity, in particular where States are unable or unwilling to prosecute acts of sexual violence that can also qualify as war crimes or as crimes against humanity.

Finally, we would like to add that we support the idea of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations initiating a pilot project, based on its successful child protection adviser system, to improve the United Nations response to sexual violence. Such advisers have proven to be extremely productive and effective.

The Department of Peacekeeping Operations could consider deploying women protection advisers who would document sexual violence and help survivors get better access to assistance and follow-up support and protection. These advisers would report back to the Department, as well as to other relevant United Nations and non-United Nations partners on the ground, and they would serve as focal points for information-sharing and coordination among all sectors. We believe that such a mechanism would be an important step towards implementation of resolution 1820 (2008).

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

Mr. Normandin (Canada) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Government of Canada, I wish to thank the United Kingdom presidency for having convened this open debate on Security Council resolution 1820 (2008), on sexual violence in situations of armed conflict. This debate is indeed timely at a time when

we are calling for further concerted action to combat and prevent sexual violence.

Canada, through the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, is pleased to support the presence of women officers from the United Nations police at this open debate. Their experiences and advice are invaluable as we advance our collective understanding of how interventions against sexual violence can be more effective. Their presence also highlights the critical importance of increasing the number of women officers in the field. This can empower women to come forward to report sexual violence, while at the same time presenting women in positions of authority and power, a key element in breaking the cycle of sexual violence.

I would like to draw attention to the round table held yesterday with those United Nations police officers. The round table usefully complemented today's open debate and sparked an enriching discussion about challenges and best practices in investigating sexual violence in conflict. It also highlighted the need for capacity-building for women police officers and the importance of their role in national police services.

Canada welcomes the report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/362) and his commitment to ensure increased attention to sexual violence. The report provides important contributions towards improving our collective understanding of the issue. We would therefore like subsequent reports to contain more information from the field, including the response to the issue by the United Nations system and its missions.

Canada would very much welcome an annual report on the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008). We also urge the Council to request that the next report include a proposal for a Security Council mechanism to consider and act on information concerning sexual violence. Monitoring and reporting mechanisms can provide the international community with the data it needs to effectively monitor and strengthen the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008).

(spoke in English)

Canada would also like to encourage the Security Council to give priority attention to the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report which address the establishment and renewal of

mandates, the monitoring of resolutions and enforcement measures and sanctions.

We would like to express our strong interest in two additional proposals contained in the report: the proposal to establish a commission of inquiry to investigate and report on sexual violence and the proposal that all data on sexual violence be reviewed by an existing working group or groups. We would submit, however, that the creation of a dedicated working group may be a more effective response, and we urge the Council to consider that option. At a minimum, we must ensure that sexual violence perpetrated against adults as well as children is included in the Council's considerations. Ultimately, we would like to see the Council adopt structural and lasting initiatives that will make a real difference to those targeted by sexual violence.

We would also like to raise the issue of bringing violators to justice. An important step forward in that direction was taken by the Special Court for Sierra Leone. The Special Court, as members may remember, was the first to pronounce convictions on the charge of sexual slavery and on the crime of forced marriage as a crime against humanity.

In that regard, Canada would like to stress the following. Amnesty clauses within peace accords which can be interpreted as exempting perpetrators of sexual violence from being held accountable directly contravene resolution 1820 (2008) as well as many other previous international commitments. We are deeply dismayed by the failure to implement fully this essential element of 1820 (2008) during the year since its adoption.

We also emphasize the importance of the establishment by States of vetting mechanisms to exclude perpetrators of sexual violence from armed forces, where credible allegations supported by evidence have been brought against those perpetrators.

In conclusion, the Secretary-General's report contains a number of important recommendations that would strengthen the international response to sexual violence in conflict situations, and those recommendations warrant serious consideration. Security Council members may rest assured that Canada remains committed to actively supporting the Council in its efforts to combat sexual violence in conflict-affected situations.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Papua New Guinea.

Mr. Aisi (Papua New Guinea): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Pacific small island developing States represented at the United Nations, namely the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Tonga, Vanuatu and my own country, Papua New Guinea.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the United Kingdom on its assumption of the presidency and on presiding over this debate on the subject of women and peace and security. I would also like to acknowledge the Secretary-General's recent report (S/2009/362) on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1820 (2008).

Resolution 1820 (2008) builds on resolution 1325 (2000). It has compelled the international community to finally recognize sexual violence committed during conflict situations as a crime punishable by law. Sexual and gender-based violence is no longer a by-product of war and conflict. It can no longer be seen as collateral damage of war. We, the international community, have decided that enough is enough, that sexual violence in war and conflicts is intolerable and that the practice must be prevented at all costs.

We commend the Security Council and the Secretary-General for engaging in high-level diplomacy and advocacy. The recent developments in integrating the issue of sexual and gender-based violence into the peace process in countries such as, for example, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, are a strong step forward for the Security Council. The Council has communicated to the leaders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to the global community at large that sexual and gender-based violence in times of conflict is intolerable. We commend the Council for providing assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in monitoring incidents of gender-based violence.

Furthermore, we are also encouraged that the issue of sexual and gender-based violence has now become an integral element of the Council's assessment and evaluation of peacekeeping missions, increasing the legitimacy and accountability of peacekeeping troops.

We commend the Secretary-General's concerted effort to promote a more coordinated and systematic approach towards gender-based violence. We also commend the work implemented by the recent United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict initiative. United Nations Action unites the work of 12 United Nations entities with the goal of ending sexual and gender-based violence in conflicts. It takes a holistic approach to sexual violence in conflict by coordinating the efforts and work carried out by individual United Nations agencies on the matter. Such systemic coordination and cooperation improve accountability, amplify programming and advocacy, and increase support for national efforts in the prevention of sexual gender-based violence.

United Nations Action takes the following actions to attain the objectives of resolution 1820 (2008), which we recommend to the global community. At the country level, it supports joint strategy development and programming by United Nations country teams and peacekeeping operations, including building operational and technical capacity. In the area of advocacy among the public at large, it takes action to raise public awareness and generate the political will to address sexual violence as part of a broader campaign to stop rape now. Through learning by doing, which is important to many of us, it creates a hub of knowledge on the scale of sexual violence in conflict and on effective responses by the United Nations and its partners.

We believe that more can be done to fully attain the objectives outlined in resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008). Currently, there are a few outstanding issues that should be further addressed. They include the need to strengthen and coordinate a systematic approach by international organizations, including the need to strengthen the coordination of regional organizations and mechanisms in dealing with sexual-based violence in conflict situations. We also believe that there is a need to strengthen national priorities, legal frameworks, personnel training and public advocacy to exterminate the practice of sexual-based violence. Finally, we believe that there is a need to increase the participation of women in conflict resolution, peace negotiation, peacekeeping troops and the rebuilding and reintegration of soldiers and communities.

Recently, Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro, in her address to the Security Council in April

this year on United Nations support for advancing the national implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), put forth a practical framework involving the “three Ps”: protection, participation and prevention in developing national action plans. We believe that the three Ps provide a broad and practical framework that can also be applied to Security Council resolution 1820 (2008). Allow me to briefly highlight some of the relevant aspects of the three Ps.

In the area of protection, we recognize the need to strengthen our collective determination to treat rape and sexual assault in conflict situations with the same determination as that with which we address any other factors of war. One of the obstacles preventing the full implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) is the tendency of Governments and military personnel to treat gender-based violence as a by-product of war, not as a crime.

We believe that there is an ad hoc approach to women’s security in times of conflict. Until recently, gender-based violence was often an afterthought following the occurrence of conflict. There is a need to protect women and children by building protection policies into national security strategies, legislation and peace negotiations.

Secondly, with regard to protection, we believe that there is a need to establish a firm and clear international norm when it comes to the prosecution of crimes involving gender-based violence in times of conflict. Perpetrators cannot go unpunished. The United Nations system and the Security Council must strengthen their resolve to collect evidence-based data to support accounts of sexual gender-based violence. Deployed soldiers and peacekeepers need to be properly trained and debriefed.

As far as participation is concerned, we believe that we need to encourage women’s engagement in conflict resolution and prevention and in the negotiation of peace agreements, as their participation greatly increases the prospects for sustaining peace during times of conflict. Engaging women in post-conflict dialogue and policies will ensure their participation in creating a system-wide effort that includes results-based monitoring and social provisions.

We believe that there is a direct link between poverty and security. In countries with high rates of sexual gender-based violence, the economic capacities

of women are often diminished. In many developing nations, the traditional role of women and their relationship to land make them important contributors to food production and economic growth. And it has been recognized that the economic empowerment of women is an effective way to combat sexual gender-based violence. However, we find that the current United Nations programmes are unsustainable and often being cut short when funding is depleted. We in the Pacific in particular would therefore like to encourage the United Nations to invest more resources and to strengthen existing agencies in order to promote the link between women’s economic empowerment and security.

Pacific leaders are committed to the eradication of sexual gender-based violence. In June this year, the Pacific Islands Forum Regional Security Committee discussed the issue of gender-based violence and reaffirmed that sexual gender-based violence is a growing and serious concern and requires concerted national and regional response. Just this week, at the fortieth Pacific Islands Forum group meeting held in Australia, our leaders, together with those of Australia and New Zealand, reaffirmed their commitment to eliminating sexual gender-based violence. The Forum communiqué acknowledged sexual gender-based violence as a threat to human security in the region. The leaders welcome collaborative efforts at the local, national and regional levels to address the issue and would like to increase their engagement with global initiatives to address the issue.

