

Ms. Bird (Australia): Australia welcomes the Secretary-General's report on women and peace and security (S/2015/716) and yesterday's unanimous adoption of resolution 2242 (2015), which we were very proud to co-sponsor. We were pleased to participate in today's launch of the ground-breaking global study.

While there have been advances since resolution 1325 (2000) was adopted, there are areas where the international community is still failing. Women and children continue to suffer disproportionately in conflict and post-conflict countries. Maternal mortality rates are twice as high; education parity has not been achieved; there are record numbers of people forcibly displaced; and rates of violence, including sexual violence, against women are escalating.

Australia is pleased to make a number of pledges today to help address this dire situation.

First, Australia is committing an additional 4 million Australian dollars over three years to the Global Acceleration Instrument on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, bringing our total contribution to 5.5 million Australian dollars. This is in recognition of the fact that more is needed to support the critical role of women's organizations in preventing and resolving conflict, building peace and ensuring relief and recovery.

Secondly, the women and peace and security agenda must be implemented across the military. Accordingly, the Australian Defence Force is deploying more women and increasing their number in senior decision-making roles; has introduced recruitment targets for women in non-traditional roles; and is developing a gender adviser and female engagement team capability. The Australian Defence Force will also provide a technical expert for women and peace and security to UN-Women for five years from 2016.

Our third pledge recognizes that women, girls and women's organizations are vital to promoting gender equality in countering terrorism and violent extremism. We will therefore support new research to be conducted by Monash University in Melbourne on preventing conflict and countering fundamentalism through women's empowerment and civil-society mobilization.

Australia will also support women's organizations in their participation in the regional network of civil- society groups being established as an outcome of the June 2015 Regional Summit to Counter Violent Extremism, held in Sydney.

Fourthly, Australia understands that humanitarian efforts need to do more to prevent and support survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. That is why Australia has dedicated specific funding to address sexual and gender- based violence in response to

the Syria crisis: 7 million Australian dollars, as part of our overall commitment of 59 million Australian dollars in the last 12 months.

Finally, Australia is reviewing its national action plan on women and peace and security, and we will use the global study to inform future actions under our plan.

We call on the United Nations system as a whole to respond to the global study's recommendations. Women and peace and security must be considered and implemented as part of the Secretary-General's review of peace operations and the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture in addition to this high-level review.

Global leaders have now agreed to the historic 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1), recognize the links between development, human rights and peace and security, and are placing gender equality at the heart of these efforts. We must, as a global community, do more to deliver on these promises for women around the world.