

Statement by

Mr Michael O' Toole

at the

Security Council Chamber

Open Debate on Youth, Peace and Security

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Mr President,

Thank you for convening this important debate.

At the outset, I would like to thank Mr Graeme Simpson and the Secretary General's Envoy on Youth Ms Jayathama Wikramanayake, as well as the representatives from the FRIDA Young Feminist Fund and URU for their valuable briefings.

Ireland also aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the European Union.

Mr President,

In 2015, Jordan took the far-sighted step of putting the issue of youth on the agenda of the Security Council. The passing of Resolution 2250 was a landmark moment for the inclusion of youth, and the recognition of their capacity to be change makers and contribute positively to sustaining peace.

Ireland was proud to provide funding to the Progress Study on Resolution 2250, presented to you today by Mr Graeme Simpson. We are particularly impressed with the thorough consultative process undertaken in conducting the Study.

In line with the recommendations made in the Progress Study, Ireland calls for the Secretary General to report annually to the Security Council on implementation of Resolution 2250. Ireland also thinks it would be useful for a

Council focal point on YPS to be appointed, in order to mainstream this issue across the Council's agenda.

Ireland urges States not to treat the YPS agenda as a new silo. This agenda has obvious synergies with the Women Peace and Security agenda and Resolution 1325, but also with the SDGs and the human rights agenda. As Chair of the 62nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women, Ireland was pleased to see the Agreed Conclusions outline the role of youth-led organisations in strengthening the collective voice of women and girls. This is important as we work to challenge the perception of young women as passive victims of conflict.

The YPS agenda is also an important component of the UN peacebuilding architecture. The Progress Study makes important recommendations about the role of youth in conflict prevention and sustaining peace. While it is true that young men can be vulnerable to radicalisation, young people can also play a positive role in preventing conflict and countering terrorism.

Ireland urges states to really consider the recommendations made in the Progress Study in order to move beyond mere lip service about youth. We do not need to give young people a voice – they already have one. It is up to states to empower their inclusion in peacebuilding processes.

Ireland recently marked the 20th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, the touchstone of the peace process in Northern Ireland. We know all too well how the trauma of conflict can pass down through generations. The Youth, Peace and Security agenda is thus a core issue for Ireland.

Ireland established a UN Youth Delegate Programme in 2015, whereby two Youth Delegates are appointed annually to participate in the General Assembly. Our youth delegates have carried out a survey of young people in Ireland, which found that while young people recognise the value of fostering peace worldwide, they continue to feel marginalised from discussions around these processes. Our youth delegates noted that many conversations happen *about* young people, rather than *with* young people.

This echoes the comments made in the Progress Study that young people should not be *on* the table, but rather *around* the table. Ireland's youth delegates encourage member states to adopt similar Youth Delegate Programmes and include young people in their delegations to the General Assembly.

Mr President,

When we discuss the Women, Peace and Security agenda here at the UN, we often say that sustainable peace is not possible when half the population of a society – i.e. women - are excluded. This is also true about youth – sustainable peace simply cannot exist without the meaningful inclusion of young people. They are not the 'future' or the 'leaders of tomorrow'; young people are the present, and the leaders of today.

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