Following are some examples of the initiatives taken in our region. In Vanuatu, a Family protection act has been enacted; in my own country, there have been many advances in the legal arena, such as through the establishment of a family sexual violence unit; and in Solomon Islands, a sexual assault unit and a family violence unit have been established.

Finally, Pacific Islands such as Fiji, Vanuatu, Samoa and Palau have volunteered their soldiers and police in support of Security Council peacekeeping missions. We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our support for the Council’s initiative in making the elimination of sexual gender-based violence an integral part of peacekeeping.

The President: I now all on the representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): Allow me at the outset to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important debate. My delegation also thanks the Secretary-General for his briefing this morning.

It is superfluous to say that women suffer most as victims of conflict. Even in peace processes, they are deprived of their due dividends. Women and girls are often viewed as bearers of cultural identities. Thus, they become prime targets. It is therefore essential that the Security Council devote serious attention to the issue of women and peace and security. We recall that Bangladesh, when it was a member of the Council, was closely associated with the adoption of the landmark resolution 1325 (2000). It is a document that applies not only to States, but to all actors involved in post-conflict peace processes.

Unfortunately, even nine years after the resolution's adoption, an increasing and alarming number of women and girls are becoming victims of violence. We are aware that poverty, the struggle for resources and socio-economic injustice lie at the heart of conflicts. The impact of this situation not only affects the safety and security of women, but also impairs the political, economic and overall security conditions of the relevant nations.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/362) pursuant to Security Council resolution 1820 (2008) provides us with disturbing information on violence against women. The adoption of resolution 1820 (2008) no doubt helped to draw global attention to the issue, but an effective plan of action involving the United Nations system, national and international actors, civil society, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders should follow in order to curb such violence. My delegation finds merit in the conclusions and recommendations set out in the report, and we look forward to engaging with other Member States in working on them. My delegation also stresses the need for appropriate training programmes for the peacekeeping personnel deployed by the United Nations.

On a number of occasions, my delegation has underlined the importance of availability of relevant data in analysing the plight of women and girls who are victims of conflicts. Focused examination of such data is important to the formulation of policy guidelines and to undertaking preventive measures. The sharing of experiences and lessons learned on a

regular basis is useful in guiding policy measures. We note with appreciation that this point has been reflected in the Secretary-General's report.

While we stress the need for concrete actions to protect women from violence, we believe that substantial progress should be made in the area of prosecution. Precedent shows that perpetrators get away with crimes because of lengthy and complicated judicial processes. We feel that all concerned should facilitate the establishment of effective judicial systems. Moreover, measures should be taken to address the psychosocial needs of the victims.

As one of the major troop- and police-contributing countries, Bangladesh emphasizes the importance of the effective implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008), as well as all relevant General Assembly resolutions, particularly 61/143 and 63/155. We wish to reiterate that there should be adequate representation of women at all levels of decision-making in conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation.

It is reassuring that multidimensional peacekeeping operations have such great potential to address the security of women. Troop- and police-contributing countries should continue to increase the number of uniformed and civilian female personnel. At present, only 8 per cent of all United Nations police officers are female; this number was 4 per cent in 2006. The number of women from Bangladesh in peacekeeping is set to increase in the coming days in order to ensure gender balance in our share of the deployment.

It is essential to make women's voices heard. Women's participation is necessary in the decision-making process in any post-conflict country. Emphasis should be placed on the electoral process in post-conflict environments in order to increase the participation of women as voters, candidates and electoral officials.

A critical factor in the successful implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) is high-level commitment and accountability in administration, without which policy guidelines are of little use. We believe that the protection of women and girls from gender-based violence is a primary responsibility. There should be zero tolerance with respect to the perpetrators, and impunity must be ended. It is therefore crucial to mobilize leadership, ensure

accountability, provide adequate resources, identify challenges and address the root causes in protecting women and girls.

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

Mr. Ney (Germany): Germany welcomes this open thematic debate on women and peace and security. I would like to express Germany's appreciation to you, Mr. President, for this important initiative.

Germany aligns itself with the declaration made by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union, and would like to add the following remarks.

We congratulate the Secretary-General on his report (S/2009/362) pursuant to resolution 1820 (2008), which we are discussing today and which Germany is pleased to have supported. The report contains compelling evidence that sexual violence in situations of armed conflict is indeed not only a serious human rights and humanitarian concern, but also a security problem requiring a systematic security response, including through attention by the Security Council and the International Criminal Court. As the report rightly states, in bringing together available data, no matter how incomplete, the report shows a disturbing picture of the use of sexual violence against civilians in armed conflicts and their aftermath.

Much still needs to be done by Member States in order to ensure a more timely and efficient response to these challenges. In this regard, Germany supports the proposal for the establishment of a commission of inquiry. We also reiterate our support for an appropriate follow-up mechanism of the Security Council. Both proposals would allow the Council to better fulfil its mandate. We welcome the efforts made by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the United Nations membership to integrate the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) into the ongoing New Horizon debate on the reform of peacekeeping missions.

The report also contains a wealth of information on what the United Nations is already doing in order to combat sexual violence. We commend all United Nations entities on their extremely important work and encourage them to further intensify their efforts. Given the fact that the issue of conflict-related sexual

violence is already being addressed by so many actors in the United Nations system, it could provide an excellent test case for a more structured and integrated approach by the United Nations to a specific problem. However, as in other areas relating to the field of gender equality and the empowerment of women, a strong driver is currently missing.

Germany hopes that the negotiations on the establishment of a new United Nations gender entity will soon create those necessary structures. In this context, we would like to point out that any new gender architecture must also be responsive to the special mandates under resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008).

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

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): Australia very much values this opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to tackling sexual violence in conflict. As a sponsor of resolution 1820 (2008), we very strongly support the Council's focus on this compelling challenge.

Australia recognizes the important links between sexual violence, social violence and the role of peacebuilding activities in preventing violence. We have been a strong supporter of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security since its adoption nine years ago. That resolution, of course, provided the basis for women to play a greater role in all peace processes and peacebuilding activities, and urged all of us to undertake proactive strategies to promote, cultivate, develop, encourage and sustain individuals, communities and nations to integrally practice peace. Resolution 1820 (2008), of course, grew out of the decisive resolution 1325 (2000), and we would urge all nations to undertake all actions to implement it and to ensure that it is carried out within that broader context.

Specifically in regard to the Secretary-General's report, we welcome his recommendations on operationalizing resolution 1820 (2008) within the United Nations in a systematic, structural and lasting way, including by ensuring appropriate references in mandate creation and renewal processes. Utilizing effectively this Council's most recent aide memoire on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, which includes provisions on sexual violence, will also be crucial.

Now is the time to get things done. One good example of practical United Nations action is in Timor-Leste, where the National Vulnerable Persons Unit of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste is successfully training local police on gender-based violence and policing responsibilities.

We welcome the Secretary-General's advice that he is considering the appointment of a senior person to address the prevention of and response to sexual violence across the United Nations system. We would support such an appointment. Australia considers an appointment with an operational mandate to be an appropriate way to build on the current work of the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict.

We note the Secretary-General's recommendation that a commission of inquiry on sexual violence in Chad, the Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo be established. Any such process must result in tangible outcomes. Impunity for sexual violence cannot be tolerated. We think that the Council must be prepared to act on any evidence collected by such a process to ensure accountability.

We are concerned — not exclusively, but particularly — about the high level of reported sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are also concerned about the reported discrimination against the minority Muslim population in Myanmar and its vulnerability to sexual violence, as well as the high level of sexual violence perpetrated by the armed forces against rural women from other ethnic groups. We call on Myanmar to ensure that its agents cease perpetrating sexual violence against civilians.

Australia itself is actively pursuing a range of practical initiatives to combat the prevalence of sexual violence in conflict. We are pleased to support the efforts of United Nations action on its *Analytical Inventory of Responses by Peacekeeping Personnel to War-Related Violence against Women*, which will be launched this year. That very practical tool will provide valuable guidance to peacekeeping personnel on the ground. We are pleased to support the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the United Nations Development Programme in their initiative in conducting a joint research project to provide guidance on how this Council's resolutions on women and peace and security can be implemented to reduce the high levels of sexual violence throughout the Pacific. That

includes in Solomon Islands, where Australia, with many others, is involved with partners in a regional peacekeeping mission. In Solomon Islands, Australian federal police officers are working alongside local police to develop their capacity to respond to sexual violence.

As the representative of Papua New Guinea has just observed, the communiqué issued yesterday in Cairns, Australia, by the 16 leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum took an important step towards addressing sexual and gender-based violence, which is endemic throughout the Pacific. Leaders acknowledged the potential destabilizing effects of that significant issue on communities and societies, undertook to firmly establish it on domestic political agendas and committed to its eradication and to ensuring that all individuals have equal access to justice. Those steps reaffirm the commitment of all Pacific leaders to combat sexual and gender-based violence.

