

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

*Statement by **Mr. Thöresson**, Permanent Mission of **Sweden** to the United Nations, speaking on behalf of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden*

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

First, let me thank all the briefers. I would like to thank in particular Ms. Suaad Allami for her participation here today. The role and influence of civil society in preventing conflict and building peace are both essential and must be supported.

Realizing the women and peace and security agenda is a top priority for the Nordic countries. Next year will mark the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of ground-breaking resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. We need to grasp that opportunity to accelerate our efforts. It is time to move from normative commitments to full implementation. In preparing for the high-level review on resolution 1325 (2000), we encourage all Member States to develop national action plans on women and peace and security, and to effectively implement already existing plans.

Gender inequalities lie at the heart of the issue. Gender equality in political, economic and social life is a goal in itself and also contributes to preventing sexual violence and armed conflict. We must therefore firmly address the root causes of gender inequality. This includes changing the norms in society that are denying women and girls their human rights. It also means pursuing policies that ensures women's political and economic empowerment, secures sexual and reproductive health and rights, and improves women's security. Not least, we must guarantee the right to education of all women and girls.

The fight against impunity for sexual and gender-based violence is also crucial, not least at the national level. We welcome and support the undertakings of the chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in this regard. We furthermore recall the unique capacity of Justice Rapid Response, in close cooperation with UN-Women, to address situations where expertise is needed for investigating sexual and gender-based violence crimes.

Women are not only victims, but also actors and agents of change. We therefore need the participation of women and men alike in formal as well as informal processes, in mediation, peace negotiations and humanitarian and peacebuilding efforts. Sustainable peace and security can never be achieved if half the population is excluded.

The theme of today's debate is "Displaced women and girls: leaders and survivors". Unfortunately, the levels of forcibly displaced persons in the world today are unprecedented. Patterns of violence against women and girls are often amplified in conflict-affected settings. As we see in many parts of the world today, extremism and terrorism are a prominent part of conflict situations and constitute a threat to women's rights and lives.

All the relevant actors, States and the United Nations and other international organizations must ensure that displaced populations are protected from violence, that humanitarian access is granted and that gender-responsive services, including for sexual and reproductive health, are delivered. Women and girls who are forcibly displaced are at particular risk of sexual and gender-based violence. Effective protection strategies must include the empowerment of women and girls, such as access to education and specific efforts to increase the enrolment and retention of girls in school, access to registration and documentation, and livelihood opportunities.

Improving women's participation and leadership in situations of displacement is also crucial. In that regard, we welcome the good practices of the camp management committees in eastern Nepal, which have attained 48 per cent participation by women. However, equal participation by men and women should be the norm in every case, and we urge the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and others to step up their efforts in that regard.

It is a sad fact that many refugee and internally displaced person settings are not temporary situations, but often become semi-permanent or even permanent arrangements. In all of these cases, we call on Governments to find suitable solutions in consultation with affected populations.

The United Nations system has a central role to play in implementing the women and peace and security agenda. Next year several critical reviews will take place, including the Secretary-General's review of peace operations, the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, the review of the Beijing Platform for Action and the high-level review of resolution 1325 (2000). In order to ensure coherence, all these reviews should take into account the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) objectives in a coordinated manner. The work to promote women and peace and security should not take place in isolation.

Although there has been an increase in the number of mandates of United Nations missions including references to women and peace and security, this is not enough: all mandates should be based on a gender-sensitive conflict analysis so as to be tailored for the needs of women and girls. Gender issues should be part of reporting requirements and all United Nations missions should have a gender advisor at the strategic level.

Before I conclude, I would also like to underline the importance of the new post-2015 development agenda. The Nordic countries are actively promoting a separate goal on freedom from violence and peaceful societies as well as a stand-alone gender equality goal. The targets should include the reduction of all kinds of violence, especially against women and children. We believe that the post-2015 agenda represents a unique opportunity to address violence against women, including sexual and gender-based violence, on a fundamental level.