

**Mr. Kickert** (Austria): At the outset, let me thank President Rajoy Brey and Spain for taking the lead in organizing this open debate, marking 15 years since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). Allow me also to thank the Secretary-General and his dedicated staff for their efforts in making a difference for women and girls in conflict situations.

Austria aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the observer of the European Union.

In its national capacity, Austria commends the extensive review exercises that have been carried out in parallel, on the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), involving the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, United Nations peace operations and the women, peace and security agenda. We welcome the launch of the global study that was made public earlier today and which Austria has supported from its inception. This exercise was not only necessary in terms of taking stock, but it also provides us with important lessons learned.

Austria is alarmed by the current spread of brutal and systemic violence, which is not only causing unspeakable suffering to civilian populations, but has also triggered the biggest wave of refugees and displacement in recent history. We must develop answers on how to deal with the growing spread of violent terrorism and extremism, which are marked by unprecedented levels of sexual violence, abuse, and violations of women's and girls' rights. The perpetrators must be held accountable for their acts before the International Criminal Court. We must also empower and support the work of women activists and women human rights defenders. Therefore, a conference in Austria in June 2016 will bring together local women leaders with political representatives and discuss ways forward in tackling sexual violence in armed conflict.

Austria believes that a dedicated body on the Security Council and regular briefings on matters related to resolution 1325 (2000) would increase the Council's capacities to take timely and consistent action. Gender expertise, at adequate levels, needs to be included as well into all peace and security related work of the United Nations. We also need champions that take the lead. Austria would therefore support the idea of reviving a women leaders network and would be ready to work together with other interested Member States in this endeavour.

Austria would like to use this occasion to join other Member States in pledging support to women, peace and security. These are the following pledges.

We are committed to completing a review of the Austrian national action plan, originally dating from 2007, by the end of 2016 — with the broad participation of civil society and women's organizations — which will reflect findings of the United Nations high-level review. Our inter-ministerial working group on resolution 1325 (2000), which was

established under the national action plan and works with civil society and women's organizations, will organize at least one big public event per year.

Together with other interested Member States, Austria will continue to work on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and the subsequent relevant resolutions in all regional organizations. In that respect, Austria, together with Finland, Turkey and Kazakhstan, will continue to push for the adoption of an action plan on women and peace and security by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), as many other international organizations have done before. We call on the Russian Federation to join in that endeavour. It would be a timely deliverable for the OSCE ministerial meeting in December in Belgrade.

Austria supports the work of UN-Women and will continue, on a voluntary basis, to support its activities in the field of women and peace and security. Austria commits to realizing concrete results at the policy level by earmarking at least 15 per cent of all our peacebuilding spending by our development assistance agency, Austrian Development Cooperation, for programmes and projects aimed at furthering women's empowerment and gender equality.

Civil society efforts are also a critical element for the effective implementation of resolutions on women and peace and security. Austria, through its Development Cooperation, will spend more than €1 million in the next 3 years on its cooperation with civil society activists in that field.

Austria will also follow up on the recommendations developed at the symposium entitled "Enhancing Women's Share in Peace and Security", held in November 2014 in Vienna.

Austria commits to intensifying efforts to achieve the goal of a 10 per cent proportion of female soldiers within the Austrian Armed Forces and to creating the organizational structures needed for the institutionalized integration of gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment within the Ministry of Defence and the Austrian armed services.

Finally, Austria will continue to further strengthen its training activities on resolution 1325 (2000), in particular in pre-deployment training for peace and humanitarian operations, which is now provided for civilian and military experts from around the world in Austria, as well as in its national training courses.