



IRELAND

Statement by

H.E. Ms Anne Anderson
Permanent Representative

**Security Council Open Debate on
Women and Peace and Security
(Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of
Security Council Resolutions 1820 (2008) and 1888 (2009))**

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PERMANENT MISSION OF IRELAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS
885 SECOND AVENUE, NEW YORK, NY 10017 TELEPHONE 212 421-6934 FAX 212 752-4726
ireland@un.int

Madam President,

Ireland aligns itself with the EU statement and also with the statement on behalf of the Human Security Network.

This is an urgent and necessary debate. Amid the glow of the holiday season, it is all the more difficult for our imaginations to comprehend the horror and brutality of sexual violence on the scale to which the Secretary-General's Report attests. The contrast could not be more shocking between the civility of our lives here and the depravity of sexual violence so widely associated with conflict. The Report and the Resolution before us connect the two worlds; they signal the determination of the international community to stand with the victims and deal with the perpetrators.

Conflict and sexual violence feed off one another; the poisonous inter-relationship is fully demonstrated in the Secretary-General's Report. This is an excellent Report: clear and dispassionate in its analysis and incisive in its recommendations. Ireland strongly supports the full range of recommendations and welcomes the extent to which they have been reflected in the Resolution. Each of the operative paragraphs of this Resolution must be followed up with vigour. In her compelling opening address, SRSG Wallstrom spelled out the standards to which we must hold ourselves.

I would wish to make a few comments which draw on Ireland's experience in UN peacekeeping and on our involvement in cross-learning processes.

Our extensive engagement in UN peacekeeping has taught us that the triggers for sexual violence and the entry points for influence are different from one case to another. But there are some common points: in all situations active monitoring and timely reporting is critical: without it, early warnings will be missed, policy-making will not be properly founded, and perpetrators will slip through the cracks. Almost always, too, there are groups who are particularly vulnerable and who need specific and special protection. Again and again, one sees the pattern of preying on refugees and internally-displaced persons, especially those – mostly women – who have to venture outside villages and camps in search of water and firewood.

The recent deployment of Irish defence forces with MINURCAT has left us with some reflections. Our experience of that deployment was that by raising awareness of human rights, of the unacceptability of sexual and gender-based violence, and of the responsibilities of government and other parties, the Mission helped to foster a climate in which communities were less likely to tolerate and more likely to report acts of sexual violence.

This was certainly a positive lesson: that a peacekeeping mission, operating as intended, can raise consciousness and change tolerance standards in communities. But helping to change attitudes and standards brings a follow-up responsibility. It cannot be right that communities are left with new ways of looking at things but – with the international presence gone – no means to ensure that new standards are implemented.

This is where the continuum between peacekeeping and peacebuilding really matters. In many peacekeeping contexts, an effectively functioning domestic judicial or penal system is lacking. Although international peacekeepers can temporarily fulfil a very important role, tackling sexual violence ultimately necessitates support for a wide range of capacity-building, training and infrastructural development activities. This may not be quick or easy, but only such an integrated approach will ensure that the scourge of sexual violence in conflict is dealt with in a sustainable and lasting way.

A further source of insight has been the Cross-learning Process on Women, Peace and Security, which Ireland conducted in partnership with Liberia and Timor-Leste. This innovative initiative drew on the experiences of those directly affected by conflict in Ireland/Northern Ireland, Liberia and Timor-Leste to discuss the most critical issues facing women and girls in conflict and post-conflict settings. The Report on the Process, which we presented to Under-Secretary-General Bachelet on 25 October, highlights a number of important points.

Among the particular priorities stressed throughout this initiative were the need to fight against the culture of impunity in relation to sexual violence; to exclude sex crimes from amnesties; to improve women's access to formal, traditional and transitional justice; to increase awareness among family members and community leaders of issues surrounding sexual and gender-based violence; to enhance capacity to prosecute sex crimes; to incorporate reporting on sexual and gender-based violence into early warning systems.

Ireland is already seeking to take these recommendations forward: for example, sexual and gender-based violence has been incorporated as an indicator into an Irish Government-funded "early warning/early response" system in Timor-Leste.

Madam President, let me conclude by reiterating our unequivocal support for SRSG Wallstrom and her office, as well as our appreciation for the incremental steps that are being taken by the Security Council on this issue. The perpetrators of crimes of sexual violence now know that they are caught in the headlamps of Security Council attention; slowly but surely, the darkness in which they took refuge is being dissipated.

In this season that reminds us all of our common humanity, I can think of no more appropriate message from the Security Council than today's expression of support for and solidarity with victims of sexual violence in conflict.

Thank you, Madam President.