There is a range of other activities, of course, that we and others in our region are involved with, which we list in our distributed statement.

To conclude, in 2008, this Council, through its adoption of resolution 1820 (2008), finally recognized that sexual violence was a calculated aspect of conflicts threatening regional and international peace and security that had to be addressed, and had to be addressed very specifically. One year on, the commitment of all Member States is still required — very much required — to translate that understanding into practice. We must all, Australia included, remain firmly dedicated to that goal.

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

Mr. Cornado (Italy): Italy fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Sweden as President of the European Union. I will therefore limit myself to a few additional remarks.

I would like first to commend you, Mr. President, for having convened this important debate. The adoption of resolution 1820 (2008) a little more than year ago was a historic achievement of this Council, clearly stating that sexual violence, when used as a weapon of war, not only is a heinous violation of human rights, and possibly a war crime or a crime against humanity, but also endangers international peace and security.

Italy is proud of having been one of the sponsors of resolution 1820 (2008) and of having substantially contributed to its drafting. For us, its implementation, as well as that of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, is a key priority in the foreign and security policies of my country. For that reason, my Government has started the process of drafting a national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and is constantly and actively engaged in all United Nations forums that deal with the advancement of women.

Italy is also organizing, in the framework of its G-8 presidency, an international conference on violence against women that will take place in Rome on 9 and 10 September 2009. The conference will tackle all aspects of gender-based violence, including sexual violence in armed conflict, with the aim of focusing the attention of the international community on a global issue that affects all countries of the world. The event will see the participation of representatives of several Governments from all over the world, international organizations and civil society, and intellectuals and global advocates.

Today's debate shows once again the commitment of the international community and the Security Council to putting an end to those unspeakable crimes. We are on the right track. The adoption last Tuesday of resolution 1882 (2009), extending to rape and sexual violence the criteria for the inclusion of parties to armed conflict in the annexes of the reports of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, is yet another concrete step in the right direction. Italy co-sponsored that resolution, and commends Mexico and the other Council members for that important achievement, which will allow the Council to protect children affected by armed conflict.

Yet, it is clear to all of us that more needs to be done and that the measure of our success will be the difference that we can make on the ground by effectively protecting women and girls from sexual violence, holding accountable those responsible for those crimes, putting an end to impunity, helping the victims and empowering women within their societies.

In that framework, we read with attention the report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/362) pursuant to resolution 1820 (2008), which is a useful first step to increase the capacities of Member States and of the

United Nations to respond to sexual violence in armed conflicts.

We support the Secretary-General's recommendations. We believe that our first priority must be to ensure accountability. The establishment of a commission of inquiry to investigate and report on human rights and humanitarian violations leading to sexual violence in Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan and to recommend to the Council the most effective mechanisms to fight impunity in those situations is undoubtedly a proposal that could lead to tangible progress on the ground.

Still, as resolution 1820 (2008) points out and as clearly emerged from today's debate, the challenge before us is global in scope and not limited to certain situations. We must provide ourselves with the appropriate tools to face the challenge both in single-priority situations and at the general, more global level.

We therefore support the proposal that the Secretary-General issue an annual report on this topic, and we hope that future reports will include detailed and verified information, publicly listing those parties to armed conflicts responsible for acts of rape and sexual violence in violation of international law.

The progress obtained through the annual report on children and armed conflict shows that information is the first step towards real accountability within the international community. We realize that it will not be an easy task and that the United Nations system, and particularly its missions on the ground, will need more resources, stronger capacities and better coordination. Still, we are convinced that this is something that needs to be done without delay and, equally, that the Council will then need to act upon the information that it receives with all its instruments, including sanctions committees.

Finally, we are convinced that it is now time to have a global advocate for the implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008), acting as a focal point both of the United Nations system and of Member States. We would therefore favour the appointment of a special representative of the Secretary-General for women and peace and security.

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

Mr. Park In-kook (Republic of Korea): I appreciate your special effort, Mr. President, to

convene this open debate on women and peace and security, focusing on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1820 (2008), which was adopted unanimously and enjoyed a large number of sponsors, including the Republic of Korea.

My delegation appreciates the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/362) pursuant to Security Council resolution 1820 (2008). We concur with the analysis contained in the Secretary-General's report and support its recommendations.

The Republic of Korea welcomes some progress made by the States and parties concerned in their efforts to prevent and respond to sexual violence, especially in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, the Sudan, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire.

Despite that progress, the overall situation with regard to sexual violence in armed conflict remains of serious concern. In many parts of the world, State and non-State actors alike continue to commit violations with impunity. As the Secretary-General's report points out, mainly three factors, among others, have contributed to and exacerbated sexual violence.

My delegation would like to lend a strong voice to urging civilian and military leaders to demonstrate the commitment and political willingness to combat sexual violence. All commitments and pledges must be matched by action. In most situations of armed conflict, access to key medical, psychological and socio-economic reintegration services is inadequate and limited. Parties to conflict have a legal obligation under international humanitarian law to protect and meet the basic needs of persons within their control. In situations where they are unwilling or unable to do so, they must allow and facilitate the work of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in providing critical life-saving humanitarian assistance, including to victims of sexual violence.

The United Nations has a critical role to play in assisting States in preventing sexual violence, protecting individuals from such violence, and punishing perpetrators while providing remedy to victims. Currently, the United Nations system is taking action across its main areas of work. Among these various activities, my delegation particularly appreciates and supports the strong advocacy campaign and deliver-as-one efforts made under the robust leadership of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. We also recognize that many efforts have been made at

Headquarters and the field level, such as the adoption by the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict of its strategic framework for the period 2009-2010; the cluster approach to humanitarian assistance led by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNICEF; and the Peacebuilding Commission's support to States in responding to sexual violence.

My delegation would like to highlight some areas in which the United Nations system should redouble its efforts in order to adequately address sexual violence in armed conflict.

First, there should be more coherence between peacekeeping missions and United Nations country teams to ensure joint priorities in preventing and responding to sexual violence. Furthermore, peacekeeping missions, country teams and Governments should actively explore developing a joint Government-United Nations programme on sexual violence, as has been done in Liberia.

Secondly, in the humanitarian field, further coordinated action is required. The cluster approach on a cross-sectoral basis is the right approach. Under protection clusters, UNFPA and UNICEF are co-leading the gender-based violence area of responsibility. The key is the capacity of each sub-cluster and whether it has enough expertise and capacity to deal with sexual violence and coordinate within the sub-cluster, as well as with other clusters. As such, the strengthening and consolidation of cluster capacity are urgently needed.

Thirdly, the importance of the determined role of peacekeeping missions in addressing sexual violence cannot be overstated. In this regard, we encourage special envoys and representatives to pay greater attention to the issue of sexual violence. Gender guidelines should be provided as soon as possible to military personnel in peacekeeping operations in order to effectively implement resolution 1820 (2008).

Fourthly, there is gross underreporting of cases due to fear, shame or stigma, while gathering comprehensive information is complex in and of itself. In order to improve data collection, clear guidance and support should be given to peacekeeping missions and United Nations country teams. In fact, United Nations agencies and organizations providing services to survivors could be an effective tool for gathering data. United Nations actors engaged in data collection

should be familiar with and respect the ethical and safety standards of the World Health Organization for data collection on sexual violence. An additional contribution to data collection could be made by the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflicts, who has benefited from the recently strengthened mechanism of resolution 1612 (2005) on children and armed conflict. This type of close cooperation is to be encouraged in order to ensure that resolutions 1612 (2005) and 1820 (2008) are implemented in a mutually reinforcing manner.

Fifthly, the United Nations system needs a driver dedicated to the issue of women in armed conflict, taking responsibility across the United Nations system to reinforce, support and help drive existing United Nations efforts forward to address the needs and interests of women in conflict-affected situations. This is particularly necessary to prevent and respond to the use of sexual violence, as well as to streamline organizational initiatives. Of course, we will have a strong driver on women's issues that can play such a role once we establish a stronger gender architecture, such as the composite entity. We sincerely hope that such an agreement is made at the current session in order to honour our commitment to women throughout the world. However, even if we successfully reach a consensus on this issue, it will take time to move the agreement into full operational mode. We simply cannot wait until then to have a senior figure who can attend, with authority and focus across the United Nations system, to the urgent issue of sexual violence.

Finally, we support the suggestion that the Secretary-General request a follow-up report with a proposal for a mechanism to act against parties to armed conflict who do not comply with their obligations under international law and against the perpetrators of sexual violence.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to urge the General Assembly to take a substantive decision on the establishment of a new, strong composite entity on gender that can guide and assist the United Nations system and Member States in effectively implementing their commitment to women, including their obligations under Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security.

The Republic of Korea looks forward to a concrete outcome based on our discussion today and in the future with a view to ending grave sexual violence

in armed conflict. We are fully committed to ensuring the realization of the United Nations promise to women in armed conflict.

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

Mr. Morejón (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, allow me to thank you, Sir, for convening this important meeting to address a critical item on the international agenda.

Ecuador believes that the United Nations has a fundamental role to play in combating all forms of discrimination and violence against women. My country is therefore firmly resolved to continue to support and strengthen that work, and calls on the international community to pool its efforts to that end. Ecuador has demonstrated its commitment by ratifying all relevant international treaties and by co-sponsoring various resolutions of the General Assembly on this important and sensitive question.

