

**Statement by H.E. Geraldine Byrne Nason
Permanent Representative of Ireland**

Women, Peace and Security

Security Council Chamber

27 October 2017

(As delivered)

Ireland takes women and peace and security seriously. Almost 20 years after the Good Friday Agreement and our own peace process in Ireland, we firmly believe in the importance of the role of women in conflict prevention and resolution and peacekeeping and -building. I think it is fair to say that we are a testament to that.

The Secretary-General's report (S/2017/861) correctly highlights that if we are to successfully deliver on the women and peace and security agenda, we absolutely need broad-based cooperation and coherence in what we do, and that must be at the international, regional and national levels. We see this as essential to the fundamentally transformative nature of the women and peace and security agenda. I stress that none of us can deliver that alone. We have to work together and, importantly, it is crucial that we work in full partnership with civil society.

This year and next, Ireland, as Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women will embed the women and peace and security agenda in everything we do. We look forward to working hand in hand with our excellent partner UN-Women to deliver on that. All the evidence shows that ensuring women's empowerment and participation in peacebuilding is critical to creating any lasting peace. It is not just the right thing to do, it has been shown to be the smart and, if I may say so, the efficient way to deliver on sustainable peace. Initiatives strengthening women's capacity to participate in peace processes and enhancing gender expertise and mediation need our support.

We thank the United Nations entities, including UN-Women, that are working every day to find the tools to do that. Ireland currently funds non-governmental organizations that we think can make a difference in this area, including the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and its "Women at the Peace Table — Africa" initiative in Nigeria, the Dialogue Advisory Group and the Mediation Support Unit of the Department of Political Affairs. Last year we hosted a regional workshop on the acceleration of resolution 1325 (2000) in which the discussion was devoted to gender advisers from peacekeeping operations in the United Nations, the European Union (EU) and NATO. Ireland is also a founding member and a key funder of the excellent Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund.

We support women in that role in peacebuilding, conflict prevention and accountability. The Fund facilitates valuable civil-society initiatives in conflict-affected countries such as Burundi, promoting women's leadership on the ground. We are working in Jordan for the empowerment of Syrian refugees. Frankly, we need to do more of that. Nationally, Ireland is currently working to implement resolution 1325 (2000) through our second national action plan on women and peace and security.

We are particularly focusing on the empowerment and participation of women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. We welcome the Secretary-General's recognition of the importance of synergies between the agendas on young people and peace and security and women and peace and security. Ireland is pleased to be funding the progress study on youth, peace and security led by the Peacebuilding Support Office.

We see the role and potential of young women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding as significant, and we must challenge the obstacles that prevent young women on the ground from participating. The interlinking of these two agendas is an area that we plan to highlight as we build our third national action plan for 2018. I am proud to say that the Irish Defence Forces have adopted their own action plan for women and peace and security, mainstreaming the priorities across all areas of their policy, including in their overseas engagement. There are trained gender advisers and focal points in all units, and our Defence Forces are committed to doubling the rate of female participation in peacekeeping by 2021. We strongly support and implement a policy of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse.

Of course, many women are vulnerable. Ireland welcomes the Secretary-General's focus on the protection of women and girls during conflict and in humanitarian responses. We make sure that our Irish aid policies make the protection of women and girls a top priority in our rapid-response initiatives. We support accountability initiatives for ending impunity for sexual exploitation and abuse, including through working in partnership with Justice Rapid Response and UN-Women. We would like to underscore Ireland's major cooperation with and financial support to the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Ireland is one of only 14 States, along with the EU, that are signatories to the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies. This is a multi-stakeholder Women and peace and security initiative to fundamentally transform the way gender-based violence is addressed in humanitarian action, and we fully support it.

On disarmament, another matter that is a key priority for us, Ireland's gender and disarmament policy recognizes the specific effects that the use of weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons have on women and girls. We actively emphasize the importance of women's participation in disarmament discourse and salute women's capacity to act as a positive force for change in that regard, something that we are already seeing evidence of. I could sum up by saying that much has been done, but there is more to do. The challenges remain and even grow. I need only mention

migration and international protection as two examples of the major hills, or perhaps mountains, that we have to climb. Ireland is ready to play its part fully in addressing them.

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