

Mr. Kickert (Austria):

Austria aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union.

We also co-sponsored resolution 2331 (2016), adopted by the Security Council earlier today. We welcome the fact that the resolution — alongside prevention and prosecution — also puts a strong focus on supporting victims in their recovery and in overcoming traumatization and stigmatization, or, as the Secretary-General said this morning, “in helping victims heal and become agents of change”. In conflict and post-conflict settings, the risk that civilians can become victims of trafficking is clear. Those displaced by conflict, especially women and girls and minorities, are particularly vulnerable to that form of crude exploitation.

Recently, Austria was affected by mass migration and refugee movements as a transit and destination country. Close to 90,000 persons applied for asylum in 2015. Most of them came from conflict zones. Aware that persons fleeing conflict risk becoming trafficking victims along their migration route or after arrival in their destination countries, Austria has scaled up measures to enable the active screening of potential trafficking victims among migrants and refugees and to facilitate access to services for identified victims.

We would like to emphasize the important need for all parts of the United Nations system to work effectively together in assisting States to tackle trafficking in persons in conflict zones and also to mainstream the awareness of such issues in humanitarian response and protection efforts. We would also like to highlight the key role and contribution of civil society in enhancing the identification and referral of victims of trafficking, including those originating from conflict and post-conflict areas.

Austria is currently supporting projects conducted by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development. The projects aim at building the capacities of front-line officials and at improving the identification and integration of victims of human trafficking along migration routes. We would also like to take this opportunity to encourage all States to contribute to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, as Nadia Murad and the Secretary-General have also called for today.

Conflict-related sexual violence and sex as payment for passage for women and girls on the move, as well as the sexual enslavement of and trading in women and girls by terrorist groups, are a shockingly common reality. Austria hosted an international conference in June this year, entitled “Fighting Conflict-Related Sexual Violence — Grassroots Women as Agents of Change”, which focused specifically on the contribution

and the role of women in civil society in Syria and Iraq. We reiterate our support for the important work on that topic by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sexual Violence in Conflict.

With its portfolio of technical assistance programmes, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has been and continues to be a central partner in assisting Member States in implementing practical measures to combat trafficking in persons. We are also particularly appreciative of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, which, through its monitoring and reporting mechanism on grave violations against children, documents abductions of children and related violations, including human trafficking.

A substantial number of radicalized foreign fighters — also from Austria — have joined terrorist groups in conflict areas and might, among other crimes, be perpetrators of human trafficking. In that regard, we fully support the Secretary-General's recommendation that Member States consider establishing jurisdiction to prosecute instances of human trafficking committed by their nationals abroad.

We would like to emphasize that States have the primary responsibility for bringing perpetrators to justice and ending the climate of impunity. In post-conflict settings, accountability and transitional-justice mechanisms are key elements for sustainable peace. We also call on those States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Palermo Anti-Trafficking Protocol.

With the assumption of the chairmanship of the OSCE in 2017, Austria will further put a spotlight on the interlinkages between migration and trafficking and between radicalization, terrorism and trafficking.