



AUSTRALIA



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UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

29 October 2019

Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security

**Statement by H.E. Mr Mitch Fifield
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia to the
United Nations**

(As delivered)

Thank you, President,

I am pleased to address the Security Council for the first time as the new Permanent Representative of Australia on a topic of such vital importance as the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

We thank South Africa for its strong leadership on this Agenda and we welcome the Secretary-General's renewed commitment and call for action. We also welcome the report of the Expert Working Group and commend the work of the experts who contributed.

Australia has a proud history of contributing to international peace and security. Since 1947, Australia has deployed on more than 60 operations overseas, including longstanding contributions to some of the United Nations' oldest peacekeeping efforts.

Today, all Australian Defence Force personnel deployed to fragile and conflict-affected contexts are trained in WPS. We also have 166 ADF Gender Advisers who can be deployed on military, humanitarian, relief and recovery operations.

The WPS Agenda reflects the fact that conflict continues to disproportionately affect women. Women's needs, contributions and agency in conflict and peacebuilding situations are too often an afterthought.

The rights of women and girls underpin the fundamental components of the WPS Agenda. The convergence of the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action and the 20th anniversary of UNSC Resolution 1325 provides an opportunity to highlight the intersections of these two important agendas.

Women and girls are central to the success of efforts to prevent, respond to, and resolve conflict and to build peace. However, women are too often excluded from conflict resolution, peacebuilding and security operations. This puts peace and stability at risk and compounds negative outcomes for women and girls.

To deliver this Agenda we must address the root causes of gender inequality, including harmful norms and inequitable structures. We must promote and protect women's rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights.

We must commit to improving gender composition in our peacekeeping missions and our national security services. We must commit to the Sustaining Peace agenda, and its important actions on WPS.

In Australia, WPS is indivisible from our work on humanitarian response and disaster relief, on development assistance, and on peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions. We have seen the difference gender advisers have made in reconstruction efforts – it's life changing. It's transformative to the way we do business.

Australia's second WPS National Action Plan, to be released this year, is underpinned by a commitment to human rights and inclusion, and women's meaningful participation in all aspects of peacebuilding, crisis response, and prevention.

We look forward to continuing to work with the UN, its member states and civil society to accelerate implementation of the WPS agenda in 2020 and beyond.

Thank you, President.