

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): I would like to thank all our briefers and visiting Ministers for their remarks. I am particularly grateful that we have had the opportunity to hear a voice from civil society in this Chamber today, something that is even more vital at a time when so many such voices are being ignored, threatened or silenced around the world. That is great, and it is also great that so many people are attending the debate here today, but in the spirit of trying to improve still further how we do things here, I would like to make a few points frankly.

We meet in this format once a year and repeat what we already know — that we need more women at the negotiating table, that peace deals stand a greater chance of succeeding with women taking part, that we must turn our words into action. And yet, year after year, session after session, Secretary-General's report after report, the actual implementation of this agenda still falls way too short. We have had resolution after resolution — eight of them since resolution 1325 (2000) — and yet the promise of that first historic text still remains unfulfilled.

So I encourage everyone speaking later today to be specific about what his or her country has been doing since we last met in this format to make the women and peace and security agenda a reality — and then, ideally, to commit to doing even more. This year, the United Kingdom has worked to increase women's participation in conflict resolution in some of the most fragile countries in the world: Somalia, Syria, Yemen and Afghanistan. We have helped women in parliament, civil society, the military and business to increase their voice, influence and participation, and we will keep doing so next year.

But we also know that the agenda on women and peace and security is about more than work in individual countries. So many of the dangers that women face in conflict are shared ones that are found in every conflict, such as sexual violence and the stigmatization of survivors of such horrific crimes. And since they are shared challenges, we must all share in the response if we are to affect international change. That is why the United Kingdom has championed the prevention of sexual violence in conflict; why we launched the global principles on stigma in the General Assembly this year; why we are running 23 projects in conflict and postconflict countries to support survivors, end stigma and deliver justice; and why we have contributed \$2 million to the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund. I urge others to contribute, too.

Turning to peacekeeping, this year United Kingdom troops on large-scale overseas missions, whether for the United Nations or anyone else, are now receiving pre deployment training on preventing sexual violence and on the women and peace and security agenda more broadly. Alongside our Bangladeshi and Canadian partners, we will be launching a new global network of military gender champions at the 2017 United Nations Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conference in Vancouver next month. We strongly support the Secretary-General's commitment to gender parity and his efforts to increase the number of women in peacekeeping. However, the women and peace and security agenda is about far more than numbers. We are concerned, frankly, about the fact that the Secretariat is deprioritizing gender advisers in United Nations missions, and we urge the United Nations to reinstate accountability through its compacts with United Nations leaders.

In the United Kingdom this year, Baroness Hale became the first woman ever to head our Supreme Court, which makes it the first time in our history that we have had women as our Head of State, Head of Government, and head of the most senior court in the land. This year we also appointed our first ever special envoy for gender equality, putting that issue at the heart of our foreign policy. But despite such historic steps, we have more to do. That is why next year we will be launching the United Kingdom's fourth national action plan, building on progress made, lessons learned and our discussions with civil society and focus countries.

My final point is that there is more that all of us around this table can do — both internally, in the missions and ministries that we lead, and externally, in the Security Council and around the United Nations. Internally, I commend to the Council the gender compact for the United Kingdom Mission that I launched this year. I encourage all to read it, steal its good ideas and apply them in their own missions. And outside our missions, we must practice every day what we preach in the Security Council. It is easy to talk about women and peace and security when that is the subject on our agenda, as it is today, but the challenge is to talk about it when our agenda is Syria or Somalia or South Sudan. We can all do better on that, and I encourage everyone to come together to do so.