

41. Regular session of the Human Rights Council

Draft joint oral statement on

Strengthening the role of women in peace and multilateralism

Mr. President,

I have the honour to read this statement on behalf of the Kingdom of Spain, The Kingdom of Jordan and other X countries.

Following this year's commemoration of the International Women's Day and the League of Nations Centenary initiative to mark 100 Years of Multilateralism in Geneva, held on 8 March 2019 at the Palais des Nations, the above-mentioned Member States express the following:

As we commemorate the 40th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, we recall its affirmation that "the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields"; and the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, that recalled the shared conviction that "women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making processes and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development, and peace.", we acknowledge that important strides have been achieved in the promotion and protection of women's rights.

We also approach the 20th anniversary of the adoption by the United Nations Security Council of the first resolution on Women, Peace and Security, - UNSCR 1325 -, which recognized the fundamental participation of women in peace-building, conflict resolution, sustainable development and multilateralism. Grounded on the link between gender equality and sustainable peace, the WPS Agenda has stated the need to ensure the effective participation of women in every phase of conflict and the importance of women's leadership becoming into a global norm.

Resolutions 1325 and the following on WPS, are a call of action to reduce the gap between our commitments and the reality on the ground regarding participation of women in all decision-making processes, the protection of women and girl's rights and the prevention of the violation of their rights.

Participation of women in peace processes and agreements and the eradication of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls remain urgent challenges in our societies. Through this statement, we would like to recommit to these goals and principles, and emphasize their urgency in the face of today's crises. We must reinforce our commitment to women's organizations and women rights defenders and ensure that their voices are present in the Human Rights Council and every multilateral fora.

All forms of discrimination based on gender are violations of human rights, as well as significant barriers to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG) and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Sexual and gender based violence is the most extreme form of discrimination and constitute a human rights violation. By mandating the investigation and documentation of gender-based crimes in several conflicts, the Human Rights Council has discharged its responsibility in a pioneering fashion. As a result, atrocities committed against women and girls are now more documented than ever before in history, and this has eroded the culture of silence and impunity that compounds these crimes. But we still need to advance in putting in place effective instruments that address individual human rights violations and enhance accountability as a key element.

Therefore, we encourage the Human Rights Council to identify additional measures aimed at promoting Goal 5 on gender equality and Goal 16 on the promotion of peaceful, just and inclusive societies for sustainable development of the 2030 Agenda, as well as to contribute to implement the resolutions that constitute the WPS agenda. In particular, the Council should affirm the fundamental importance of the role of women in protection against Human Rights abuses and violations. Another important chapter is that of empowerment and education of women and girls, as well as the necessity of mainstreaming gender and women's participation in multilateral diplomacy, the United Nations, Regional Organizations, and Development Agencies.

We believe that we must do a lot more to translate the recommendations of human rights mechanisms, Special Procedures, Treaty Bodies, and the Universal Periodic Review into real change for women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations. They offer us a path towards greater accountability in the implementation of women, peace and security commitments, and will bring us closer to a more peaceful world.