The Security Council has made a significant contribution in its own area of competence by adopting a number of resolutions on the protection of civilians, in particular children and women, in armed conflict, including resolution 1325 (2000), which refers to sexual violence in situations of armed conflict. On 19 June 2008, the Council also adopted resolution 1820 (2008) stressing the important role of women in conflict prevention and resolution and peacekeeping, as well as the need to include the gender perspective in peacekeeping operations, and condemning all forms of gender-based violence, in particular rape and sexual violence.

Ecuador has taken due note of the first report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/362) pursuant to resolution 1820 (2008). The report highlights the numerous efforts of States to eradicate that scourge. My country believes that, notwithstanding the strenuous efforts of the Secretary-General and the Security Council, it is urgent to establish greater cooperation among the main organs of the United Nations, taking into account the fact that the General Assembly is the universal entity responsible for establishing the normative framework that guides the decisions of all States. Moreover, my delegation believes that the General Assembly should consider the subject of sexual violence, including when it is perpetrated during armed conflict, systematically and regularly, as it has done during previous sessions with

the consensus adoption of a number of resolutions on working to eliminate rape and other forms of sexual violence in all their manifestations.

Ecuador believes that a financially and operationally strengthened gender entity would help eradicate the scourge. We call upon States to continue to pursue the goals of United Nations system-wide coherence, which would enhance the Organization's effectiveness and efficiency in the field.

A topic as sensitive as the one we are discussing today, which should be a matter of concern for all countries, deserves broad and systematic consideration by the entire membership. The international community should join its forces to establish mechanisms that would provide comprehensive assistance to victims of this scourge and coordinate efforts to punish perpetrators.

I wish in conclusion to reaffirm the determination of the Government and the people of Ecuador to continue to work together with the rest of the international community to eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls, in particular sexual violence, in every country and every region of our planet.

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

Mrs. Ogwu (Nigeria): I extend the gratitude of the Nigerian delegation to you, Mr. President, for convening this crucial meeting on women and peace and security. I thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his lucid and concise introductory statement on his report (S/2009/362), which sets out several thought-provoking ideas, assessments and recommendations.

Today's deliberations reaffirm our sense of urgency on the issue of sexual violence against women and girls. My delegation is concerned that in spite of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008), which provided hope for millions of women and young girls, the crime of rape and sexual violence has not only increased but has become a tactic and weapon of war. Indeed, it has become systematic and widespread, and it remains largely unpunished.

Nonetheless, I share the optimism and hope that, with our collective will and support, we can bring an end to that impunity and to these crimes against humanity. It is in this regard that my delegation

appreciates the recommendations of the Secretary-General, particularly on establishing mechanisms of accountability, ensuring that peacekeeping mandates address sexual violence and providing regular annual reporting on gender-based violence. Those concrete proposals would complement and strengthen the implementation of the largely unfulfilled commitments made by Member States in resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008). With respect to fulfilling those commitments, I would like to make the following observations.

First, there is need to tenaciously uphold the zero-tolerance policy, which calls for an end to impunity in post-conflict situations. This can be achieved through promoting efforts and programmes for transitional gender justice, provided through mechanisms such as the International Criminal Court, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the Special Courts. Member States should support the work of those mechanisms in order to promote justice for women survivors. Seeking justice for survivors and punishing the perpetrators conveys an unequivocal message about our commitment to accountability and responsibility.

Secondly, it is crucial that support programmes for survivors emphasize income generating, food security and protection schemes that would enable them to restart their lives.

Thirdly, the Secretary-General's request for more women troops deployed to conflict zones should elicit a renewed response from Member States. It is common knowledge that the Indian all-female police unit has recorded some positive results in Liberia, restoring confidence and self-esteem in Liberian women, some of who are now enlisting in the armed forces.

Fourthly, it is imperative to provide adequate and appropriate training to peacekeepers on dealing with human rights violations and on strategies to address gender-based violence. Such specialized training should encompass members of the military, police, judiciary, civil society, women and gender advocates. It will provide the skill set required to identify and address issues relating to sexual violence and other crimes against humanity.

Fifthly, we invite the Secretary-General to utilize existing regional and subregional resources, such as the African Peace and Security Architecture and the early

warning system of the Economic Community of West African States, to strengthen efforts to protect women in situations of conflict on the continent.

As one of the largest troop- and police-contributing countries, Nigeria remains ready to contribute to peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. The Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, with support from the United States Government and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, has established a model peacekeeping training centre in Jaji, Kaduna, early this year. The centre, which is headed by a senior military officer with extensive peacekeeping and training experience, is designed to improve and enhance the skills of Nigerian troops in relation to managing post-conflict reconstruction, human rights violations and gender awareness in peacekeeping environments. We will continue to provide the Council with updates on best practices and progress.

Once again, we thank the United Kingdom delegation for initiating this dialogue and for introducing a very useful draft resolution.

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

Mr. Argüello (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Let me begin by thanking the United Kingdom presidency for having convened this open debate, which reflects the Security Council's commitment to effectively follow up and implement resolution 1820 (2008) nearly a year after its adoption.

There must be a firm response to the continued use of sexual violence in its various forms against civilians, in particular women and girls, in conflict and post-conflict situations. We must put an end to impunity and protect the victims in all situations where the United Nations is present.

Consonant with my country's firm commitment to combat gender-based violence, the Argentine national congress, in March, adopted a comprehensive protection law to prevent, punish and eliminate violence against women wherever they interact with others. This encompasses sexual violence, including rape, in all contexts, such as marriage, other relationships and family situations — both with and without cohabitation — as well as forced prostitution, exploitation, slavery, harassment, sexual abuse or trafficking.

With respect to the training of Argentine troops, including those participating in United Nations peacekeeping operations, I wish to emphasize that throughout the process of selecting personnel for deployment consideration is given to the Code of Conduct for peacekeepers, including the provisions related to gender and sexual exploitation and abuse, which encompass the provisions and concepts set out in resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008).

Similarly, those two resolutions underpin the work of the Argentine centre for joint peacekeeping training, which for four years has been training troops for United Nations deployment. I stress that the national training centre is firmly committed to international standards of human rights protection, in particular gender issues in peacekeeping operations, as well as to the Code of Conduct and measures to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse. We also stress full and equal participation of men and women in all initiatives for peace during all stages of armed conflict, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Implementation of the two resolutions, the content of United Nations reports and our own lessons learned are systematically incorporated into the centre's gender curriculum.

It is part of our training mission to make these documents and resolutions known; moreover, all staff know the applicable law and the conduct that the United Nations expects from its peacekeepers in this sphere. Specific courses are offered following the United Nations Standardized Generic Training Modules. And at present the training institute is completely updating its entire curriculum in accordance with the new United Nations training module, the Core Pre-Deployment Training Materials.

Furthermore, a follow-up system is in place through interviews and surveys that serve as guide and support for national policies, and we are planning an auditing system for monitoring the progress of gender mainstreaming.

As to the punishment contemplated in the eventuality of an Argentine military personnel member deployed in a peacekeeping operation being involved in a case of sexual violence, disciplinary measures are applied immediately within the unit deployed in the theatre of operations. This results in the return to our country of the person in question and the continuation of disciplinary action in Argentina. This can involve very severe punishment, including discharge. We

should also note that as of today, after 51 years of an uninterrupted Argentine military presence in many United Nations peacekeeping operations, there has been no recorded case of sexual violence or abuse in connection with Argentina's participation in peacekeeping missions.

We continue to receive reports from the field on the use of sexual violence as a political or military weapon in some current conflicts. Sexual violence is categorically prohibited as a method of war. The widespread and systematic use of sexual violence is a grave violation of international law, as enshrined in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and in the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols. This was prominent in the context of the first case to be tried before the Court, which leads us to reflect not only on how widespread this aberrant practice is in conflict, but also on the importance of effective penalties in putting an end to impunity and preventing such situations from recurring in the future.

Bearing in mind these realities, Argentina is convinced that effective measures must be adopted as a matter of urgency to prevent and respond to acts of sexual violence against the civilian population. This would make a significant contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Argentina hopes that the decisions that the Council will adopt in this area will strongly incorporate two lines of thought: protection for the full human rights of victims and an end to impunity for the perpetrators. In that connection, we are grateful for the conclusions and recommendations of the report of the Secretary-General, which we support. We hope that the Council will take specific measures in a future resolution to ensure that in the renewal of every peacekeeping mandate these situations be considered and that effective mechanisms will be put in place to provide leadership and coherence in the response and ensure a solid basis for future Council action at all levels, including information gathering, awareness, technical analysis of options and best practices.

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

Mr. De Klerk (Netherlands): Let me express our sincere appreciation to the United Kingdom for marking this first anniversary of the adoption by the Council of resolution 1820 (2008), on sexual violence in conflict, by holding an open debate in which the

United Nations membership has the opportunity to address a subject which deserves the full attention of all States Members of the United Nations.

I would first like to align myself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union.

