

**Security Council Open Debate on Women, Rule of Law and Transitional Justice in Conflict-Affected Situations, October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013, Security Council Chamber**

*Statement by Mr. Donaghue, Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations*

Ireland aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union.

We warmly welcome today's landmark resolution of the Security Council (resolution 2122 (2013)), a resolution that can fairly be described as representing the high water mark so far in terms of advancing the agenda relating to women and peace and security. Although — or maybe because — the links between women and peace and security are so well established and that set of issues is now a well-developed part of the Security Council's broader work programme, there is a clear need for a more consistent and systematic application of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on the subject.

Ireland is a founding member of the ACT (accountability, coherence and transparency) group, which is pressing for the Security Council to be more accountable, more coherent and more transparent in its working methods. I assume that the enhanced focus on women and peace and security in today's resolution will mean improvements in both the quantity and quality of briefing that will be provided to the Council on those issues.

What distinguishes today's resolution from others is that it represents a pivot away from a narrow focus on women as victims and towards the more positive and liberating agenda of women's participation and women's leadership. Welcome attention is paid to the active role that women and women's groups can play in transforming conflict, insecurity and fragility. That aspect has been insufficiently highlighted. It is often overshadowed by the appalling suffering inflicted on women through, for example, sexual violence in conflict.

We should, however, recognize the profoundly positive contribution to be made to conflict resolution by the empowerment of women, allied to the treatment of women and men on equal terms. Peace is more effectively secured when women are involved. Peace initiatives that have strong participation by women tend to be more resilient than those that do not. There is no denying the moral imperative for equal treatment between women and men.

At its core, the women and peace and security agenda presents an ambitious, even a radical, challenge. It calls on us to fundamentally revise the role of women within society. It requires men to reflect on their own roles and abandon traditional mindsets.

Fortunately, as the report of the Secretary-General of 4 September (S/2013/525) acknowledges, times of transition and flux can present opportunities to strengthen women's leadership, empowerment and rights in the process of restoring the rule of law and governance systems. As his report indicates, the participation of women in peace negotiations and donor conferences has increased over the past year. Active support for such participation, which is being provided by gender experts and women's civil society organizations, is growing, and some peace agreements have included gender-sensitive language. That is encouraging. Yet the progress being made is hard fought and uneven.

One of the most eloquent champions of women's rights in the world today is Mary Robinson, a former President of Ireland and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region. The "Framework of Hope" that she has set out for progress in that region highlights the empowerment of women as a factor of critical importance. It is based on a vision of reaching beyond traditional political leaders to energize civil society, especially women's groups. The Bujumbura declaration of 11 July 2013 was a product of that approach.

It is clear that real transformative progress will be possible only when national political leaders in conflict-affected societies, almost all of them men at present, adopt the women and peace and security agenda as their own, and when more male voices are heard and more male champions stand up. We need to expand understanding of the enormous contribution that women can make in meeting peace and security challenges. We need to incentivize national and local male leaders so that they commit to making the concrete progress needed to realize that potential.

