

## **Open briefing of the Counter-Terrorism Committee on “The Role of Women in Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism” 9 September 2015**

### **Statement by Sweden**

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Our response to terrorism must be resolute. Democracy, human rights and equality are our best defence against terrorism. These values are also our strongest counter narratives and most effective tools to prevent radicalization into terrorism. The focus must be on a broad approach, to reflect the complex root causes to terrorism.

Promotion of women’s participation in prevention, mitigation and peace building efforts is imperative and key to counter radicalization and terrorism. Yet, women’s potential as peace builders to challenge extremist narratives, promote social cohesion and prevent radicalization, is still a largely resource. Empowering women and girls is an essential component in building peaceful communities that are less susceptible to the threat of radicalization. It is therefore paramount to further push for full implementation of the women, peace and security agenda through the realization of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions.

We need to fully emphasize and enhance the role of women in countering violent extremism and terrorism. The focus has to be on the widespread and systematic brutality of terrorist groups like ISIL and Boko Haram against women and children. In this context, let me underline that the use of sex slavery and rape as methods of warfare is a flagrant violation of human rights and international humanitarian law and must be condemned in the strongest possible terms.

To sum up, violent extremism and terrorism are some of the major challenges for gender equality in peace and security. At the same time a gender perspective in countering violent extremism and terrorism is necessary.

We must not forget that women play a number of different roles – as powerful agents of change in countering and preventing violent extremism, but also as perpetrators of violence and terror. Unfortunately, as we have heard from the Members of the Panel, we are currently seeing a worrying trend where women and girls are being recruited to, and voluntarily choose to join, violent extremist groups. We agree with the Panel and other speakers that increased efforts are needed to address this problem.