

**Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security  
October 2014, Security Council Chamber**

*Statement by Mr. Riecken, Permanent Mission of Austria to the United Nations*

It is an honour for Austria to speak today in its capacity as current Chair of the Human Security Network and therefore on behalf of the following countries: Chile, Costa Rica, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, Norway, Panama, Switzerland, Thailand, Slovenia, South Africa as an observer, and my own country Austria.

Let me first of all thank all speakers for their briefings and commend them for their important work. We also welcome the adoption of presidential statement S/PRST/2014/21 earlier today.

I would like to express our strong appreciation for the focus of today's debate on refugee and displaced women and girls. The vast majority of displaced persons are women and girls who often face increased insecurity in their lives, health, rights and livelihoods and are particularly vulnerable to gender-based violence and sexual exploitation. While we note that significant progress has been made, especially at the normative level, we are deeply concerned that the progress has been hampered by a proliferation of new crises with outbreaks of violence and unprecedented levels of displacement, particularly affecting women and girls. Moreover, we are witnessing armed groups and violent extremist groups targeting women and girls in particular.

Our group is deeply concerned about the use of systematic and widespread sexual violence as a tool of intimidation, retribution and social control, as well as the continued use of sexual violence as a means of displacing populations. We urge all parties to immediately cease such atrocities and to hold perpetrators to account. We also call upon the members of the Security Council to use all means at its disposal to address sexual violence in armed conflicts, including making referrals to the International Criminal Court and other relevant actions. We welcome the clear global, regional and national commitments taken to tackle that.

We also welcome the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report (S/2014/693), including those on steps that can be taken by the Security Council to reinforce and implement the prevention framework outlined in resolution 2106 (2013). We recognize especially the need to pay increased attention to improved protection and accountability for the full range of gender-related human rights violations. We support the efforts to strengthen early warning and early action ability to prevent and respond to serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

I wish to highlight in particular that women's empowerment and participation are essential to any prevention and protection response. We need to strengthen our efforts to ensure that women in situations of displacement have access to resources, services, financial independence and decision-making processes. We need to develop tailor-made services for displaced women, foster gender-sensitive needs assessments and the collection of sex- and age-disaggregated data and to make progress in linking relief, rehabilitation and development.

To improve the situation of women and girls, we also need to make better use of international legal and policy instruments. In that respect, we welcome the upcoming entry into force of the Arms

Trade Treaty, which mandates exporting States parties explicitly to take into account the risk of serious acts of gender-based violence or violence against women and children.

Strengthening civil society, including grass-roots women's organizations and networks that provide assistance to victims and survivors of sexual violence in conflict, can enable the restoration of dignity and respect and provide the necessary skills, treatment and care to empower individuals to protect themselves and defend their rights.

The Human Security Network would like to reiterate the importance of women's participation in all stages of conflict resolution processes. We strongly support the deployment of women protection advisers and the designation of gender focal points in the United Nations peacekeeping and political missions, and believe that their positions should be provided for within the missions' budgets.

To conclude, let me highlight the importance we place on reviewing our progress on women and peace and security next year in the context of the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. In particular, on today's anniversary, we are looking forward to the high-level review in 2015 to assess progress at the global, regional and national levels in implementing resolution 1325 (2000) and especially to the renewed momentum we will gather to further strengthen and implement all our commitments on women and peace and security. The global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) is an important step in that direction and we look forward to the results of that important study.

We must all strive to improve the protection of women and girls in situations of conflict or displacement, and the Human Security Network will continue to contribute to that shared goal.

Finally, in my national capacity, I would like to add that as a contribution to UN-Women's campaign in the lead-up to the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as to the global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), Austria will host an international symposium in Vienna early next month. The symposium's results will be published in a policy paper intended to sum up real-life expertise in conflict prevention, analysis, resolution and peacebuilding, and to provide recommendations on how to address the most pressing issues.