The Netherlands applauded the unanimous adoption of resolution 1820 (2008) by the Council last year. During that open debate (see S/PV.5916), I expressed our hope that a report of the Secretary-General would initiate a process to ensure adequate follow-up by the Council and would address ways to improve coordination of United Nations activities on the ground. I also emphasized the importance of finding ways to monitor the actions taken by parties to a conflict to fulfil their responsibilities.

One year after the adoption of resolution 1820 (2008) and almost nine years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), we have to conclude that we need to intensify our efforts to end sexual violence by ensuring real, concrete follow-up to these resolutions.

The Secretary-General's report (S/2009/362) rightly states that it is up to Member States, the United Nations system and civil society to rise to the challenge. After finalizing a national action plan on resolution 1325 (2000) one and a half years ago, the Dutch Ministries for Foreign Affairs, Defence and the Interior and 15 civil society organizations are working, nationally and internationally, to achieve our common goals, such as ensuring that a gender perspective is well integrated in the work of the armed forces, improving access to justice for victims of sexual violence, creating zero-tolerance communities and increasing the active role of women in State-building in countries such as Afghanistan, Burundi, the Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We commend the important work of United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict in the field and recognize the ongoing efforts of the United Nations system as a whole to improve coordination of activities on the ground. However, there is a need to enhance coordination, whether it be in the field of the rule of law, the provision of assistance to survivors of sexual violence or the collection of accurate data. While we are fully aware of the challenges to data collection and reporting in the midst of fragile and often volatile post-conflict and conflict situations, we consider the collection of

accurate information in a safe, confidential environment very important, in order to ensure an adequate and coherent response of States and the United Nations system. In this respect, I also would like to underline the important role that civil society organizations play in the field and the need to involve them in the work of States and the United Nations system.

Let me highlight some concrete steps which we consider crucial to ensuring follow-up to the commitments of Security Council resolution 1820 (2008). First, the Netherlands would like to underline the responsibility of all parties to a conflict, including State agents, to protect civilians in accordance with international, humanitarian and human rights law. This implies commitment and action from civilian and military leaders to use their authority to prevent sexual crimes and to report and punish all perpetrators who commit these crimes. In this context, we consider the vetting of armed and security forces, joint patrols to protect civilians, a duty to investigate for commanders, and enforceable codes of conducts to be measures that could significantly strengthen prevention policies.

Secondly, we welcome the efforts of the United Nations system to ensure that peace negotiations and agreements contribute to preventing and responding to sexual violence. We would strongly encourage increasing efforts in this regard. We also would like to stress the role the Council and the Secretariat can play in ensuring the explicit integration of commitments made in resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) into the mandates of United Nations appointed mediators, special envoys and special representatives, and in monitoring the implementation of these commitments.

Let me now briefly address some of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report.

We welcome the recommendation that the Council establish a commission of inquiry to investigate and report on violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. We also welcome the recommendation to ensure that the Security Council Expert Group on the Protection of Civilians and the sanctions Committees be duly mandated to address sexual violence.

In this respect, we consider the recent adoption of resolution 1882 (2009) to be a crucial step forward, as it ensures that the killing and maiming of children and

rape and other sexual violence perpetrated against children in situations of armed conflict, are integrated into the monitoring activities of the Councils' Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict.

In addition, we look forward to receiving the Secretary-General's proposal for an appropriate mechanism or procedure to consider and act on information concerning measures taken by parties to armed conflict to comply with their obligations and to prosecute perpetrators of sexual violence.

Finally, we take note of the Secretary-General's consideration of the advisability of the appointment of a senior person with responsibility to attend to the prevention of and response to sexual violence across the United Nations system. Indeed, there is a need for structural attention on this issue. The prevention of and response to sexual violence should be an integral part of peacekeeping and peacebuilding. In this respect, we would like to underline the importance of a positive decision by Member States in September to establish a strong, coordinated and coherent United Nations gender entity headed by an under-secretary-general.

Let me conclude by calling upon all Security Council members to adopt a strong, action-oriented resolution that will contribute to a coordinated, systematic and coherent international response to these heinous crimes.

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

Mr. Leroy (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Belgium fully associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union and thanks the Secretary-General for his report (S/2009/362) on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1820 (2008).

A year ago, the Security Council took an important step in fighting sexual violence by adopting resolution 1820 (2008). Belgium believes that, today, it is urgent to take our efforts to the next level. The situation on the ground seems to be far from improving, and the international community's interventions are still too few and far between.

Our goal should be to act proactively rather than to react after the fact, when it is already too late for the tens of thousands of women and children victims of these crimes. To that end, we must, as a matter of priority, put in place a comprehensive plan of action

that aims not only at ending this intolerable violence when it takes place, but also and above all at strengthening once and for all the capacity of States to prevent such violence in the future. Only the strengthening of national capacities can enable States to shoulder their own responsibility to prevent such crimes.

In this respect, the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo should serve as a warning and an example. While today we can talk about a genuine human disaster in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and in particular in the region of the Kivus, the recent adoption by the United Nations of a comprehensive strategy to combat sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo represents a glimmer of hope for the future. Belgium will do its utmost to ensure that the international community musters the resolve necessary for the strategy to bear fruit.

The Secretary-General's report offers many interesting options for the future, and Belgium would like to address several of these in particular.

We cannot emphasize strongly enough the importance of combating impunity for sexual crimes. Impunity is not only fertile ground upon which violence develops and recurs, but it also undermines the foundation of any reconstruction and redevelopment effort. As the jurisprudence of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda have shown, international criminal courts have an important role to play in combating sexual crimes. Belgium warmly welcomes the appointment of a special adviser for gender issues by the International Criminal Court.

International prosecution, however, is not enough. On the contrary, we must increase initiatives to strengthen the rule of law, judicial institutions and penal systems in countries that have the greatest need of such in order to enable them to dispense justice at the local level. These countries must be in a position to dispense impartial justice and to prosecute all perpetrators, even when they are agents of the State.

Last week, we learned of the conviction by the North Kivu military court of three officers of the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for crimes against humanity, including the rape of several young girls. Such examples should be encouraged and become the rule.

Punishing the perpetrators of sexual crimes is one thing, but assisting victims is another. Fighting impunity should be accompanied by programmes to address the individual and societal consequences of these crimes over the short, medium and long terms. The work done by the Peacebuilding Commission in its country-specific configuration for the Central African Republic is a good example of the integration of gender and sexual violence issues into a reconstruction programme. Such efforts should become widespread.

In that respect, Belgium appreciates the Secretary-General's idea of appointing a senior person responsible for the United Nations response to the issue of sexual violence. However, we believe that more should be done, and we call for the appointment of a female mediator for women, peace and security. The role of this mediator would be to ensure that women are systematically involved in peace negotiation processes and that a gender-based approach, including the issue of sexual violence, is taken into account in all United Nations peacekeeping and reconstruction activities.

In order to fight the scourge of sexual violence in the most effective way possible, our Organization also needs to guarantee the quality of the information at its disposal. Belgium supports the Secretary-General's proposal to improve the collection and coordination of data by involving all actors not only in the field, but also in Geneva and New York. Belgium also supports the creation of a follow-up mechanism within the Security Council so as to make the most of this information.

This week's adoption of resolution 1882 (2009), whereby sexual violence will be considered as a trigger for the Council's follow-up mechanism on children and armed conflict, is a step in that direction, and Belgium welcomes it.

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

Mr. Touray (Sierra Leone): Let me start by expressing my satisfaction and gratitude for the opportunity to participate in this open debate on the use of sexual violence in armed conflict and its aftermath

I also wish to sincerely congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August and to wish you a

successful tenure. I extend my thanks and appreciation to the members of the Council for having unanimously adopted resolution 1820 (2008), which mandated the submission of the report we are discussing today, as well as its precursor, resolution 1325 (2000).

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his very informative and enlightened report (S/2009/362) and to express my delegation's full support for it and its consequential recommendations to the Council. In addition, I would be remiss if I failed to commend the Department of Peacekeeping Operations; United Nations special agencies, funds and programmes, including United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict; and all other stakeholders whose concerted efforts contributed to the production of the report.

The Secretary-General, in the report under review, emphasizes the need for the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) in the context of situations that are on the agenda of the Council, including the situation in Sierra Leone. He also describes key challenges that remain and the need to address them as a matter of urgency if progress is to be made in containing sexual violence. He also outlines the responsibilities of States and other parties in relation to sexual violence in conflict and its aftermath, as well as the efforts of the United Nations to prevent and respond to sexual violence.

Sierra Leone experienced one of the fiercest and bloodiest conflicts of the 1990s, involving mass killings; the maiming, hacking and amputation of limbs; the targeting and terrorizing of civilians as a tactic and instrument of war; the plundering and pillaging of their property; and the subjection of our women to horrendous and despicable violations of their human rights, including but not limited to rape, abduction, gang rape, sexual slavery, forced marriage and even forced labour and conscription.

However, with the help of the international community, our bilateral partners and regional and subregional organizations, the country is moving comparatively swiftly towards stability and peace. That is not to say, however, that the relics of the past are gone and done with, for traces of the past — although not many — remain with us in the aftermath of the war, and gender-based violence within domestic settings is not uncommon.

Much has been accomplished in my country through measures taken to prevent sexual violence and protect civilians, to combat impunity for sexual violence, to address discrimination against our women and girls, and to provide assistance, remedies and reparation for victims of sexual violence.

