

Ms. Wilson (Australia): As we have heard today, the Secretary-General's report (S/2017/861) is clear. We have made progress on policy and normative change. But we need to further mainstream gender equality and ensure the effective implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. We must move from adhoc programmes and words on paper to ensuring that women are included in all aspects of this agenda as a matter of course.

That is possible. Australia commends the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund for exceeding its target, with 20 per cent of funding focused on promoting women's participation in peacebuilding. That shows the positive outcomes that can be achieved by focusing on implementation, setting clear targets and investing in dedicated gender expertise. Australia is pleased that our \$10 million commitment to the Fund is helping countries build sustainable peace. We have also increased the number of our women officers serving as staff officers and military observers in United Nations missions to 25 per cent, exceeding the commitment made at the 2016 Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conference.

Australia commends the Department of Political Affairs for its oversight of dedicated efforts across a range of special political missions in 2016, which resulted in a substantial increase in the deployment of gender expertise, with 25 gender advisers working across 11 field missions. Australia is pleased to have helped with that expansion by providing the first-ever military gender adviser to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan. We have also seconded a senior military officer to UN-Women here in New York as a technical expert on women and peace and security. That officer is assisting in the conduct of the female military officers' course and helping UN-Women country teams as they work to increase gender equality in local armed forces.

Such efforts demonstrate that with dedicated funding and specific targets, we can improve women's participation, but all key actors must play a role in implementing the women and peace and security agenda. We must also acknowledge the expertise and enduring capability of civil society. Civil-society groups often predate conflicts and will carry on after them, and civil society is our greatest source of expertise on the ground. That is why Australia is also pleased to be the founding — and largest — supporter of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, which supports civil-society organizations in contributing to conflict prevention, crisis response and peacebuilding.

To sustain peace we must include women, not just in our words but in our actions. We must all accelerate and strengthen practical efforts to place women front and centre in the peace and security agenda.