

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

Statement by Mr. Schwalger, Permanent Mission of New Zealand to the United Nations

I thank you for convening this important debate today, Madam President. I would also like to thank this morning's briefers for their thought-provoking presentations.

New Zealand welcomes the ongoing development and strengthening of the normative frameworks around the agenda on women and peace and security, made manifest through the various Security Council resolutions adopted over the past decade and a half. The challenge now is to put those concepts into practice, as is the case in other areas of the Council's work. Focusing on the needs of particular groups can shine a light on the implementation gaps that should be addressed. That is why we particularly welcome your initiative, Madam President, in focusing today's debate on displaced women and girls.

As other speakers have noted today, the number of displaced people is higher now than at any time since the Second World War. The rise of violent extremism is also raising severe challenges to protection. In the turmoil of conflict and post-conflict situations, displaced women and girls are uniquely exposed to the erosion of protection standards. Traditional community-based frameworks of stability disappear, and the urgency and uncertainty of ongoing violence obscure its long-term consequences for vulnerable groups.

The challenges to the protection of displaced women and girls remain acute. Sexual violence in conflict is still a particular vulnerability. There is a need for responses that can address all violations of rights in conflict. Incorporating gender indicators into early warning frameworks could be a useful practical step to help identify vulnerabilities as quickly as possible and to target responses. To have a real chance of finding solutions, we should combine that awareness of vulnerability with an equally strong recall of the premises of the agenda on women and peace and security, going back to resolution 1325 (2000) — that is, that women and girls have an important active role to play in preventing and resolving conflict. Sustainable solutions cannot work if women's participation is not addressed with that perspective in mind.

That is why we must ensure that women and girls are consulted and listened to at every stage of peacebuilding and programme design. That is the only way we will realize their potential as leaders. There are worthy examples of this in practice, but the challenge is to ensure that it happens far more regularly. It requires sustained and conscious effort, including the active recruitment, training and promotion of women leaders both in affected communities and at Headquarters, so that they are part of the most senior levels of decision-making. Regional organizations can also play an important role in facilitating the rise of women and girls as agents of change.

As we have heard today, the cycle of displacement can often last many years, spanning initial displacement, resettlement and recovery — and, eventually, return. We acknowledge that the challenges that displaced women and girls face are not related merely to immediate protection, but also extend to the consequences for their livelihoods, health care and legal status and rights. We must ensure that the international community's response addresses those challenges in an holistic

way, so that displacement does not lead to a lifetime of disadvantage and vulnerability, and that their leadership potential and contribution to peace and security can be realized.