As a State party to relevant international human rights instruments, we are quite conscious of our obligations, under international law, international humanitarian law and pertinent resolutions of this body, to protect our women and girls from all forms of violence, to punish the perpetrators and to provide reparation for the victims. In that regard, Sierra Leone has shown genuine political will and commitment towards meeting the needs and interests of women and girls and has taken appropriate measures to address gender-based violence, including the following.

First, the Lomé Peace Agreement, which brought an end to the hostilities and paved the way for peace, was a major effort to ensure that the negotiations and their outcome would contribute to preventing or responding to sexual violence. It emphasized special attention to the needs of women and the importance of their inclusion in strategic decision-making positions so that they can play a central role in the country's reconstruction process.

Second, the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission highlighted the pathetic plight of women during the conflict. It recommended 30 per cent representation for women in the decision-making process, as well as reparations for victims of sexual violence.

Third, the Special Court for Sierra Leone was established to demonstrate that there can be no impunity for those who have committed acts against women and to address the heinous crimes — especially sexual violence against women — committed during the war, irrespective of assurances of amnesty for the perpetrators.

Fourth, three gender acts, aimed at reinforcing women's rights and clamping down on sexual and domestic violence, were adopted. The gender acts modernized the law against rape, including marital rape; criminalized domestic violence; and provided protection for victims, especially women in rural areas. Wife-beating is now a criminal offence, women can now own property, and the idea of forcing young girls into marriage is gradually becoming a thing of the past.

Fifth, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, a core international human rights instrument on discrimination against women, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child have been ratified.

Sixth, we have endorsed and implemented relevant resolutions such as resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008), including through the establishment, in all our district police headquarters, of family support units mandated specifically to deal with gender-based violence. Although poorly resourced and understaffed, they are in high demand.

Seventh, a national policy on the enhancement of women through gender mainstreaming was adopted in 2001.

Eighth, a Gender Ministry — although also poorly resourced — has been established.

Ninth, a national committee was established in 2008 by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, bringing together all agencies working on gender-based violence, including UNICEF; the Rainbow Clinic Centre, a counselling and treatment clinic for raped and battered women; and other non-governmental organizations to ensure proper coordination. Since its establishment, the committee has been very effective in facilitating referrals to police, legal and medical practitioners, counsellors and trained health workers for the assessment and prosecution of cases of sexual violence.

Tenth, structures have been put in place for the provision of remedies and reparation for victims of sexual violence. The process of identification, enlisting and registration is currently ongoing.

Eleventh, an affirmative action programme has been adopted for the education of girls. It seeks to empower our women and girls so as to transform them into effective partners in addressing discriminatory practices; to increase their participation in decision-making, conflict prevention and peacebuilding processes; and to improve their status in society.

Twelfth, the Human Rights Commission has been established to report on, monitor and address human rights issues and violations.

Thirteenth, the Constitutional Review Commission of Sierra Leone has been established and tasked to consider discriminatory provisions in the

Constitution, particularly those discriminating against women and on the basis of gender.

Finally, gender-sensitive enlistment for the security sector, police, army and prison staff has been made a matter of Government policy.

Laudable though these achievements may sound, there is a need for more political space to articulate the aspirations of women and to contain sexual violence in all its ramifications, particularly within the context of the cultural dimensions of issues affecting women and changing culturally ingrained practices.

Barely seven years after the end of the civil war in Sierra Leone and almost 10 years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), there is still a need for more action to improve our performance on matters of gender-based violence. Adequate performance is constrained largely by a lack of much-needed resources rather than a lack of political will. We still need the continued support and assistance of the international community to help us fully implement the provisions of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008).

More is still needed in the sphere of international assistance and support to States, particularly fragile ones like ours that are emerging from conflict, to enable them to fulfil all of the obligations imposed by these resolutions in terms of the prevention of and response to gender-based violence.

Furthermore, from an international point of view, it is important that the prevention of and response to sexual violence be clearly and specifically reflected in peacekeeping mandates and mission directives and that personnel selected for peacekeeping operations and units be skilled in dealing with sexual violence. There is also a paramount need to improve the collection of data on sexual violence and to ensure accountability.

There are many hands on deck. The United Nations Development Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), UNICEF and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs are all involved in the process in their own special way, and there are also senior-level mission focal points made up of Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, humanitarian coordinators and resident coordinators. As the saying goes, too many cooks spoil

the broth, and the need for effective coordination is ever present.

The Sierra Leone delegation accordingly supports the call for the appointment of a special representative of the Secretary-General for women and peace and security, a call that was made most recently during the March 2009 International Colloquium for Women's Empowerment, Leadership Development, Peace and Security, organized by the Presidents of our sister Republic of Liberia and Finland. This would drive the coordination of the system-wide response to sexual violence in armed conflict, especially in the areas of humanitarian assistance, data collection and reporting on sexual violence and information management. This, in the view of my delegation, would not only reinforce the United Nations multisectoral response to gender-based violence, but would immensely help to address the existing gaps in it. It could further assist and give direction to the understanding of the problem and the adoption of effective strategies in strengthening the United Nations role on gender-based violence, data collection and other related matters.

I cannot conclude my statement without taking this opportunity to thank the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone, a creation of both the Security Council and the General Assembly that was introduced in our peacebuilding architecture, for its leadership role in ensuring that the incidents that took place in Freetown on 13 and 16 March did not escalate to the point of disrupting the hard-earned peace that we have all tirelessly worked to sustain. I must also commend the recent intervention by UNIFEM to facilitate the provision of victim- and witness-protection services for the ongoing Justice Bankole Thompson Commission of Inquiry, established by His Excellency President Ernest Bai Koroma to investigate the allegations of rape and sexual violence that occurred during the political clashes in March this year.

The Secretary-General states in his report that

“when it comes to sexual violence, we cannot expect peace without justice, reparation without recognition, and sustainable development without the full empowerment of those who have suffered sexual violence or are at risk”. (*S/2009/362, para. 58*)

That could not be truer of the situation in Sierra Leone.

Finally, the Security Council's leadership in controlling sexual violence has been invaluable and praiseworthy. Its continual leadership is a must if significant progress is to be sustained in this venture.

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

Mr. Jónasson (Iceland): Allow me at the outset to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate and to thank the Secretary-General for his thorough report (S/2009/362). Iceland subscribes to the recommendations put forward by the Secretary-General in his report as to how to better implement resolution 1820 (2008).

The international community has a responsibility to protect civilians from the widespread and systematic use of sexual violence as a tactic of war. While States bear the primary responsibility, the international community also has an obligation to assist those States that are not able to fulfil that responsibility.

To tackle the deliberate use of sexual violence, it is essential to understand the nature and scope of the problem. An effective monitoring and reporting mechanism is pivotal to ensuring the successful implementation of resolution 1820 (2008). Useful synergies could be established between the monitoring and accountability mechanisms established under resolutions 1612 (2005) and 1820 (2008).

Furthermore, efforts to address sexual violence, as set out in resolution 1820 (2008), would benefit from increased cooperation among the United Nations actors involved in peacekeeping, development and human rights, including gender equality and the status of women. By promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in national and international development policies, as well as in peace processes as set out in resolution 1325 (2000), the international community can effectively reduce the use of sexual violence as a tactic of war.

The United Nations must lead by example. United Nations peacekeepers must receive proper training. They must not betray the trust we have placed in them by perpetrating acts of wanton violence. Troop-contributing countries must adopt appropriate measures.

Finally, as long as impunity for sexual violence continues, these crimes will be difficult to suppress. To effectively end impunity, a broad range of actions is

needed. At the national level, urgent legal and judicial system reforms are required to punish perpetrators. This will require active cooperation and assistance from the international community. Moreover, the Security Council should use all the measures at its disposal, especially when it comes to persistent violators. We encourage the Council to ensure that sexual violence offences are addressed in the work of its sanctions committees and to use its most effective tools, including targeted sanctions, as appropriate, for such crimes.

In conclusion, my delegation would welcome annual reports by the Secretary-General on the progress and implementation of resolution 1820 (2008).

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

Mr. Tanin (Afghanistan): First, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of August and to thank you for convening the debate on this crucial topic. I would also like to welcome the report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/362) on sexual violence in situations of armed conflict, which reflects both the appalling scope and the devastating effects of this issue.

Afghanistan remains fully dedicated to the implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) on the rights of women in conflict situations. It has become clear that the lack of a stable, secure State often leads to persistent violations of human rights, particularly women's rights. Insecurity allows extremism to flourish and makes it extremely difficult for Governments and international organizations to provide even basic services to their citizens. The lack of resources and capacity limits the ability of Governments to effectively enforce protective legislative and judicial mechanisms. Without the equal involvement of half of our populations in our civil societies, economies and political systems, our nations are deeply incapacitated and our children, economies and even the stability of our countries suffer.

Only eight years ago, under the brutal Taliban regime, Afghanistan had no provisions for the protection of women and human rights, but, despite ongoing difficulties, we have made significant progress, particularly in education and health care. Women's issues are taken into account at each stage of

the national stabilization process and in national strategies, such as the Afghanistan National Development Strategy. Afghanistan has the legal and judicial mechanisms in place to achieve success. We are also party to the relevant international mechanisms, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. However, the ongoing support of the international community for Afghan efforts is absolutely necessary, both to encourage our citizens' bottom-up efforts towards success and to sustain the Government's top-down labours. We have emerged from the darkness of a long national nightmare, but we still have more work to do.

