

Statement of the Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations, Ambassador Michal Mlynár, in the open debate of the Security Council on “Addressing the impacts of climate-related disasters on international peace and security” (25 January 2018)

Mr. President,

Permit me at the outset to congratulate you on your presidency of the Security Council and for having taken the initiative to hold this ministerial-level open debate to further underscore the nexus between human security and environmental security and how the Security Council can perform its functions with respect to the climate-related risks to international peace and security.

We are **happy to see that increasing attention is being paid by the Security Council to the environmental problems in its work**. My delegation had the honor to serve on the Council as an elected member when the UK delegation introduced this discussion for the first time in 2007. Since then there has been an increase in the Security Council’s consideration of climate change-related security issues. In 2017, the Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2349 on the Lake Chad Basin, and in March 2018 Resolution 2408 on Somalia, that incorporated language on climate and security.

Mr. President,

My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of the European Union. Allow me to make a few additional remarks.

In general, it makes no difference where the risk of conflict stems if it is real. **Climate change is a very real phenomenon and a very real threat to all of us in the 21st century**. It poses grave risks to our health, nutrition, economic growth and security and the livelihood of future generations. The impact of climate change has already contributed to increased vulnerabilities of certain populations around the world. It is stretching the capacities of governments and societies and driving people out of their homes.

Mr. President,

We need climate action that is timely, concerted and sustainable, in order to alleviate its negative consequences, improve energy security, and protect the environment. We need to accelerate actions to implement the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

We **welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General to bring climate to the top of the international agenda** and his sustained political and diplomatic mobilization at global level. Indeed, the United Nations should to the best of its ability lead in facilitating and coordinating global efforts on climate action, working with regional partners and other stakeholders, including non-state actors such as businesses and local authorities, which play an increasingly important role in this field.

In this respect, my delegation **encourages the UN Security Council to continue identifying ways of addressing the impacts of climate change on conflict**, and seek necessary policy responses in accordance with its respective purview and mandate to maintain international peace and security.

We need an **integrated UN response**, that includes the Security Council, focusing on preventive diplomacy, peacebuilding, peacekeeping and resilience. Institutional and sectoral divides must be overcome to work in a more integrated fashion linking the humanitarian, development, climate mitigation, peace and security action.

On 27 May 2016, the United Nations Environment Assembly in Nairobi adopted a resolution, which recognized the role of healthy ecosystems and sustainably managed resources in reducing the risk of armed conflict. We have to move further to more effectively address the **critical threats that war and armed conflict pose for the environment** and conservation efforts, as well as the **role that natural resources may play in fueling armed conflicts**.

The final issue that I would like to raise is in relation to **environmental management in peace operations**. It is a well-known fact that large peacekeeping operations and the number of peacekeepers deployed in them can have a potentially adverse environmental impact on the host country. We call for full implementation of the Environment Strategy launched by the UN in November 2016 in this respect. All parts of the UN system involved, including the Security Council, should closely cooperate to address such potential risks.

Mr. President,

An overwhelming majority of us view climate change as the defining challenge of this era. The Secretary-General has warned us that; “Climate change is running faster than we are and we must catch up sooner rather than later before it is too late”. Multilateralism is a key tool that can and should deliver on global solutions including climate change. The motto of the 24th Session of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP-24) in Katowice was “changing together”. With this in mind, the Security Council should make its own contribution to managing and mitigating climate change, too.

Slovakia is fully committed to doing its own part of our collective responsibility in this regard.

Thank you, Mr. President.