

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

Statement by Mr. Van Oosterom, Permanent Mission of Netherlands to the United Nations

Let me first express our deepest appreciation to Argentina for organizing this important open debate on women and peace and security. We especially welcome the special focus on displaced women and girls. The urgency of this topic is evident. The world faces unprecedented numbers of refugees and displaced persons. Three-quarters of them are women and girls.

We also thank the Secretary-General for his annual report (S/2014/693) on resolution 1325 (2000). The Netherlands fully endorses the report and its recommendations. We align ourselves with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union.

In view of the time constraints, my full speech will be available via Twitter and on our website. Here, I will limit myself to the key points on the need for women's leadership, the need for the implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2122 (2013), and the way ahead.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands strongly believes in the power of women. They must be leaders; they must be key participants in political decision-making, in conflict prevention, in conflict resolution, and in conflict recovery. Women can and must play an important role in addressing the root causes of the conflicts that cause so many refugees. Women must participate in decision-making on humanitarian issues, such as the provision of emergency assistance.

We admire the work of women's human rights defenders, who fight for equality, also within conflict-affected areas. The international community should acknowledge the risks they face, support their efforts and ensure their safety. We support the call of the Secretary-General for comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights services in conflict-affected settings in all its aspects, including family-planning material and safe abortions for victims of rape.

In the light of the current humanitarian needs around the world, the Kingdom of the Netherlands has substantially increased humanitarian funding, providing a total of €570 million for the period 2014-2017. This includes €10 million for UNICEF in view of its focus on the vulnerability of girls in humanitarian emergency situations.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands gives priority to the implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2122 (2013). We supported the women of Syria in coming together under the Syrian Women's Initiative for Peace and Democracy. We made their voices heard, working closely together with the Department of Political Affairs and UN-Women. We invest in gender expertise at strategic positions to allow for a more effective and strategic implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. In addition, we believe in the added value of training people on the ground on issues related to women and peace and security.

In our National Action Plan 1325 (2000), the Government, knowledge institutions and civil society work in partnership in the Netherlands. The purpose of the Plan is to empower women in six focus countries and in the Middle East and North Africa. It has an annual budget of €4 million. This cooperation is a powerful instrument for effective action for women's empowerment. We aim for the inclusion of women in peace negotiations and of women and peace and security dimensions in peace agreements. We welcome the sustained positive trend reflected in the report of the Secretary-General, and we are committed to working with the United Nations system and with other countries and relevant partners to further improve on this trend.

With respect to the way ahead, we are horrified by today's violent extremism and its despicable effects on women and girls. We should include the women and peace and security agenda while drafting responses to these terrible situations. We should support the role of women as mothers, wives and sisters in countering violent extremism, and we should strengthen women's civil society and women's political participation and leadership. Furthermore, we should use the opportunities which the coming year has to offer. The Netherlands supports the inclusion of a stand-alone goal on gender equality and women's empowerment in the post-2015 agenda, and we support the integration of these issues across the framework.

In February, the Kingdom of the Netherlands will organize an international conference that will address the 1325 agenda and the review process for peace operations. The results of the conference will provide input for the United Nations high-level review of peace operations, the report of which should be ready by April 2015. Key issues, in our view, will be the participation and leadership of women in conflict and transitional situations.

In conclusion, together we must maintain the women and peace and security agenda as a priority. Together, we must translate our words into concrete action on the ground, by empowering women, by promoting gender equality, by investing in training, by working together with civil society, by learning from each other, and by seeing women as leaders, and not just as victims. The Kingdom of the Netherlands has the ambition to be a partner for peace, justice and development, and women are crucial in all these three domains.