

**Statement by Ireland**

Mr. Chair,

Ireland would like to extend our appreciation to Ms. Rashida Manjoo for her commitment to addressing the issue of violence against women during her term of office. We would also like to congratulate Dr. Dubravka Simonovic on her recent appointment as Special Rapporteur.

This appointment comes at a time when women are at increased risk. The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 recognised the unique adverse effect of conflict on women and girls while humanitarian emergencies have also led to increased vulnerability. However, the increasingly depraved actions of violent extremists have undone decades of work to promote gender equality and women's empowerment and have put women in many parts of the world in increasingly precarious situations.

The international community is faced with the challenge of responding to acts including the systematic sexual exploitation of women, sexual slavery and the targeting of girls who merely seek an education. It is vital that impunity for all forms of gender-based violence be addressed at national, regional and international level through legal procedures as well as peace and reconciliation processes.

As the Special Rapporteur has noted, States bear ultimate responsibility for acting with due diligence to protect the victims and punish the perpetrators of violence against women and girls. However, prevention can only be achieved if gender inequality is addressed and all parts of society given an opportunity to contribute to this goal. Civil society organisations have, and must be allowed to continue highlighting threats and acts of violence against women.

The inclusion of a specific target regarding the elimination of violence against women and girls in the 2030 Agenda provides the impetus for renewed international action. We believe that it is important that this momentum is harnessed and would be interested in hearing the Special Rapporteur's views as to how this process can be initiated.

Thank you.