

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Rule of Law and Transitional Justice in Conflict-Affected Situations, October 18th, 2013, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Ms. Frankinet, Permanent Mission of Belgium to the United Nations

My delegation thanks the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of UN Women, Ms. Mlambo- Ngcuka; the representative of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, Ms. Balipou; and Ms. Pillay, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, for their contributions to this debate.

We fully align ourselves with the statement of the European Union. We would like to make a few additional remarks in our national capacity.

Belgium welcomes the theme chosen for today's debate. We also sponsored resolution 2122 (2013), adopted today. The rule of law and transitional justice in relation to gender have not yet received sufficient attention, despite the fact that they are key to the promotion and protection of women's rights in post- conflict situations. My country welcomes the fact that this debate is also focusing on the rebuilding of justice mechanisms that guarantee women non-discriminatory access to justice in post-conflict societies.

Indeed, improving the legal framework and the rules of procedure to ensure women better access to justice at both the national and the international levels is one of the aims of the second national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) that my country recently finalized for the period 2013-2016. To attain that goal, we believe that it is critical, on the one hand, to support the initiatives that facilitate access to justice for women and girls so as to ensure that their rights are protected, and, on the other, to incorporate the gender dimension into documents relating to the rule of law and transitional justice and to support transitional justice mechanisms that have a real impact on gender parity.

Belgium continues to give political and operational priority to the fight against all forms of violence against civilians during and after armed conflict, with particular focus on sexual violence. In that regard, my country encourages States to include the fight against sexual violence in their transitional justice mechanisms and penal law, and to consider the fight against sexual violence as their responsibility. We also reiterate our call on all countries to apply the broadest possible definition of the concept of sexual violence, as identified by the International Criminal Court.

In conclusion, I take this opportunity to welcome the publication by the Democratic Republic of the Congo of a report on sexual violence in that country. The report demonstrates the importance of the Human Rights Council's decision to convene at its twenty- fifth session a high-level dialogue on the lessons learned and the remaining challenges in the campaign against sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The report also reflects the need to allow countries in conflict and post-conflict situations to share their relevant experience.