Over the past 30 years, Afghans have experienced violence on an almost unprecedented scale. Persistent poverty and other symptoms of conflict have disproportionately affected women, and for the first time in the 1990s, during a bloody internecine war, physical and psychological violence was accompanied by horrendous acts of sexual abuse.

The scars of those abuses continue to be seen and felt today. Women in Afghanistan still face not just sexual violence, but sexual discrimination and oppression, caused and exacerbated by enduring insecurity and the terrorist activities of the Taliban and Al-Qaida. In some particularly unstable parts of the country where the Taliban is still active or where the rule of a law is not yet strong, women attempting to work or hold office face abuse, threats and physical attacks. Other women have their rights curtailed and are forced into marriage and other exploitative situations. Even in areas free of the Taliban threat, a creeping Talibanization promotes an un-Islamic, un-Afghan culture that denies women's basic rights.

Afghanistan supports the Secretary-General's analysis that a central step towards preventing violence against women is to combat gender discrimination and to give women a larger role in political and decision-making processes. Afghanistan's experience shows that there are no better advocates for women's rights than women themselves, and so we must do everything we can to help them be heard.

In the upcoming presidential and provincial elections, the participation of women will be crucial to success in Afghanistan. We have had some praiseworthy victories. Millions of women have registered to vote, and educational programmes run by the Government, the United Nations Population Fund

and the United Nations Mission of Assistance in Afghanistan educate women about the voting process and their rights and opportunities as citizens. Our Constitution guarantees women at least 25 per cent of the seats in provincial councils and 27 per cent of the seats in Parliament, and women have served as governors and in the Cabinet. A growing number of women have registered as candidates; a record-breaking 328 women are running for provincial councils and two women are among the presidential candidates.

Nonetheless, even if governmental mechanisms are in place to ensure equality, women are silenced within a culture of shame and, worse still, do not demand their rights owing to a lack of awareness or support. My Government will continue to enlist cultural, political and religious leaders in encouraging a proper understanding of women's Islamic and political rights, and to explicitly and publicly condemn all violence against women and girls. Impunity only reinforces patterns of violence.

Afghan women need the support and protection of the United Nations, the international community and the Government of Afghanistan as they work to transform society. The role of the United Nations and the international community in that struggle should be to support the Government of Afghanistan with resources, knowledge and capacity-building. Led by this Council, we should also encourage a moral and legal awareness of women's rights, both locally and in multilateral forums, and keep the issue of violence against women at the top of the international agenda. With that support, we can work to strengthen judicial mechanisms and decrease reliance on local, ad hoc justice systems that frequently disadvantage women. We can increase the number of women in the Afghan National Police and have more units dedicated to domestic violence. We can also do more to combat extremism and educate the public about the rights of women by publicizing and enforcing international and Islamic human rights norms.

The women of Afghanistan continue to suffer from violence. However, social transformation, like political stabilization and economic development, is a gradual process that requires security and continuity. We have learned that the surest way to improve the situation of women is to provide them with education, protection and support and to give them a platform

from which to speak for themselves. My Government remains fully committed to that cause.

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

Mr. Chávez (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I welcome the initiative to hold an open debate on resolution 1820 (2008) and the role of women and peace and security. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for presenting his report (S/2009/362), and welcome the statements made this morning.

As the Secretary-General points out, sexual violence is deeply dehumanizing, inflicts serious physical and psychological wounds, is accompanied by fear, shame and stigmatization, and is often a method of torture. Women and girls have been particularly vulnerable to such violence in the armed conflicts that have occurred throughout history, although they are not the only victims. That is why resolution 1820 (2008) represents an important step forward at the normative and operational levels in firmly condemning all forms of sexual violence against civilians in armed conflict and in adopting measures aimed at its elimination.

Moreover, this debate is particularly relevant as it is taking place a few days after the Security Council took a step forward in protecting children in armed conflict by adopting resolution 1882 (2009), co-sponsored by my country, which extends the criteria whereby parties to a conflict may be included in the reports that the Secretary-General must periodically submit to the Security Council on that matter. Resolution 1882 (2009) includes sexual violence among those criteria. My delegation therefore believes that it is important that Security Council resolutions 1820 (2008) and 1882 (2009) be mutually reinforcing in preventing and combating sexual violence against women and children in conflict situations.

Due implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) undoubtedly calls for prevention measures and resolute actions to combat impunity, effective mechanisms of assistance to victims and the greater empowerment of women, making them part of conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes. It also continues to be a priority to include gender perspective in issues related to peace and security. There we see the complementarity of implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008).

Peru also believes that, as the Secretary-General stresses in his report, it is fundamentally important that resolutions adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, whether to establish or renew mandates or to impose sanctions, contain provisions to prevent and respond to acts of sexual violence. Furthermore, peacekeeping operations should have clear mandates for attaining this objective.

I welcome the progress made by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in formulating guidelines to facilitate implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008). Also valuable are studies of peacekeeping best practices to combat sexual violence that the DPKO is carrying out together with the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict. It is important that during the early recovery and peacebuilding phases efforts continue in this area. It is critical to continue support for the endeavours of the Peacebuilding Commission and the work of the United Nations Development Programme in the field.

Without socio-economic opportunity for victims of sexual violence, we cannot hope for lasting peace. Nor is lasting peace possible without the rule of law or access to justice. For that reason, the fight against impunity is fundamental to the eradication of sexual violence.

One key element in addressing this question is the availability of complete information on instances of sexual violence in armed conflict. As indicated by the Secretary-General, many cases are known through ad hoc tribunals, transitional justice mechanisms and other special mechanisms, although only scattered information exists on this topic. Thus, it is necessary to look into mechanisms to enable the United Nations agencies, the various committees of the Security Council and the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict to exchange reliable information on acts of sexual violence, with a view to taking measures to reduce and combat this scourge. My delegation also believes that it is important to consider the Secretary-General's request to establish a Security Council follow-up mechanism regarding measures taken by parties involved in conflict so as to comply with their international obligations to prevent and combat sexual violence.

We note with satisfaction that the international community is making efforts to move forward on the

protection of civilians, especially women and children in armed conflict and in post-conflict situations. Resolution 1820 (2008) and other resolutions reflect shared values and the unanimous condemnation of sexual violence against civilians in armed conflict. It is only through concerted efforts and political will that it will be possible to create a safe and sustainable environment for peacebuilding processes.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Timor-Leste.

Mr. Santos (Timor-Leste): Let me begin, Mr. President, by expressing Timor-Leste's appreciation to you for convening this open debate on the report of Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) (S/2009/362).

My country, Timor-Leste, believes it has a moral obligation to speak out on this issue. Timorese women lived through the worst and went through extreme violence during our conflict. Our women have seen it all. We hope we can honour them by helping to make the lives of all women in all conflict settings more secure and dignified.

Timor-Leste is of opinion that the Secretary-General's in-depth report on the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) is a good and comprehensive report and an important tool for reducing the use of sexual violence against women. It provides critical information on conflict situations in which sexual violence is widely or systematically employed against civilians and offers a number of good recommendations aimed at minimizing the susceptibility of women and girls to such violence.

Unfortunately, and despite repeated condemnation, as noted in the Secretary-General's report, violence and sexual abuse of women and children trapped in war zones is not only continuing, but, in some cases, has become so widespread and systematic as to reach appalling levels of brutality and inhumanity. More than ever, we need to move from words to action. We need to make sure that implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) results in real change on the ground for women and girls at risk of sexual violence.

The report should be seen as a landmark opportunity and a basis on which to build implementation. In this regard, Timor-Leste calls on the Security Council to consider full and effective

implementation of the report's recommendations and to consistently and substantively address the particular concerns of women in conflict-affected situations.

Timor-Leste hopes that the Council will specifically consider the appointment of a special representative or special envoy for women and peace and security. Such a person would drive coordination of the system-wide efforts to respond to and prevent sexual violence in armed conflict, promote action and enhance effectiveness on the ground, and would reinforce, support and help drive existing United Nations efforts.

The Council should also establish a commission of inquiry, supported by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, with the task of investigating and reporting sexual violence in Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan, and of making recommendations to the Council on the most effective mechanisms for ensuring accountability. In addition, we also recommend that the Council establish such commissions in future conflicts where sexual violence is prevalent.

The Council should request analysis of sexual violence issues in all country-specific reports and ensure that resolutions that establish or renew peacekeeping mandates or political missions contain provisions on the prevention of, and response to, sexual violence, as well as corresponding reporting requirements.

The Security Council should emphasize the need for more systematic and effective data collection and reporting on sexual violence. Prevention, protection and prosecution cannot occur without information and analysis.

The Council should request that the Department of Political Affairs ensure that sexual violence dimensions are considered in all mediation processes in which the United Nations is involved.

The Council should call on troop contributors to strengthen pre-deployment training on ways to address sexual violence and request that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations include this subject matter in training advice to troop-contributing countries.

