

Mr. Hattrem (Norway): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and my own country, Norway.

While hope is growing in some regions, new crises are emerging elsewhere. Persistent and recurring suffering as a result of war calls us to action. There is fear and distress, persons are displaced, and educations and livelihoods are lost. Women's and girls' rights are targeted and their security compromised even before a conflict erupts. Experience has taught us that there is no sustainable peace without the participation of women. We will not succeed unless our approach is gender-responsive.

We welcome the Secretary-General's report (S/2017/861), but we also have concerns about the decrease in women's participation in mediation after years of steady progress, the decline in requests for and inclusion of gender expertise, and the decline in gender-sensitivity in peace agreements. Hard-won gains must be sustained. It is up to us to see that they are. A global Women, Peace and Security Index was launched yesterday. It combines data on women's inclusion, access to justice and security. It can help us target interventions more effectively. We are doing better normatively, but also in implementation. What is needed is more strategic and consistent implementation.

Overall, women have become more influential in peace processes, at the negotiating table and as part of parallel initiatives. Colombia and Syria are noteworthy, but important strides have also been made in countries like Yemen and the Philippines. We are including civil society more systematically. We commend the efforts of UN-Women, the Department for Political Affairs, and committed Special Envoys.

The question remains: Are we learning from one process to the next? Various groups of friends, including the new Group of Friends on Countering and Preventing Violent Extremism, give attention to the participation of women and the roles of young women and men. The Women Mediators Networks make it possible for those involved to share experiences. The National Focal Points Initiative is helpful. The Nordic countries have joined forces for women and peace and security. Nordic-Baltic coordinators will meet annually to improve coordination and the implementation of national action plans in our region. However, more is required if we are to effectively learn from our successes and failures alike. The NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security provides essential information. The Global Solutions Exchange platform shares insights that we need. Yet our approach to women and peace and security is often too generic and lacks contextual analysis and points of action. The Security Council's informal group of experts is an important step in the right direction.

Gender is recognized to be about men and masculinity as well. Men can be victims of sexual violence too. That women can play a destructive role in conflict is no longer ignored, yet stereotypes persist and influence our work. The powerful leadership of women in mediation is now better understood and promoted, but women are often ignored when a process moves to

the national or international level. Women human rights defenders often remain unprotected, abuses underreported, and our response inadequate.

Sexual violence is firmly on the agenda. We recognize the work of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten, United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict and her Team of Experts, and the call to action to end sexual violence in conflict. Women and men in United Nations operations are more systematically trained to be gender-responsive. Yet sexual violence remains endemic in many conflicts. We welcome the new handbook on the prevention and handling of sexual violence in conflict that is being developed for use in United Nations peace operations.

More women are being deployed as leaders as well. Major General Kristin Lund was recently appointed Head of Mission and Chief of Staff of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in the Middle East. Women leaders are sought after. We welcome the Secretary-General's leadership and the new strategy on gender parity. However, he needs our help. Member States are nominating seven men for each woman. We have many best practices and positive developments to showcase, but far too often they remain isolated initiatives that are not followed up consistently and systematically. Our job is to ensure that best practices become mainstream practice.