

**Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Council, April 2014, Security Council Chamber**  
*Statement by Mr. Rishchynski, Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations.*

At the outset, I would like to convey our congratulations to you, Madam President, and to Nigeria for presiding over the Security Council this month and to thank you as well for the invitation to participate in this important debate.

This open debate is an important opportunity to review the shocking but all too constant tragedy of sexual violence against women and girls in conflict situations. The debate today serves as a necessary bridge between the considerable political commitment, concrete programming in the field and high-level activities. In 2013, at the United Nations and elsewhere, the international community worked to raise awareness and establish a framework for the prevention of violence against women, including conflict-related sexual violence. Canada is encouraged by the momentum demonstrated by upcoming high-level activities focused on practical measures to improve the lives of women and girls, and to empower them to participate and contribute fully to the development of their communities and countries unhindered by the effects of sexual violence, female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage.

In the past year, the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted a resolution (A/HRC/RES/23/25) on accelerating efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women with a focus on sexual violence, including in conflict. The Human Rights Council also passed the first-ever stand-alone resolution (A/HRC/24/23) that addresses the harmful practice of child, early and forced marriage. Canada is honoured to have played a role in those resolutions and is pleased by the support for them by many other delegations.

In New York in June 2013, the Security Council passed resolution 2122 (2013), which further addresses sexual violence in conflict and emphasizes the essential role of women's participation in preventing sexual violence. In September 2013 at the General Assembly, some 140 Member States endorsed the United Nations Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, which was co-sponsored by the United Kingdom, Canada and many other champions of preventing sexual violence.

The impact that conflict and long periods of post- conflict recovery have on the safety and security of women and girls and the barriers that the various forms of sexual violence represent for their capacity to learn and to develop their full human potential is an issue that we all must address.

Canada continues to call for support for women's civil society organizations, particularly those assisting survivors of violence to ensure their health, safety and dignity, and those amplifying women's participation in decision-making processes.

Canada welcomes the Security Council's resolve to include explicit requests for protection and support for women and children affected by conflict in mission mandates. The missions can play a key role in helping to monitor, investigate and report on violations committed against women and girls, including all forms of sexual violence in conflict, and to contribute to efforts to identify and prosecute perpetrators.

I can assure the Council that Canada remains committed to women's political and economic empowerment as essential elements in efforts to address and prevent conflict-related sexual violence. In that regard, we plan to continue to work closely with Ms. Zainab Bangura, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and the Council in a forthright, integral and results-focused manner to try to put that detestable practice behind us.