

**Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security  
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*Statement by Mr. Barriga, Permanent Mission of Liechtenstein to the United Nations*

We are seeing unprecedented numbers of displaced persons; 55 million were reportedly displaced by the end of 2013, including 33 million due to violence in conflicts. Violent outbreaks in Gaza and Iraq have exacerbated the situation even further. Displacement is a peace-and-security issue that needs adequate attention by the Council, in addition to action by the other main organs.

Liechtenstein therefore welcomes this debate and its very timely focus on internally displaced and refugee women. My delegation hosted a workshop and a policy forum on the topic in collaboration with the International Peace Institute a few weeks ago in preparation for today's discussions.

Women and children account for 80 per cent of displaced persons. Nevertheless, the way they experience displacement rarely shapes interventions and programmes. Displacement has been shown to exacerbate existing gender inequality. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees often lack identification documents. They are deprived of their livelihoods and struggle with poverty, which puts them in a particularly vulnerable position. As a consequence, women face a drastic increase in violence, particularly violence inside their homes and from intimate partners. They are more vulnerable to sexual harassment and exploitation as well as to child, early and forced marriages.

We cannot limit our action to assist IDPs and refugees to what is required for bare survival. IDPs account for 63 per cent of the aforementioned 33 million people displaced due to violence and conflicts. Internal displacement is a long-term experience, lasting an average of 17 years. The assistance required must be complemented therefore by protection, which is currently lacking. Much more is necessary to ensure protection from further harm and trauma, in particular to women and children. States also need to invest in prevention, to work on preparedness and to have policies in place to deal with displacement before it even occurs.

Displacement is not a short-term problem, and we therefore have to stop treating it as if it were. It is not solely a humanitarian issue, but also a development issue. Early investment in development will help IDPs and refugees rebuild their livelihoods. Rapid provision of identity documents, fair and equal access to asylum as well as access to education are key. Education in particular is a crucial element for empowering women, making them less vulnerable and allowing them to make active contributions to recovery. Indeed, women have to be part of the solution, with full and equal participation.

In that regard, I would like to highlight the World Food Programme's excellent initiative in the Sudan, entitled Safe Access to Firewood and Alternative Energy in Humanitarian Settings (SAFE). It provides fuel-efficient stoves that reduce firewood consumption and the clearing of community forests. The stoves have reduced expenses for cooking fuel, allowing women to buy other food items and improve the nutrition and diet diversity of their families. In addition, women no longer have to venture far from their homes to collect firewood. Such trips — as is well known — expose them to grave risks, including physical and sexual violence. In less than three years, beneficiaries are

reporting that SAFE has not only changed their lives for the better, but that many also no longer need food assistance from the World Food Programme.

It is simply unacceptable that the majority of humanitarian action still fails to take into account the vulnerabilities and special needs of women and girls or their potential to make active contributions. That is not due to a lack of guidance, since we have the relevant instruments at our disposal. It is up to us Member States, the United Nations system and all relevant actors in the field to ensure the implementation of the guiding documents. It is now time to hold ourselves accountable to our own standards.

In tackling displacement, we need a holistic, inclusive approach based on close collaboration with civil society and women's groups and aimed at prevention, protection, participation and development. We believe that this is the only way that will allow us to build long-lasting peace and achieve full recovery.