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TO THE UNITED NATIONS

High-Level Review of Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000)

Statement by the Republic of Austria

Delivered by

H.E. Ambassador Jan Kickert

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Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me at the outset thank Prime Minister Rajoy and Spain for taking the lead in organizing this debate marking 15 years of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Allow me to also thank the Secretary General and his dedicated staff for the efforts in making a difference for women and girls in conflict situations.

Austria aligns itself with the statement made yesterday on behalf of the European Union.

With the high-level events of previous weeks and today's 15 year anniversary of resolution 1325, 2015 has become an important opportunity for advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women. Austria commends the extensive review exercises that have been carried out in parallel on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of resolution 1325, involving the UN peacebuilding architecture, UN peace operations and the women, peace and security agenda. We welcome the launch of the Global Study earlier today, which Austria supported from its inception. This exercise was not only necessary in terms of stocktaking but it also provides us with important lessons learned.

Austria is alarmed by the current spread of brutal and systemic violence which is not only causing unspeakable suffering to the civilian population but has also triggered the biggest wave of refugees and displacement in recent history. We must develop answers on how to deal with the growing spread of violent extremism which is marked by unprecedented levels of sexual violence and abuse and violations of women and girls' rights. Christian and Yazidi women and girls in Iraq and Syria are being kidnapped, held captive as sexual slaves and traded. Mass rape is part of the strategy of Daesh. These crimes are amongst the gravest under the Statute of the International Criminal Court. The perpetrators must be held accountable for their acts before the International Criminal Court. We must also empower and support the work of women activists and women human rights defenders whose daily work makes a difference for women and girls on the ground. To empower such processes, a conference in Austria in June 2016 will bring together local women leaders with political representatives and discuss ways forward in tackling sexual violence in armed conflict.

Austria believes that a dedicated body on the Security Council and regular briefings on 1325 related matters would increase the Council's capacities to take timely and consistent action for the benefit of international peace and security. Equally gender expertise at adequate levels needs to be included into all peace and security related

work of the UN – both at headquarters and in the field. We also need champions that take the lead. Austria would therefore support the idea of reviving a Women Leaders Network and would be ready to work together with other interested Member States in this.

Austria would like to use this occasion to join other countries in pledging support to women, peace and security:

Currently the 7th report on the implementation of the Austrian National Action Plan, which was initially adopted in 2007, is under preparation. A review of the National Action Plan with broad participation of civil society and women's organizations which will reflect findings of the UN High Level Review will be completed by the end of 2016.

In order to raise awareness and broaden support for the 1325 agenda, the inter-ministerial working group on 1325 established under the National Action Plan, together with civil society and women's organizations, will organize at least one public event per year focusing on enhanced implementation and addressing emerging challenges.

Together with other interested Member States, Austria will continue to work on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions in all regional organisations. This comprises advocating for women's participation at all levels, for the creation and adoption of adequate policy frameworks and the creation of dedicated structures and resources within the respective organizations.

In this respect, Austria, together with Finland, Turkey and Kazakhstan, will continue to push for the adoption of the OSCE wide action plan on Women, Peace and Security as many other international organizations have done before. We call on the Russian Federation to join this endeavour. It would be a timely deliverable for the OSCE Ministerial Meeting in December in Belgrade.

Austria supports the work of UN Women and will continue on a voluntary basis to support activities in the field of Women, Peace and Security.

Austria commits to integrate concrete results at the policy level concerning the earmarking of at least 15% of all Austrian Development Cooperation peacebuilding spending for programs and projects to further Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality.

Austria commits to support programs in the framework of the African Union contributing to policy development and implementation of programs in the field of gender, peace and security and protection.

Civil Society Efforts are a critical element for effective implementation of the Women Peace and Security resolutions. Austria's cooperation with civil society will focus on the development of National Action Plans on Resolution 1325 in the Black Sea Region, the creation of effective policy and legal response to sexual and gender based violence before during and after conflict and the improvement of legal and social service delivery for women and girls. To these ends Austria through its development cooperation will spend more than 1 Mio. EUR within the next 3 years.

Austria will follow up on the recommendations of the policy paper developed at the Symposium "Enhancing Women's share in Peace and Security" held in November 2014 in Vienna (circulated as a SC document (S/2015/142) on February 27th 2015) inter alia, to give just two examples, through supporting UN Women in Africa to intensify its cooperation with the media and private sector to change stereotypes and promote a positive image by sharing practical examples of the contribution of African women to society and peace and by hosting a follow up conference for Palestinian women to provide space and the opportunity for the development of feminist strategies for social change and peace. A report of the symposium lies before you today.

Austria commits to intensifying efforts to achieve the long-term goal of a 10% proportion of female soldiers within the Austrian Armed Forces, in particular by strengthening the role of women in the Austrian Armed Forces and by enhancing the equality of opportunities and the development of career opportunities for women. The action plan for the empowerment of women, updated in 2014, is a crucial guiding tool in this respect.

Austria commits to creating the organizational structures necessary for the institutionalized integration of gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment within the Ministry of Defence and the Austrian Armed Forces.

Finally, Austria will continue to further strengthen its training activities on 1325, in particular in pre-deployment trainings for peace and humanitarian operations that are being provided for civilian and military experts from around the world and commits to integrating gender mainstreaming, prevention and response to sexual violence, and sexual exploitation and abuse as well as child protection (on the basis of UN guidelines) into our training courses.