

Statement by Mr. Tim Mawe

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Women, Peace and Security

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Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this debate. It is an opportunity to take stock of both progress and challenges in the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

There is indeed much to review. Eight resolutions. 63 National Action Plans. And initiatives at international, regional and national level too numerous to list. The Secretary-General's annual report shows that the WPS agenda has fundamentally changed the way we approach issues of peace and security.

Ireland fully supports the statement made by the European Union and, in my national capacity, I will focus on how the implementation and mainstreaming of the WPS agenda has led, and can further lead, to paradigm shifts in crucial areas.

First, migration.

Last month we adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. It confirms that our response to refugee and migrant flows must go beyond border security, camps and asylum processes. It highlights the particular risks faced by women migrants and women refugees, including in the areas of sexual violence and trafficking. Moreover, it recognises the role of women in peace and reconciliation processes, and in developing solutions. These are intrinsic elements of the WPS agenda. Their inclusion in the Declaration is a major achievement. We urge Member States and other partners, including the Security Council, to maintain momentum by ensuring that WPS priorities are now mainstreamed through our collective response to this global phenomenon.

Second, conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives.

We are moving closer to plugging what Secretary-General Kofi Annan termed the 'gaping hole' in the UN's machinery for sustaining peace. Much more remains to be done. The peacebuilding resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly in April provide us with a robust policy framework for enhancing the UN's work in the areas of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The WPS agenda, however, provides us with a tool for implementation. We have seen plainly that when women participate in society and their voices are heard, there is a higher chance of achieving sustaining peace or preventing the outbreak of conflict in the first instance. The Peacebuilding Fund, having met the SG's 15% gender target, is pioneering the mainstreaming of WPS in peacebuilding. In September Ireland pledged more than three million dollars to the PBF over three years. We urge Member States and the

Security Council to support the work of the PBF and the Peacebuilding Commission as part of a wider move to harness the WPS agenda as a driver of conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

WPS mainstreaming has also driven change in mediation and peace processes.

A formula for lasting peace cannot be reached by excluding half of society. This has been shown by the Global Study on UNSCR 1325. It is also rooted in fundamental logic. Thankfully, we are advancing in this regard. Since 2012 all UN mediation support teams have included women. We have best practices, including Colombia, to draw from. Nevertheless, the report of the Secretary-General shows mixed progress regarding the inclusion of women in peace processes. Through our experience of reconciliation on our own island, and our consistent engagement with the UN's Mediation Support Unit, Ireland can attest to the crucial need for the participation of women in mediation and peace processes. We call for a redoubling of efforts from Special Envoys and Representatives, with support from the Security Council, Member States and regional partners, to ensure that next year's SG report points to clear progress in this regard.

Finally, the WPS agenda is leading to a notable shift of the peacekeeping paradigm. For Ireland, we don't have to look farther than home to see this. UN Security Council Resolution 1325 was transposed directly by our Defence Forces into an Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security. This plan supports our National Action Plan on WPS, now in its second phase. It mainstreams WPS priorities into almost every stage of Ireland's overseas engagements, from pre-deployment training to the planning, execution and reporting of operations. Initiatives to target women in our 2016 recruitment drives have been held up as best practices. We are pleased to announce that the recent deployment of Lieutenant Colonel Mary Carroll to UNDOF represents the first woman commander of a mixed gender infantry unit in a UN Mission.

With regard to sexual exploitation and abuse by UN and other peacekeepers, we don't just need change; we need to create a new paradigm. Ireland will continue to support accountability initiatives to end impunity for SEA, including through partnership with Justice Rapid Response and UN Women. We encourage the UN, under the guidance of Ms. Jane Holl Lute, to implement coordinated policies to support national authorities to meet their responsibilities in investigating alleged abuses.

Mr. President,

These are only four areas in which the WPS agenda has catalysed change and can continue to do so. There are many more, including disarmament, international criminal justice, and the prevention and countering of violent extremism.

It would be remiss not to focus, lastly, on those charged with advancing this momentum:

The UN system: More work is needed to advance the Global Study's recommendation that a gender perspective is mainstreamed throughout the UN's response to conflict and emergencies. The recent adoption by the Peacebuilding Commission of a gender strategy is an example of a best practice we can all learn from.

Regional and sub-regional organisations: Ireland was pleased to host, in May this year, the inaugural workshop on Regional Acceleration of Resolution 1325. This brought together regional organisations working on peacekeeping. Such work must form a part of larger efforts to support and learn from WPS initiatives at regional-level.

Member States: 63 National Action Plans mean 63 opportunities to identify lessons learned, which could serve to support new initiatives. We look forward to participating actively in the national WPS focal points network, launched by Spain in September.

Finally, and crucially, civil society organisations: Those who are at the frontlines of the implementation of the WPS agenda are often those most in need of support. Ireland has contributed almost 500,000 dollars to the Global Acceleration Instrument since its launch last February, and we encourage other donors to support this CSO-driven fund.

Thank you again, Mr. President. When we speak at next year's debate, we hope to be able to point to even greater progress within the framework of peace and security - all with the WPS agenda at its core.