

Mr. President,

First of all, I would like to express my delegation's gratitude to all the briefers for their presentations and to the Japanese Presidency for organizing this important debate on the roles of women in the consolidation of peace on the occasion of the 6th anniversary of the adoption of the UNSC Resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.

Slovakia fully associates itself with the statement to be delivered later by the Permanent Representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union. That is why I will limit myself to a few additional remarks.

Mr. President,

Slovakia strongly supports full implementation of 1325 (2000) that represents a concrete tool for promotion and protection of the rights of women in conflict and post-conflict situations. Active and equal participation of women in peace and security processes, including in peace and reconciliation efforts, represents the best tool of prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and all other forms of violence against women. Women's empowerment can play a critical role in peace-building processes. We welcome the progress achieved in implementation of various aspects of Security Council Resolution 1325, which provides an important political and legal framework for bringing gender perspectives to the center of attention in all UN peacemaking, peace-building, rehabilitation and peace consolidation efforts. Thanks to the activities connected with the implementation of Resolution 1325, there is a growing awareness and understanding that lasting and sustainable solutions cannot be achieved without participation of women and the inclusion of gender perspectives in the peace processes.

Slovakia also welcomes the recent Report of the Secretary-General on women, peace and security focusing on implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan for the implementation of Resolution 1325 (2000). The SG report reflects some progress made so far in the area of active participation of women in early warning and conflict prevention work, including consultations on the situation on the ground facilitated by DPKO. We also welcome the integration of gender-perspective focus into the projects of various UN agencies and NGOs active in the conflict and post-conflict situations. We highly value projects promoting

dialogue between communities and active participation of women in ongoing decision-making processes. In this regard, let me highlight here, for example, the UNIFEM Programme on "Advancing Women's Rights for Democratic Governance and Peace in South East Europe" prepared by the UNIFEM Regional Office in Bratislava under the scope of which the agency, inter alia, facilitates dialogue between various women organizations in Kosovo.

Slovakia fully supports the efforts of the SG and of the whole UN system to mainstream the gender issues in the agenda, and especially in the field of conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding and the systematic approach to this task through the United Nations System-wide Action Plan for the implementation of Resolution 1325 (2000) as reflected in the SG report.

The Security Council has recently requested the SG to submit a concrete plan for implementation of Resolution 1325 (2000) with regard to activities of the UN Peace-building Support Offices in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) and the UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL). Moreover, it seems only appropriate that Resolution 1325 could be further implemented in other mandates of UN peacekeeping and political missions, too. In this respect, we welcome the inclusion of the implementation of Resolution 1325 into the agenda of the recent meetings of the UN Peace-building Commission on Burundi and Sierra Leone.

However, despite all the efforts of the international community, women in conflict situations continue to face violence, including sexual violence, and abuses which are often used as a weapon of war. In recent history the international community has been shocked by reports on involvement of the UN personnel in various abuses. At the same time, the situation of hundreds of thousands of women affected by conflicts and wars and the worst abuses of human rights committed against women and girls around the world remind us that a lot remains to be done to eradicate the evil of gender-based violence. We also note with regret that women are still very often ignored or excluded from formal peace processes and peace negotiations. In our view, a more coherent and systematic approach of the international community is needed to address the requirements and obligations of Resolution 1325 in order to improve the situation of women and increase their participation in peace-building activities.

When Security Council visited Darfur, refugee camps in Eastern Chad and DRC and met with women groups, refugees, and NGOs we heard horrific stories about gender-based violence used as a weapon of war. UN agencies in DRC indicated that more than 30 thousand survivors of sexual violence have been identified in DRC since mid-2005. Only some of them have benefited from some form of assistance. In Western Darfur and Eastern Chad the situation was even worse and there was almost no access of victims to judicial and medical services.

Slovakia strongly condemns the continued widespread sexual violence and all other forms of violations of human rights of women and girls in situations of armed conflict. Impunity for such acts is unacceptable and if the national authorities are unable or even unwilling to act, the international community has the responsibility to use all available tools to put an end to impunity of the perpetrators of those crimes. We believe that the international community and national authorities must respond more effectively to widespread, continued sexual violence in situations of conflicts including through following activities:

- prevention of sexual violence through advocacy and sensitization campaigns,
- training of workers in the medical, psychological and legal assistance fields,
- identification of survivors through community based networks,
- medical, psychological and legal assistance to victims,
- efforts to curb impunity, including by supporting the prosecution of sexual violence crimes.

We also reiterate our full support to the zero tolerance policy in respect to crimes committed by UN personnel.

Mr. President,

We believe that appropriate presence of women and gender training in armed forces, including peacekeeping forces, clearly has a positive effect on the behaviour and actual conduct of duty of the troops. In this respect, we are convinced that the provisions of Resolution 1325 are fully relevant for carrying out security sector reform plans (SSR). The issue needs to be properly addressed. It is closely related to other phenomena which are natural parts of the comprehensive approach to SSR, especially such as child soldiers, gender-based violence, sexual exploitation, etc. Otherwise there is an imminent danger of countries falling back into a violent conflict. Sustainable solutions require a holistic institutional

approach. Addressing sexual violence requires mainstreaming the issues into security sector and other governance reforms and creating a permanent mechanism which brings together victims, civil society, government and donors in order to coordinate more effectively policies and actions on domestic and international level.

As far as Slovakia's own implementation of Resolution 1325 is concerned, the long-term reform plan of the Slovak Armed Forces called "Model 2015" addresses also the gender issues and refers specifically to the 1325. Its implementation has already led to a moderate increase of the number of female officers (currently representing the figure of 7.5%) in all kinds of army units, including among the Slovak troops deployed in the UN, NATO and EU missions. Women in the Slovak Armed Forces undergo the same training as men and pre-deployment training of our peacekeepers includes also special gender training with particular emphasis on the promotion of gender equality and prevention of sexual crimes.

In conclusion, I would like to use this opportunity to congratulate the Government of India on its decision to contribute with the first ever Female Formed Police Unit that will join the UN Mission in Liberia later this year. We believe that it will serve as a positive example - the presence of this unit will have a significant positive effect on the post-conflict Liberian society.

I thank you, Mr. President.