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*Provisional***Statement by the Representative of Sweden, Ms. Alice Bah Kuhnke:**

I align myself with the statements to be delivered on behalf of the European Union, the Nordic countries and the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security. Let me begin by thanking the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Amina Mohammed, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Pramila Patten, for their thoughtful interventions this morning and for their leadership and concrete efforts to combat conflict-related sexual violence. I want to extend a particular word of welcome and thanks to Ms. Razia Sultana, whose testimony underlines the critical importance of using all the tools available to the Security Council to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence.

In my position as the Swedish Minister for Culture and Democracy — with responsibilities such as national human rights, civil society and the fight against discrimination and racism — I have met women and girls, men and boys who are seeking asylum in Sweden, and I have listened to their testimonies. I have heard stories about children in conflict areas, taken from their families, abducted, forced into sexual slavery. Those are horrible atrocities. But it does not stop there. During their journey to Europe, they were once again abused and harassed, including in refugee camps. My role as Minister is to listen, to understand and — most important — to act. Those testimonies, like Ms. Sultana's, cannot only be something we here are horrified by; the stories must become the starting point for action.

Regrettably, violence, oppression and systematic subordination still mark the daily lives of countless women and girls. Conflict-related sexual violence brutalizes and traumatizes the victims and seeks to undermine and shatter communities and societies. Its impact cannot be overestimated. Addressing this scourge is a central part of the Security Council's work. Alarming, conflict-related sexual violence as a tactic of war and terrorism has reached new levels. That is a core security challenge. At the heart of this issue is the fundamental principle of women's full enjoyment of human rights, especially sexual and reproductive health and rights. The link between accountability and prevention is clear. Ensuring accountability and putting an end to impunity for violations and abuses against international law must be a priority for all of us, both inside and outside the Council.

When Sweden joined the Security Council, we set out two overarching priorities: conflict prevention and women and peace and security. Therefore, we thank Peru for organizing this open debate, and welcome the focus of today's discussion. Since 2014, Sweden has pursued a feminist foreign policy based on four R's — rights, representation, resources and reality check. That means that throughout our foreign policy

— including peace, security, trade, humanitarian and development efforts — we are applying a systematic gender perspective. Without inclusion and respect for all, sustainable peace can never be achieved. We know that gender equality makes societies more peaceful.

The ongoing Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality will cover many of these critical issues and seek common solutions. The Council needs to address the gender dynamics of the root causes of conflict. We must consider structural gender inequality as a critical element of the instability that hinders efforts to maintain or restore international peace and security. To achieve that, we need gendered conflict analysis, while building on gender-disaggregated data and solid gender expertise. We also need to build alliances with brave civil society actors, who play an essential role in addressing conflict-related sexual violence and promoting gender equality. We fully support the Secretary-General's recommendation that the Council consider the early warning signs of sexual violence in its monitoring of conflict situations.

Last year, the Security Council added the first-ever separate designation criteria on conflict-related sexual violence in the sanctions regime for the Central African Republic. However, having the criteria is not enough; sanctions committees also need gender expertise. This year, when the Council renewed the sanctions regime for the Central African Republic, it added language to respond to this need. Let us work together to include similar criteria in all relevant sanctions regimes. Panels of experts must also be mandated to report to the sanctions committees on conflict-related sexual violence. In cases where there are still no separate designation criteria, we encourage the panels to report under international humanitarian law and/or human rights criteria.

To further inform country-specific considerations, we encourage Council members and the broader membership to make full use of the documents and the meetings of the Security Council Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security. The importance of women in peacekeeping no longer needs to be justified. The evidence speaks for itself. With more female peacekeepers and police officers, we can achieve more and reach the whole population in a conflict area. Sweden is actively addressing factors that hinder the deployment of women peacekeepers, police and corrections officers. The women and peace and security agenda is an integral part of predeployment training for all Swedish troops, and all deployed contingents have specially trained gender advisers. There are many good examples to be shared in that regard.

We welcome the enhanced focus on access to justice and its links to prevention, which contributes to ending impunity and to ensuring victims' trust in accountable and effective criminal-justice institutions. As the report of the Secretary-General contained in document S/2018/250 highlights, the effects of sexual violence — including trauma, stigma, poverty and poor health — can echo across generations. In response, we need to ensure socioeconomic-reintegration support to restore community cohesion. Survivors of sexual and gender-based violence also must have access to the full range of livelihood, legal, psychosocial and medical services, including sexual- and reproductive-health services that are not subject to donor restrictions.

The focus of today's open debate shows that it is a broad agenda with many interconnected goals and that no single actor can achieve them alone. That makes alliances — among States, regional and

international organizations, civil society, women's organizations, inter alia — so important. We, the Security Council, need to show leadership — not just with regard to today's topic, but across all aspects of our work