

Security Council open debate on

Women, Peace and Security

Statement by

H.E. David Donoghue

Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations

New York, Tuesday, 13 October, 2015

Mr President,

Thank you for organising today's important debate.

It is fifteen years since our predecessors and colleagues at the Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 after the conflicts in Bosnia and Rwanda. Six related resolutions later, and the global security landscape is markedly changed. We have experienced "one of the most brutal waves of organised violence in modern history". The nature of conflict - violent extremism, intrastate conflict, new technologies - continues to rapidly change. What hasn't changed, unfortunately, is that women and their voices continue to be under-represented in mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict. Women's rights - to life, to physical integrity, to access to services, to protection in displacement - continue to be violated. In some cases they are deliberately targeted. If we want to save our future generations from the scourge of war, this has to stop. Today's debate is an opportunity to discuss how.

Ireland welcomes the evidence-base for action outlined in Global Study on implementation of 1325, led by Radhika Commaraswamy, which will be launched at an event Ireland will co-host tomorrow. The Study is a substantial body of work that must be afforded, along with the Secretary General's report, substantial consideration and reflection by the membership. We should not rush to easy platitudes that fall on deaf ears and photo opportunities that are soon forgotten, but really consider the specific and transformative steps that must be taken by the UN system, Member States, regional organisations, the media, civil society and young people to implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

One of the key messages of this Study is that women's participation is the key to sustainable peace. We know this to be true from our own experience sustaining peace and reconciliation on the island of Ireland. Internationally, evidence shows that there is a statistically significant correlation between women's involvement in reaching peace agreements, and their implementation. The national ownership of processes to promote the empowerment of women and increased gender equality is key to their success.

Ireland has prioritised this issue. We have committed to increase the participation of women at senior decision-making and leadership levels in the Irish defence, police and foreign services. We promote a gender perspective in all of our peace support operation deployments. We welcome the role played by women mediators and peacebuilders, such as the former President of Ireland Mary Robinson in the Great Lakes region. We will continue to share our own experience, and learn from the experiences of others.

Mr President,

Despite the changing nature of conflict in the past 15 years, grave crimes against women and gross violations of women's human rights continue. Ireland has supported the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women since 2006 and continues to do so. Ending impunity for appalling crimes such as sexual violence, forced marriage, sexual slavery, abduction of young girls and women is paramount. We condemn in the strongest terms possible the actions of extremist groups such as Boko Haram and ISIS, and note the plight of Yazidi girls in particular. Ireland intends to partner with Justice Rapid Response-UN Women SGBV Justice Experts Roster to support investigations, prosecutions, and victim recovery in situations of conflict-related gender-based crimes.

Ireland is proud of its unbroken history of service to UN peacekeeping since 1958. We are therefore shocked and outraged by incidents of sexual abuse involving UN and other peacekeepers. As the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Charles Flanagan, T.D., informed the General Assembly two weeks ago, "We will not be silent about the plight of women and children harmed by the very people responsible for their protection. Ireland demands decisive action in confronting any criminal behaviour by UN troops. We want appropriate training, clear accountability and strict sanctions."¹ Our message

- to perpetrators - is that these crimes will be punished

¹ Address by Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland, Charles Flanagan, T.D. to the United Nations General Assembly, 1 October 2015 available online at: <https://www.dfa.ie/news-and-media/press-releases/press-release-archive/2015/october/flanagan-addresses-un-general-assembly/>

- to the UN system – is that its systemic response to allegations must be improved,
- to States – is to take action to bring perpetrators to justice,
- and to survivors – is that we will advocate for them, their security and their dignity.

The Oversight Group which monitors implementation of Ireland's second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security will meet in Dublin tomorrow. Our Plan reflects our role in peacekeeping, our world class overseas development assistance programme, and our experience of post-conflict reconciliation at home.² It contains actions across pillars of prevention, participation, protection and promotion. It looks at domestic and international implementation. It is made possible by robust engagement from civil society organisations, international NGOs, academics and independent policy experts. This National Action Plan sets out the full range of commitments Ireland has made this year, and we are prepared to be held accountable for its implementation. The empowerment of women is at its very heart.

Mr President,

The empowerment of women must be at the centre of all of our engagements in this year of reviews and reflection. We welcome not just this Review, Study and SG's report, but also:

- the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which Ireland was proud to co-facilitate
- the report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations
- the report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture
- the preparations for the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit
- the 20-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

² National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2015 – 2018) is available online at: <https://www.dfa.ie/our-role-policies/international-priorities/peace-and-security/women-peace-and-security/>

The challenge in 2015 is not a lack of a normative framework but a lacuna in implementation. We must also ensure our strategies for implementation are inclusive, financed and grounded in the realities on the ground. Ireland will support the Global Acceleration Instrument on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action by a minimum of €200,000. It is a flexible and rapid financing mechanism that supports quality interventions. It will enhance the capacity to respond to emerging contexts, including crises and emergencies. It will strengthen capacity to seize key peacebuilding opportunities. It will encourage sustainability and national ownership of investments. Tools like this must be supported so we miss no opportunities to really effect change.

Mr President,

There is much to be hopeful about in the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. The participation of women experts, survivors and negotiators has bolstered the strength of the Peace Talks in Colombia, for example. There is momentum growing for Member States to nominate female candidates for key leadership positions, including that of United Nations Secretary-General. And today's participation of civil society representatives Ms. Julienne Lusenge and Ms. Yanar Mohammed shows the Council is willing to listen to those who have directly experienced the impact of different forms of armed conflict. It up to all of us, now, to act on what we have heard.

Thank you.

[ENDS]