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UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

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Women, Peace and Security

Statement by H.E. Gary Quinlan Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations

(Check against delivery)

Australia remains committed to ensuring the protection and empowerment of women in conflict situations and has been a supporter of resolution 1325 since its adoption in 2000. Women are particularly vulnerable to the effects of conflict, but can be powerful in ending it. Durable peace requires the specific needs of women and girls to be addressed. Women must be recognised as powerful agents of peace.

This tenth anniversary of resolution 1325 provides an opportunity to take stock of what we have done well over the last decade and to look forward and see what more can be done, and how it can be done better.

Mr Chair,

We have achieved much over the last ten years.

Over 20 countries have finalised national action plans on women, peace and security. Many more, including Australia, are currently developing plans. We should not underestimate the importance of these plans. They encapsulate political will. They set out concrete steps that countries will take to translate the ideals of resolution 1325 into action. They are a meaningful and practical way to achieve progress on the ground.

We have seen some improvements in the capacity of women at the local level to engage in peace processes that affect them. For its part, Australia continues to be active in this

field. We have supported women who are themselves mobilising in the Solomon Islands, Bougainville in Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Tonga and elsewhere to end conflict and foster peace and reconciliation in their own communities. We will continue to work with UN partners and civil society to ensure that women in the Asia-Pacific and elsewhere have a central role in peacemaking.

The last year witnessed a rapid rise in our collective will to address sexual violence in conflict. Resolution 1888 broke important new ground in this regard. We welcome the appointment of Margot Wallström as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict. Her views on how the UN system could improve its handling of this important issue of the protection of civilians should be considered carefully.

Mr Chair,

Despite the achievements of the last decade, there is widespread recognition that much more remains to be done to realise the promise of resolution 1325. Ten years on, gaps still remain. Resolution 1325 still needs to be addressed in a comprehensive and strategic way.

Although many activities have been undertaken in this field over the last ten years, a comprehensive analysis on the impact of these initiatives is yet to be conducted. To do so will require data. That data will need to be assessed against reliable and relevant indicators to assess results, determine the impact as well as identify best practices and lessons learned. That must then form the basis for new and effective policy responses.

We welcome the comprehensive set of indicators developed for use at the global, regional and national levels to track implementation of resolution 1325, as outlined in the Secretary-General's report on women, peace and security. We call on the Security Council to endorse these indicators and to put them to use, particularly where they are relevant to its work. The indicators should be deployed by all relevant parts of the UN system to collect data and inform policy and programmatic responses, particularly at the country level. They should also be used as one method to inform policy at the national level.

The recent mass rapes in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo highlight the challenges still faced in ensuring that sexual violence in conflict is addressed comprehensively throughout the entire UN system – particularly as part of UN peacekeeping operations. There remains a gap between our collective expectations on what the UN system should be able to do and the actual capacity of peacekeepers on the ground. Operational guidance, training and resources need to be provided to mission leadership and peacekeepers, so that they are prepared to take action in response to threats against civilians.

Australia was pleased to support the joint 'Analytical Inventory' developed by DPKO and UNIFEM, under the auspices of the inter-agency network UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict. This is a key tool for the UN to use in improving its ability to protect civilians from sexual violence in conflict as part of peacekeeping operations. We commit to working with our UN partners to fully operationalise this tool, including by

incorporating it into pre-deployment training for peacekeepers. I am pleased to announce that Australia will be financially supporting the roll-out of the scenario-based training materials for peacekeepers to prevent and respond to sexual violence. We will also continue our funding to GenCap and ProCap, to better ensure the broader protection needs of women are addressed in humanitarian crises.

The establishment of UN Women provides real opportunities to move forward on women, peace and security. We commend Ms Bachelet's commitment towards this goal and stand ready to support her. Effective and tailored in-country programmes, formulated on the basis of data analysed against the global indicators, will be essential. We look forward to UN Women working with all relevant partners to develop a comprehensive framework to guide the implementation of resolution 1325.

Mr Chair,

Our resolve to take effective action on women, peace and security must not end with this tenth anniversary. We have not reached the end of the road. Australia looks forward to continuing discussions with others on how best to improve our collective response to this issue.