

**Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security
October 2014, Security Council Chamber**

Statement by Mr. Donoghue, Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations

Ireland commends you, Madam, for organizing today's debate and its particular focus on refugee and displaced women and girls. We align ourselves with the statement made on behalf of the European Union and with that delivered by the representative Austria on behalf of the Human Security Network.

We welcome the adoption today of presidential statement S/PRST/2014/21, which recognizes the heightened risks faced by refugee and internally displaced women and girls.

This debate could not be more timely. Today, as many speakers have observed, the proliferation of crises and protracted conflicts has led to a situation in which we have the highest number of refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons since the end of the Second World War, with more than 51 million affected. If this number represented a country, it would be greater than the population of Argentina and would be approaching that of the Republic of Korea. It is a simple fact that the majority of this vast wave of dislocated humanity is comprised of women and girls. It is also a fact that they face multiple forms of discrimination and violations.

In Syria, we have witnessed the largest one-year refugee exodus since the Rwandan genocide 20 years ago, with almost a third of the country on the move involuntarily. In South Sudan, where more than 1 million displaced people are surviving in dire conditions, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms Bangura, attested to the "unimaginable living conditions, acute day-to-day protection concerns and rampant sexual violence" (*S/PV.7282, p. 4*) in that country.

The specific threats of conflict faced by women and girls present themselves in some very old ways and also in new and disturbing ones. I am glad, however, that today's debate takes full account of resolution 2122 (2013) and moves away from a narrow view of women as victims of their circumstances, recognizing that they are often leaders within their communities who must be politically, socially and economically empowered. The emphasis in presidential statement S/PRST/2014/21, on the need to ensure the full and meaningful participation of women and girls through all stages of the displacement cycle, is welcomed.

There is, however, quite evidently a significant gap in implementation, as the most recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/693) outlines, and there is a need to link the women and peace and security agenda to other policy frameworks. The yardstick for change lies at the level of implementation; the challenge before us is to translate political commitments into real, positive improvements in the lives of women and girls affected by armed conflict.

In addition to confronting sexual violence in conflict, there is a need to improve the protection afforded to women and girls in humanitarian emergencies. The protection of women and girls is one of the key criteria in Ireland's decisions on humanitarian funding, including in programmes of support to displaced persons. Our national action plan on resolution 1325 (2000), which is currently being updated, also prioritizes empowerment and access to services for refugee and asylum-seeking women in Ireland.

In April, on the occasion of the most recent open debate on women and peace and security (see S/PV.7160), Ireland supported a discussion involving Ms Bangura and a Myanmar representative of civil society and former refugee, Ms. Naw K'nyaw Paw. Fleeing persecution, Ms. K'nyaw Paw's family joined 110,000 Karen people now living in refugee camps that run the length of the Thailand-Myanmar border. In line with resolution 2122 (2013), we must step up efforts to support the leadership of thousands like her. We must listen to, invest in and build the capacity of individual women and of women-led civil society organizations to ensure durable solutions.

Across the women and peace and security agenda, the lack of a clear evidence base remains a challenge. Attaining greater access to data is the only way in which we can truly assess progress and identify barriers to implementation. Ireland supports the increased use of sex- and age-disaggregated data in the design and implementation of programmes. Evidence shows us that gender markers contribute to better planning and understanding of how the women and peace and security agenda is funded. Ireland welcomes the Secretary-General's recent report (S/2014/693), which suggests that the Council request data and analysis on the situation of women and girls on a more frequent basis. We also welcome the call by this Council in today's presidential statement for more systematic collection, analysis and utilization of sex- and age-disaggregated data.

The Arms Trade Treaty is the first legally binding international agreement adopted by the General Assembly to regulate international transfers of conventional weapons and ammunition. It has been ratified by 80 per cent of the members of the Council and is also the first treaty to recognize the links between the international arms trade and gender-based violence. Both of these firsts signify meaningful advancement for international humanitarian law, human rights, and peace and security. As one of the Treaty's strongest supporters, Ireland looks forward to its coming into force within a number of weeks. We need, however, to ensure gender criteria and related commitments are given full attention in its implementation.

As we look towards the high-level review of resolution 1325 (2000) next year, we must fully grasp this opportunity to take stock of where we have had significant impact over the past 15 years, to fill in knowledge gaps, to critically examine persistent and emerging challenges, and to capture lessons learned and good practices across all regions. Last month, Ireland was delighted to co-host the launch of the global study to review resolution 1325 (2000), and we will continue to support the study over the coming months.

In conclusion, we need to move beyond mere potential and opportunity and to effect real change in the lives of women and girls. We need more consistent and systematic application of resolution 1325

(2000) and subsequent resolutions on the issue. We need to be ambitious in driving local ownership and in addressing the root causes of why women and girls are so disproportionately affected by conflict. And we need to ensure that women are fully and effectively empowered as key stakeholders in the prevention and resolution of conflict.