

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

*Statement by Mr. Zehnder, Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations*

Switzerland wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2014/693) and shares his concerns regarding the situation of displaced populations, the majority of whom are women and girls. In Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, women and girls have limited access to the assistance and protection they need, which contributes to making them all the more vulnerable to sexual exploitation and sexual violence.

In that connection, Switzerland would like to make three points.

First, it is important to develop sound, context-specific policies to prevent the exploitation and abuse of refugees and displaced women and girls. Restrictive migration policies that limit opportunities for women and girls fleeing conflict zones augment their vulnerability. Through strengthened dialogue and cooperation, we must find ways to adapt those policies to ensure that women and girls from conflict-affected areas are not subjected to human trafficking or sexual exploitation and abuse. National troops, peacekeeping forces, border police, immigration service officials and humanitarian actors — all have a role to play in fighting and preventing those crimes. Ultimately, we must ensure that those responsible for such crimes are prosecuted and brought to justice.

Secondly, Switzerland believes that more must be done to prevent sexual violence committed against displaced persons. We need to respond with a coordinated and integrated approach and strive for gender sensitivity throughout the system. That is why Switzerland will host in Geneva the next donor conference for United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict on 12 November 2014.

In addition, Switzerland is committed to contributing to the fight against impunity. To that end, Switzerland supports a mechanism for the rapid administration of justice, an intergovernmental structure that can be rapidly mobilized and provide expertise to the international community. The rapid deployment of specialists in sexual and gender-based violence helps support international or national inquiries and contributes to the development of national capacities.

Thirdly, we must do more to ensure access by refugees and displaced women to political decision-making, including peace processes. Their concerns must be taken into account in all transitional arrangements. In that regard, we should like to highlight the recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons on 18 March 2013 (A/HRC/23/44) and encourage all Member States to put them into practice. Furthermore, women's participation in decision-making in refugee camps must be enhanced. Those are the findings of a study conducted by the Women's Refugee Commission in refugee camps in Jordan. That study, funded by Switzerland, analyses the existing links between women's participation in decision-making and their enjoyment of human rights. Finally, allow me to remind the Council that equal participation in political life and access to services and justice as well as the protection of rights are ways of adding to women's emancipation and avoiding sexist practices.