The international community has a special responsibility to advance efforts to deal with sexual violence in conflict settings. However, Timor-Leste would like to highlight that Member States are

individually responsible for dealing with this issue. A number of States have inadequate internal measures to prevent sexual violence and protect civilians, combat impunity for sexual violence, address continuing discrimination against women and girls in law and in practice, and provide proper and dignified assistance to victims.

Let me conclude by saying that my country is well aware that a number of these recommendations involve important budgetary implications. However, let me recall that women and girls are suffering. We have the responsibility to protect them and to take real and effective measures to put an end to their suffering, as the Secretary-General stated early this morning, to set our world on a course for a better future.

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

Mr. Mahiga (Tanzania): Mr. President, we thank you for organizing this important Security Council debate on the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008), on sexual violence against women, during the presidency of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. We commend the Secretary-General's report on this matter (S/2009/362), which advances our understanding of the subject of sexual violence against women, especially in situations of armed conflict and post-armed conflict situations, and the measures which need to be taken to preventing and address violence against girls and women.

We appreciate and encourage the leadership of the Secretary-General and the Security Council on this subject, which needs to be linked normatively and operationally to resolution 1325 (2000), on women and armed conflict. Both resolutions are central to international peace and security. They have generated significant positive responses from States and regional and international organizations, which have become engaged in addressing gender-based violence in conflict and non-conflict situations alike.

In Tanzania, we are working with the United Nations system — especially the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) — on advocacy initiatives, as well as promoting legislative and policy measures to address and mainstream national initiatives against gender-based violence. Tanzania has agreed with UNIFEM to lead a regional initiative related to the campaign against gender-based

violence, including sexual violence against girls and women.

I also take this opportunity to draw the attention of the Council and the United Nations system to the newly launched African Union gender policy, which is related to, among other issues, the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008). We encourage the Council and the United Nations system as a whole to cooperate and coordinate with the African Union on initiatives in these areas, as appropriate. This could be a subject of future discussions in the evolving partnership and cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union.

There are many challenges in the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) at all levels. Among those that stand out and require urgent responses at all levels is the collection of adequate and reliable information on sexual violence. That can best be done through the provision of assured access to humanitarian assistance for survivors of violence. Information would not only give us a better understanding of the problem, but also allow us to devise appropriate strategies to address the problem and help the victims of sexual violence. In peacekeeping missions and other humanitarian operations, access to survivors of sexual violence must be given due priority.

Coordinated action within the United Nations through a focal point in the Secretariat needs to be part of the wider initiative of the gender entity in the United Nations system-wide coherence exercise. This ought to go hand in hand with developing expertise on gender-based violence within United Nations agencies in the humanitarian sector. We commend the individual agencies, funds and programmes that already have dedicated units to deal with gender-based violence, but their mandates would be greatly enhanced through a system-wide focal point.

While the Security Council, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs continue to improve the protection of civilians in peacekeeping missions, preventing and protecting against sexual violence remain a relatively new and still evolving undertaking. We therefore encourage troop-contributing countries, in partnership with DPKO, to develop specific training for peacekeepers in the protection of women and girls against sexual violence before their deployment to peacekeeping missions.

That would entail increasing the numbers of female military and police officers, as well as of trained civilian female staff, to be deployed in the field.

We look forward to participating in a wider debate in the Council later this year on the protection of civilians in peacekeeping operations.

The President: I now call on the representative of Kenya.

Mrs. Cerere (Kenya): I should like at the outset to join other delegations in thanking you, Mr. President, for organizing this very timely debate on women and peace and security. My delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/362) pursuant to resolution 1820 (2008). Today's debate is timely, as it comes at a time when we are being confronted with persistent, widespread and systematic cases of sexual violence perpetrated against civilians in conflict and non-conflict situations.

My delegation concurs with the Secretary-General's report that sexual violence constitutes one of the most serious violations of international humanitarian, human rights and criminal law. Women and girls make up a disproportionate percentage of the victims of sexual violence. We must find the means to hold accountable all perpetrators of this atrocity and to provide justice to the victims. To that end, States should endeavour to strengthen their domestic capacities to protect vulnerable groups and to investigate, prosecute and punish the perpetrators.

The effective implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) will require Governments, the private sector, civil society and the United Nations system to reaffirm their commitments and address the most urgent challenges and obstacles to mainstreaming a gender perspective into the area of international peace and security. There is a need for States to ratify and implement core international human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The appalling situation regarding sexual violence perpetrated against women and girls in conflict situations, especially in the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa, has to be looked at seriously. As a community of States, we must rigorously implement the United Nations policy of zero tolerance with regard to the sexual abuse and exploitation of women and girls by staff and related personnel.

We must also provide protection to women and ensure that putting a stop to war-related sexual violence is prioritized at the international level. We laud the crucial work being carried out by United Nations agencies such as the United Nations Population Fund, UNICEF and others in dealing with these issues. Similarly, we need to galvanize support for putting in place the infrastructure necessary to ensure that victims of sexual violence receive quality medical assistance.

In addition, during the post-conflict reconstruction and healing process, decisions should not be made for women; women must be part and parcel of the process that affects them.

Kenya appreciates the great strides made by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in promoting gender balance among peacekeeping personnel. The incorporation of full-time gender advisers into peacekeeping missions has been very useful in that regard. Although gender balance is far from having been attained, we have taken steps in the right direction. DPKO needs to redouble its efforts to achieve that goal. It must develop and disseminate to States — especially troop-contributing countries — effective guidelines to ensure sustained efforts in gender mainstreaming at all levels of peacekeeping operations.

Kenya has embarked on a vigorous process aimed at improving its institutional capacity to hold to account all perpetrators of crimes against human rights, including sexual violence, by initiating reforms of its law enforcement and justice administration agencies. In addition, Kenya has made deliberate efforts to increase the participation of women in peacekeeping operations. Currently, we have women in uniform in all missions in which we are engaged. The adoption of the Sexual Offences Act has facilitated a more effective means of dealing with sexual offences, including rape. This has been augmented through the establishment of gender desks at police stations to deal specifically with violations relating to violence against women.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate our condemnation of sexual violence against women and to urge all Member States, civil society and the United Nations system, particularly the Security Council and the International Criminal Court, to put an end to impunity in that regard. We support more concrete and substantive measures to stem this vice. Perpetrators

must be held accountable for their nefarious deeds through the actualization of a zero-tolerance policy concerning sexual abuse and exploitation.

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

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency for the month of August. My delegation welcomes this opportunity to participate in this open debate on women and peace and security, and wishes to express our sincere appreciation to the delegation of the United Kingdom for convening this debate. We also thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2009/362) on the implementation of resolution 1820 (2008) and for its presentation this morning.

The genocide in Rwanda in 1994 witnessed some of the most inhumane acts of violence targeted against women and girls. As the Secretary-General's report correctly points out,

“for the first time in 1994, in the circumstances of the case, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) qualified the crime of rape as a form of genocide” (S/2009/362, para. 6).

The survivors of the genocide continue to live with the consequences of these crimes 15 years on, with very little or no specific assistance from the international community. The perpetrators of these heinous crimes, the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), have been central to regional insecurity in the Great Lakes region since 1994 and continue to pose a threat to ongoing peace efforts. I would urge the international community to complement the efforts of the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to eliminate the threat posed by the FDLR and to assist the survivors.

It is imperative that the culture of impunity that has allowed for the continued perpetration of systematic sexual violence in the Great Lakes region and elsewhere be uprooted once and for all. My Government, in collaboration with our Parliament, has continued to strengthen the capacity of both the police and the judiciary to effectively respond to any incident of sexual violence. In this respect, we welcome the recommendations set out in the Secretary-General's report to tackle impunity, and particularly concerning

the need for the United Nations system to deliver as one to address sexual violence in all its forms.

The equal participation of women and men in the promotion of peace and security in conflict and post-conflict situations alike is integral to any peacekeeping, peacemaking or peacebuilding process. It is within this context that my Government has set out to ensure that women are central to the political, economic and social governance of our nation. Equally, the participation of women in the maintenance of and promotion of peace is essential, and Rwanda has placed the prevention of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict at the core of its peacekeeping commitments. Sexual violence against women and girls is considered by the Rwandan Defence Forces (RDF) as a key component of the security threat in all its deployments. In this respect, the Gender Desk at Rwandan Defence Headquarters devises training programmes with the support of the United Nations Development Fund for Women and other United Nations agencies to raise awareness of gender-based violence and violence against women in the armed forces.

Awareness and training on responding to gender-based violence and violence against women have now been mainstreamed into the curriculum of all Rwanda's military schools and training institutions, and is

integral to the preparation of all RDF battalions for peacekeeping missions abroad. The participation of Rwandan policewomen in peacekeeping missions in the Sudan has further ensured that they raise awareness among the population in support of their missions. We would urge the United Nations system to strengthen and maintain its support to Member States in this respect.

My Government remains firmly committed to the joint implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) and will continue to play its role at the national, subregional, regional and global levels to ensure that the scourge of sexual violence is eliminated.

The President: I would like to say that we have heard today many valuable and thought-provoking views and suggestions on this subject of very grave concern. All of these helpful contributions will inform the work of the Council as it prepares a formal response to the Secretary-General's report over the next few weeks.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.