

Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Council, April 17th 2013, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Seger, Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations.

Switzerland would like to congratulate and thank the Secretary-General and his Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, as well as her entire team, for the work that provided the basis for the Secretary-General's report (S/2013/149).

We welcome the Special Representative's commitment to continuing the work started by her predecessor. We think that recognizing sexual violence as a tactic and a consequence of war remains vital to undertaking the real preventive action that is so urgently needed.

The Human Security Report Project, in its report entitled "Sexual violence, education and war: beyond the mainstream narrative", provides a valuable recommendation in that regard. It highlights the need to better understand what causes the differences in wartime sexual violence rates from one conflict to another.

We furthermore welcome the fact that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General has added to her priorities the fostering of national ownership, leadership and responsibility in combating sexual violence.

We note with interest the important link that the report makes between sexual violence and active population displacement. It brings to light the link between sexual violence and forced displacement and the exploitation of natural resources. The Secretary-General makes useful recommendations. Allow me to highlight three of those.

First, we strongly welcome the fact that the Secretary-General expresses the need for the women and girls who have been victims of rape to have access to emergency contraception and safe abortion services. They should not be forced to continue a pregnancy as a result of a serious crime against them. All too often, they receive no reparation or any kind of support from their own communities or from the international community. At the same time, where women and girls who have decided to continue their pregnancies cannot look after their children, steps to protect the rights of those children, including providing for national adoption, must be taken.

That leads me to my second point, on reparations. They can have a transformative effect and should be an integral part of post-conflict transition initiatives. As UN-Women explained in a recent document, reparations are the most victim-centred transitional justice measures. In that connection, we are obliged to think beyond the traditional approach. Humanitarian aid, peacebuilding and development must be effectively linked in order to achieve a real impact, namely, the empowerment of women.

Thirdly, and finally, Switzerland heeds the Secretary-General's call for the recruitment of women's protection advisers as members of United Nations assessment teams. We draw attention to the Justice Rapid Response initiative. It is an intergovernmental support mechanism that can provide the international community and the Security Council with rapidly deployable expertise. In cooperation with UN-Women and the Institute for International Criminal Investigations, the initiative has set up a roster of sexual and gender-based violence experts from various backgrounds. Switzerland is one of the countries that initiated the Justice Rapid Response initiative, which can contribute to the implementation of obligations arising from resolutions 1888 (2009) and 1960 (2010).

In conclusion, I would like to recall the significant thematic connection between the discussions on

sexual violence in armed conflict and the protection of civilians. We commend the fact that the Security Council takes into account the link between those two topics through a consistent approach.