

**Security Council**

Seventy-third year

8234th meeting

Monday, 16 April 2018, 10 a.m.

New York

*Provisional***Statement by the Representative of the Czech Republic, Mr. Ellinger:**

I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this important open debate. The Czech Republic aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union. I would like to thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his valuable report (S/2018/250) and strong commitment to implementing the agenda of preventing sexual violence in conflict and introducing new initiatives to make changes on the ground. I would also like to thank his Special Representative Pramila Patten for her extensive work and her dedication.

The Czech Republic is deeply concerned about the persistent occurrence of sexual and gender-based violence in reported countries. We should step up our efforts to put an end to the climate of impunity. Initiatives at a high political level should be translated into concrete actions in order to ensure that the concept of accountability is fully implemented on the ground. The Czech Republic remains determined to help to combat sexual and gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict countries.

In partnership with non-governmental organizations, the Czech Republic is implementing projects aimed at preventing sexual violence and the abuse of women and girls, including by setting up health-care and hygiene centres for marginalized and abused girls and internally displaced persons in Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Libya, South Sudan and Iraq, as well as in Pakistan, Jordan and Bangladesh. We believe that the culture of violence is related to socioeconomic factors and arises where various groups are marginalized.

The Czech Republic therefore addresses the root causes of inequalities in societies by implementing projects aimed at the economic empowerment of women and their equal participation in public and political affairs. Such projects are implemented in Georgia, Zambia, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The report of the Secretary-General affirms that cases of sexual and gender-based violence remain underreported. The equal participation of women and men in law enforcement agencies creates an environment that is more conducive to reporting those serious crimes. The Czech Republic has therefore become a lead nation of the Jordan III Trust Fund — a capacity-building project to assist servicewomen in the Jordanian armed forces.

In January 2017, the Czech Republic adopted a national action plan on women and peace and security. The plan contains specific measurable tasks, including measures to combat conflict-related sexual violence, as well as all forms of violence and discrimination against women, girls, men and boys, as a violation of human rights. In 2015, the Czech Ministry of Defence adopted its own action plan to

implement resolution 1325 (2000). In line with the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse, such training is obligatory for peacekeepers before joining the United Nations or other international peacekeeping missions.

In terms of enforcing accountability, the Czech Republic continues to support the International Criminal Court and ad hoc international tribunals. The Czech Republic supports the global gender activities of UN-Women through regular voluntary financial contributions.

As a candidate country to the Human Rights Council in the elections this autumn, we remain committed to advancing the empowerment of women, gender equality and access to justice. Let me affirm that the Czech Republic remains strongly committed to preventing and to protecting women, girls, men and boys from falling victim to such terrible crimes.