

Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Council, April 2014, Security Council Chamber
Statement by Ms. Burgstaller, Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations.

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

First, let me thank the Secretary-General and the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Bangura, and Ms. Misaka of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security for their informative statements, and express the continued and strong support of the Nordic countries for their work against sexual violence in conflict.

The appalling situation faced by survivors of sexual violence calls for our urgent attention. Sexual violence in conflict must stop. A strong normative framework is in place, the Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security being the most prominent constituent, and we call on the full implementation of those resolutions. As the Secretary-General points out in his report (S/2014/181), we have reached a stage where implementation is what counts. The responsibility lies with all of us and Member States must commit themselves to implementation. The burning question is: how do we do it?

It is important to address both the causes and consequences of sexual violence. We need to work on deterring new crimes and we need to hold perpetrators accountable. While the primary responsibility for that lies with the States, the role of the International Criminal Court is also of crucial importance. The Nordic countries commend the work done by the United Nations Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict in strengthening the capacities of States to address such violence. The Justice Rapid Response/UN-Women roster of sexual and gender-based violence justice experts has proven to be another important and effective tool to address crimes related to sexual and gender-based violence in conflict.

Promoting gender equality and women's participation is critical if we are to ever tackle the causes of sexual violence. We must always remember that women are not only victims; they are also a great resource for their communities and countries. A fundamental part of combatting sexual violence is that women will be actively involved in political decision-making and in the economic life in their societies, and that their voices are heard and respected. Women's input is key to finding the right solutions and putting an end to these crimes. The role and influence of civil society in preventing and addressing sexual violence are essential and must be supported.

Therefore, investments in gender equality and women's full enjoyment of human rights — not least in fragile States — must be seen as core to preventing sexual violence in conflict. We know that women's participation is essential for building sustainable peace. We need to ensure that women's rights must never be a marginalized side activity that takes place only after all the hard security issues have been dealt with. It is crucial to ensure that the women, peace and security agenda is duly reflected in all engagements relating to international peace and security. We expect the Security Council to ensure that gender perspectives are consistently mainstreamed in country resolutions and in authorizations and renewals of mandates, as laid out in resolutions 1960 (2010) and 2106 (2013). We would like to highlight in particular the requirement that missions establish monitoring and reporting arrangements on sexual violence.

The Nordic countries would also like to emphasize the importance of women's participation in the design of security sector reform (SSR) and in disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) processes. We welcome the Secretary-General's focus on that in his report. Flawed SSR and DDR processes can lead to impunity and insecurity with widespread sexual violence, even after the end of a conflict. The number of internally displaced persons and refugees continues to rise to unprecedented levels.

In his report, the Secretary-General points to sexual violence as a driver of displacement and highlights the increased risks faced by displaced women and girls, who make up the majority of displaced persons. To

further assist in that regard, the United Nations should advance the deployment of women protection advisers and gender advisers in both peacekeeping and political missions, as well as in humanitarian operations. Across sectors and actors, the United Nations needs to remain vigilant about the need to address sexual violence in conflict by ensuring the highest standards and training of its personnel.

Another issue that is reflected in the Secretary-General's report and which deserves more attention is sexual violence perpetrated against men and boys. The lack of national legislation, specialized services and the stigma associated with those violations are among the factors that prevent recognition of that violence as a crime.

Effective measures to end impunity should be combined with multisectoral services for survivors of sexual violence, including their access to legal services and health services. The Nordic countries support the Secretary-General's call for survivors' access to the full range of sexual and reproductive health services and welcome his acknowledgement of the United Nations particular responsibility in that regard.

I thank you, Madam President, for this opportunity to share some of our views on preventing sexual violence in conflict.