

**Statement by**

**H.E. Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason**

**Permanent Representative of Ireland**

**at the**

**Security Council Chamber**

**Open Debate on Promoting the Implementation of the Women, Peace  
and Security Agenda and Sustaining Peace through Women's Political  
and Economic Empowerment**

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I would like to thank the Secretary General, the Executive Director of UN Women and Ms Atallah, for the very important messages to us today.

Madam President,

I am speaking to you today because this issue matters deeply to my country, Ireland. In fact, I am speaking because we owe a lot to women in Ireland, particularly in Northern Ireland, who helped make peace possible on our island after decades of violent conflict. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, the result of a peace process in which women played a – I would say *the* - critical role, on the streets, in community groups and at the negotiating table, in bringing about sustainable peace. I am very proud that one of those negotiators is here with me today and that she has been so willing to share her experience and expertise with women peacebuilders across the globe.

Ireland welcomes the focus of the Secretary General's report this year on women's meaningful participation in negotiating peace. Meaningful is the operative word. We have long moved beyond gestures and symbols, Madam President. We know that we need hands on influential roles for women who can make the critical, often life and death differences in ending conflict and building peace.

It is now almost a cliché to say that women's participation significantly increases the probability of sustainable peace. What is shocking however is that this reality is so little respected globally. Ireland believes that we have a duty to change that -

to work to support women's leadership and empowerment across the development and peacebuilding nexus. We take this duty seriously.

Ireland's International Development Policy seeks to strengthen the voices of women and girls in decision-making at all levels. We are proud to actively support and indeed advocate for greater roles for civil society organisations. We know that women's voices are louder at civil society and local grassroots level. We want to see the volume turned up! Women are gifted in mediation and peacebuilding. We want to see that capacity leveraged. With that in mind, my country, Ireland, is a founding member and core donor to the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund.

Ireland welcomes the increase in the number of female and civil society briefers here at the Security Council. We believe "other voices" should be heard here and today is a good day in that regard. We also support calls for stronger gender analysis across the Council's entire agenda of work, including in its reporting from mission visits.

To echo the Secretary General's welcome report, peacekeeping operations and uniformed personnel remain the most visible representatives of the United Nations worldwide, working directly with communities. Ireland's Defence Forces have an unbroken record of sixty years of participation in UN Peacekeeping Missions. Peacekeeping is a part of the DNA of the Irish nation; we often say that we are as proud of the blue beret as we are of the shamrock. In the Irish Defence Forces we have a dedicated and ambitious Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security and it is now showing results.

Madam President,

Preparations for Ireland's third National Action Plan on Resolution 1325 are now in full swing. We are engaging government, civil society and academia. Top of our agenda are issues including: preventing violent extremism, the experiences of migrants and refugees, and the important question, in our view, of masculinity.

Ireland was very pleased to host the Second Regional Acceleration meeting of Resolution 1325 in Dublin earlier this year, collaborating with our European partners on the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

Madam President,

I am currently the proud chair of the Commission on the Status of Women. In addition to the work I have mentioned, Ireland fully supports today's focus on women's political and economic empowerment. We believe that our calls for women's equal participation in politics must be equaled by our calls for women's equal participation in society and in the economy. We also want to see an end to the structural barriers that limit women's political and economic empowerment. In the Commission on the Status of Women we are acutely aware of how deep and how many these insidious barriers are and as Chair, we are working with the CSW to address those.

As Ireland looks to celebrate one hundred years of women's suffrage in December this year, we also look ahead to the brilliant young women waiting in the wings.

Ireland is a strong advocate of the Youth, Peace and Security agenda; we must not perpetuate the cycle of violence by leaving young women out of the debate. We also need to engage, in our view, young men. Young men as much as young women are key to implementing the Women, Peace and Security agenda, an agenda as I have said we care deeply for in Ireland.

If Ireland is elected to the Security Council for the period 2021 – 2022, I think you will find a courageous and if I may say, a feisty advocate for Women, Peace and Security in the Irish delegation.

As I conclude Madam President, and again as Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women I want to say that I am professionally and personally deeply committed to realising the true transformative potential of women and girls. As Mary Robinson, the first elected female President of Ireland recognised, the hand that rocks the cradle can also rock the system.

Thank you.