

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

Statement by Mr. Wilson, Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom to the United Nations.

I thank you, Madam President, for holding this important debate today and for your personal commitment to this issue. I also warmly thank Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka, Mr. Mulet and Mr. Beyani for their compelling and sobering briefings. I would particularly like to welcome Ms. Suaad Allami from Iraq and to thank her for sharing her experiences with the Council today. I also thank everyone who has come to this meeting to demonstrate their interest and commitment. Their presence here is an encouragement to all of us to do more.

Today, one year on from the adoption of resolution 2122 (2013) and one year before the fifteenth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), we consider the strides that we have made and what remains to be done to make our commitments real on this vital agenda. I welcome the Secretary-General's report (S/2014/693), which demonstrates that attention to women and peace and security is increasing across the board. Over a third of those included in Colombia's peace talks are women, as we have heard. That figure rises to 75 per cent in the Philippines.

We welcome the dedicated consideration of gender issues in such processes since last year. There are more trained investigators of sexual and gender-based violence deployed than ever before. This year, an unprecedented 40 per cent of ambassadors at the Security Council are women. However, that progress is incremental. Sadly, those are exceptions to the rule. The fact that we still have to fight to include sufficient gender expertise in our peacekeeping operations, most recently in the Central African Republic and Mali, that we still have to battle to have just one woman included in most peace processes, and that Governments and armed groups continue to violate and to abuse women's rights, including by perpetrating sexual and gender-based violence, makes clear that a real commitment to women and peace and security is still piecemeal. The peacekeeping review and the global study are two opportunities to galvanize action on those issues but change must start now. The report of the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict will also be published shortly. We encourage all actors to implement its recommendations.

Presidential statement S/PRST/2014/21, which we have adopted today, has four key elements. First, it reiterates core principles of resolution 2122 (2013) with regard to women's leadership and gender equality and the working methods of the Council. Secondly, it calls on Member States to enhance protection and services for displaced women and girls and for sex and age-disaggregated data to inform policy and programming. Thirdly, it highlights the tremendous impact of violent extremism on women and urges States to protect and to engage with them in addressing that trend. Finally, it calls for all actors to review and to reinvigorate their commitments ahead of the 2015 high-level review.

We are living through a period of unusual instability. According to the Institute for Economics and Peace, only 11 countries in the world are not linked to conflict in some way. For the first time since the Second World War, the number of refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons has exceeded 50 million. If displaced people had their own country, it would be the twenty-fourth most populous in the world. That is a staggering

statistic. The United Kingdom recognizes the particular hardships faced by refugees and internally displaced persons, including the additional burden and vulnerability of women and girls. We have provided the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees with over \$180 million in the period 2011-2014. We have committed over \$1 billion to helping people affected by conflict in Syria, while in Iraq we provide \$40 million in humanitarian aid, \$30 million of which supports international non-governmental organizations, United Nations agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross. That includes supporting programmes to prevent and respond to sexual violence — for example, by establishing women-and-children centres to provide group counselling, as well as providing safe spaces for children.

In crises like those in Syria and Iraq, many of the most vulnerable households are headed by women, who often lack access to basic necessities to meet their needs and those of their children. The United Kingdom has provided cash assistance to help female refugees in Jordan pay their rent and receive livelihood support. Pregnant women are particularly at risk. We are providing essential equipment to new mothers and pregnant women in Iraq and reproductive health services for women in Jordan. We also provide financial support for vulnerable Syrian women who are thought to be at risk of coerced marriage.

Gender-sensitive programming must be increased alongside access to international protection, health and education services and livelihood activities in conflict-affected States. We must do that for all displaced persons, particularly women and girls. The international community must also step up its efforts to address the root causes of conflict. That requires concerted long-term effort and financing. The benefits of that are clear.

Finally, we must put women and girls at the forefront of our approach to tackling violent extremism and defeating the extremist ideology that underpins the barbaric acts of groups such as Boko Haram and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. We must not allow the crackdown on women's rights — from prohibiting girls' education to enslaving women's bodies — to go unheeded. Women must be part of the solution.

We have a formidable task before us. I am confident, however, that through our shared purpose and with effective follow-up, we can convert the expertise and goodwill in the Chamber to greater protection for some of the most vulnerable people around the world and create space for women to be full and equal partners in all endeavours to strengthen peace and security. We must redouble all our efforts in the important year that lies ahead.