

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security (Sexual Violence)

23rd February 2012, Security Council Chamber

Statement by H.E. Mr. Grunditz, Representative of the Swedish Permanent Mission to the UN.

Mr. Grunditz (Sweden): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Nordic countries — Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and my own country, Sweden. The Nordic countries thank the Secretary General for his report to the Council (S/2012/33), and his Special Representative Margot Wallström for so ably leading the United Nations work in this difficult area. We also thank her, UnderSecretary-General Ladsous and the representative of the NGO Working Group, Amina Megheirbi, for their important statements here today.

The report of the Secretary-General constitutes a baseline and sets a standard for the Council to obtain more systematic, detailed and analytical information on conflict-related sexual violence. That was our hope when, in December 2010, we welcomed the creation of the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements. Now as we see progress in reporting, it is also time to improve our response, as Special Representative Wallström stated in her remarks earlier today.

We support the Secretary-General's recommendation to the Council to increase pressure on perpetrators through measures by the relevant sanctions committees. We welcome the further development of the monitoring, analysis and reporting mechanism and underline the need to avoid duplication and to ensure coordination with the monitoring and reporting mechanism on children and armed conflict and regular human rights reporting. In that context, we acknowledge the important work undertaken by both the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict.

We are pleased that Special Representative Wallström has been able to address the Council in country-specific meetings throughout her mandate when new information emerged. That type of interaction can allow preventive action to be taken in reasonable time. Timely, analytical and verified information allows a better response at all levels. National Governments and local civil society organizations can more accurately plan and establish effective early warning tools, response and protection mechanisms, as well as services for survivors. United Nations actors and international non-governmental organizations that support them can respond quicker and better.

The Security Council can take targeted and consistent action against perpetrators to fight impunity, increase compliance with international law and, ultimately, prevent such crimes from happening in the first place. We encourage the Council to explore ways by which it could enhance and systematize the consideration of information on serious violations being brought to it, as well as to use all possible tools at its disposal to respond.

The Nordic countries have always advocated a broad approach based on equal rights and the participation of both women and men as the best possible prevention tool in the long term. I would like to draw attention to two sectors where institutional reforms are particularly important in combating sexual violence and other serious human rights violations, namely, the security and justice sectors.

It is essential that every process aimed at security sector reform include a focus on sexual violence, as well as the broader security needs of women and girls. Training and capacity-building of national

security actors should aim at a real shift in attitudes from a conflict management posture to the provision of security for citizens and communities, placing the person in the centre. When assessing security in the aftermath of a conflict, indicators such as women's movement between villages and children's school attendance should be used alongside the more traditional ones. Proper vetting procedures should be used to exclude perpetrators of sexual violence or other human rights violations from all branches of the security services. More women should be recruited and trained to serve in the security sector, including in leading positions. Specialized units for the reporting of sexual and gender-based violence should be set up, and the security sector should be placed under democratic control and supplied with accountability mechanisms, including accountability to local communities.

In order to incorporate those important aspects in the preparations for peacekeeping missions, all Nordic military and police personnel receive training on resolution 1325 (2000). A joint Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations was established last month in Stockholm. The aim of the Centre is to raise the countries' competence in gender issues within planning, execution and evaluation in military operations. The Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations will act as a hub for information, knowledge and experiences. The Centre will continuously support and cooperate with the United Nations, the European Union, NATO and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other relevant actors. On this note, we particularly welcome the Department of Peacekeeping Operations continuing work on training, as addressed by UnderSecretary-General Ladsous earlier today.

There should never be impunity for sexual violence. We are pleased that the Council has demonstrated increasing willingness to use commissions of inquiry and referrals to the International Criminal Court. International inquiries and high-profile trials serve an important function but, as I mentioned a moment ago, national-level legal and justice sector reforms are at least as important to combat impunity and prevent and deter sexual violence in the long term.

The Nordic countries commend the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law for having in a short time developed a focused way to support Governments in this area. Elsewhere innovative practices such as mobile courts are being used to bring justice closer to the survivors and communities, serving a doublefunction of justice and confidence building. Enhanced access to justice should also be accompanied by enhanced reparations for victims. Innovative measures such as community reparations and the creation of economic and educational opportunities should be explored more widely.

Finally, the Nordic countries commend the Council and the broader United Nations system for continuing to address conflict-related sexual violence and to use available means to counter those threats against international peace and security. We strongly welcome the soon to be launched guidelines to address sexual violence in ceasefires and peace agreements. There can be no real peace unless there is peace and justice for survivors of sexual violence.

We express again our full support for the work Special Representative of the Secretary-General Wallström.