

Statement by H. E. Michal Mlynár, Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations in the open debate of the Security Council on Women in Peacekeeping, 11 April 2019, New York

As delivered

Mr. President,

I would like to thank you for organizing this open debate on increased participation of women in peacekeeping operations. We highly appreciate the German Presidency for promoting the Women, Peace and Security agenda and also want to recognize a substantial contribution of Germany to UN peacekeeping in terms of providing personnel, training and funding. I would also like to welcome today's announcement of Germany to launch the Global Female Peacekeepers Network.

As has been reported since 2015, the overall rate of women in United Nations peace operations has only increased from 4.2% to 5%. At the current pace, it would take decades to reach the levels outlined in Security Council resolution 2242. We believe this modest increase is inadequate. Therefore, we urge the Security Council to prioritize its efforts, consistent with the need to bring women's participation and leadership to the core of peace and security in line with its mandate.

Mr. President,

My delegation aligns itself with the statement that will be delivered by the distinguished representative of the European Union. Allow me to make a few additional observations.

First, Slovakia strongly supports an equal and full participation of women in all efforts to create and maintain international peace and security and calls for the full implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions that address this issue.

I would further like to reaffirm Slovakia's support for the Secretary General's reforms aimed at rendering UN peace operations a more effective tool in the promotion of peace and security and enhancing support to political processes in host countries.

We highly commend the Secretary General's leadership in this domain, including the A4P initiative, which has garnered a strong sense of ownership among the Member States, as well as the recently adopted UN Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy for 2018-2028, which represents yet another important development in meeting the goals set at the London 2016 Peacekeeping Ministerial.

Slovakia has been an active troop and police contributing country since its admission to the UN 26 years ago, having served in 19 UN missions so far. Currently, we have our peacekeepers deployed in Cyprus, Golan Heights and Haiti. Slovakia has also participated in military and civilian missions of the European Union, NATO and the OSCE – an organization, in which we currently hold the Chairmanship and where we also promote the WPS agenda through numerous initiatives and practical steps.

Mr. President,

Increasing the number of women in our armed forces has been a long-term policy of Slovakia. Currently, servicewomen comprise nearly 12 % of our Armed Forces. This increasing trend is set to continue in the future. The current Gender Equality Action Plan of the Slovak Ministry of Defense aims to integrate the gender perspectives into areas, which include operational planning, education and training, and evaluation.

I would like to highlight that in our biggest contribution to UN peacekeeping missions, in Cyprus, Slovakia has already exceeded the targets set in the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy 2018-2028, whereby almost 10 % (9.12%) of our military contingent personnel and 80 % of police personnel are uniformed female peacekeepers. Overall, more than 44% (22 out of 50) of all contingents' uniformed female personnel in UNFICYP is from the Slovak Republic.

Mr. President,

UNSC resolution 2151 on SSR underscores the importance of women's equal and effective participation and full involvement in all stages of the security sector reform process. Gender-sensitive Security Sector Reform is therefore 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.

On March 13, 2019, the UN Group of Friends on Security Sector Reform, which is co-chaired by Slovakia and South Africa, organized together with the Group of Friends of Gender Parity, co-chaired by Ghana and Qatar, a high-level roundtable on Gender Parity and Security Sector Reform. The meeting highlighted that Security Sector Reform must be gender-sensitive throughout its planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation phases. Reforming the security sector must focus on recruitment processes and improvement in the delivery of security services to address and prevent sexual and gender-based violence. The discussions also underscored that women must be promoted as equal and strategic leaders, barriers must be broken down and stereotypes eliminated about their role in societies, including their participation in peace processes.

Madam President,

To conclude, UN peace operations, which are the most visible face of the United Nations' engagement in the world, must be representative of and responsive to the needs of both men and women. The complementary skills of both male and female personnel have long been recognized as essential for the effectiveness of UN missions. We must therefore strengthen our cooperation to accelerate progress towards achieving UN targets to increase the meaningful participation of women serving in uniformed military and police roles in UN peace operations.

Thank you for your attention.