



PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT

by

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to the United Nations**

**Open debate of the Security Council
on
Women Peace and Security**

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Madam President,

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the distinguished representative of the European Union.

Thank you, Madam President, for organizing this annual debate on Women, Peace and Security. It is crucial that the Security Council continues to systematically and consistently advance a holistic Women, Peace and Security Agenda in its work and decision-making.

I would like to thank the Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary-General Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti and other briefers for their comprehensive presentations. I wish to recognize the significant work of UN Women and their programmes on WPS and the importance of a stronger engagement with the Security Council.

Madam President,

I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his 2017 Report on Women Peace and Security and commend on his commitment and leadership related not only on the issue of gender parity but also specifically to the WPS Agenda, pursuant to recommendations and commitments made at the 2015 High Level Review and Global Study on the Implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 and the Resolution 2242 adopted last year.

First of all, my delegation welcomes and strongly supports the Secretary-General's vision of peace and security, grounded in long-term conflict prevention, inclusivity and gender equality as well as his victims-centred approach to preventing sexual exploitation and abuse.

I would also like to welcome practical innovations at the Security Council level such as the convening of experts in the Informal Experts Group on WPS and the inclusion of women civil society representatives in country-specific briefings.

Furthermore, in the margins of the General Debate new initiatives on gender parity and conflict prevention were launched, in which my country participated too. The second meeting of the Focal Points Network on WPS took place in September with an important focus on conflict prevention and the security sector and its integration in National Action Plans and National Strategies on WPS.

Also this year the heads of the armed forces of around 100 member states met at the UN and discussed also the issue of increasing the number of female peacekeepers and integrating a gender perspective.

Madam President,

As you yourself have stated in your concept note, despite the substantial efforts undertaken to implement the WPS agenda and the progress that has been made in latest 17 years, critical challenges remain ranging from increasing the number of women at the highest levels of decision-making to ending impunity for gender-based violence. Moreover, (as has been also stated in the SG's report), gender-responsive and protective environments for women remain lacking and WPS efforts remain unpredictably undervalued and underfunded.

We are of the view, that all four pillars of the WPS Agenda (participation, conflict prevention, protection and relief and recovery) need accelerated attention and action by the UN and its Member States. I should also like to highlight here other critical areas such as disarmament; creating greater space for women's civil society organizations and the need of stronger information and analysis on women and peace and security. The current refugee crisis creates specific challenges for women and further action is necessary to address women's lives in these conditions. Last, but not least it is of utmost importance to collectively advance on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially (SDG 5 and SDG 16) that recognize gender equality and peaceful, just and inclusive societies as global development priorities.

Madam President,

Slovakia is currently in the process of drawing up its first National Action Plan on WPS. Meanwhile the Government continues to promote all national efforts towards strengthening the role of women in the society through its National Strategy of Gender Equality for years 2014 – 2019 and the Action Plan on Gender Equality. In addition, the Ministry of Defence has approved its own Gender equality plan with its implementation under the responsibility of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic with sustained and allocated funding.

Madam President,

As a Co-Chair of the UN Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform (SSR), Slovakia wishes to re-emphasize that SSR is essential to post-conflict peacebuilding and creating the conditions for reconstruction and development. At present, the United Nations supports a rapidly expanding range of field Missions aimed at assisting national and regional efforts in SSR, primarily at the sector-wide level.

UNSC Resolution 2151 on SSR underscored the importance of women's equal and effective participation and full involvement in all stages of the security sector reform process. I wish to stress that gender-sensitive security sector reform is key to developing security sector institutions that are non-discriminatory, representative of the population and capable of effectively responding to the specific security needs of diverse groups.

A United Nations approach to security sector reform must be gender-sensitive throughout its planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation phases. Reforming security sector must also include the reform of recruitment processes and improvement in the delivery of security services to address and prevent sexual and gender-based violence.

There is a need to focus more on developing gender-sensitive SSR strategies and achieving tangible results in the field. With this aim, Slovakia is planning to host a workshop in New York in 2018 specially dedicated to this topic.

Madam President,

The United Nations is facing unprecedented challenges to global peace and security around the world. Civilians – most of all women and girls – are paying the highest price facing systematic violence and oppression. We all need to redouble our effort to deliver changes on the ground in favour of women and girls and societies in conflict-affected areas.

I thank you.