



PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT

by

Mr. Robert Chatrnúch

**Deputy Permanent Representative of Slovakia
to the United Nations
Chargé d'affaires a.i.**

**Open debate of the Security Council
on**

Pandemics and the challenges of sustaining peace

under the agenda item:

Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

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Mr. President,

Thank you for organizing this important debate on *Pandemics and the Challenges of Sustaining Peace* during these unprecedented, challenging times for us all. I also wish to thank H. E. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, H. E. former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon and Director of Centre on International Cooperation NYU Ms. Sarah Cliffe for their insightful briefings.

My delegation associates itself with the statement by the distinguished representative of the European Union. Allow me to make a few additional observations.

Mr. President,

We are witnessing direct and secondary consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic interacting with pre-existing humanitarian crises, adding another layer of complexity to already fragile situations, weak governance and health systems, affecting disproportionately the most vulnerable populations, who experience lack of access to basic services and health care, affecting their livelihoods and social protection. Sustaining peace and development gains made by countries in transition and post-conflict countries are at risk of being reversed in light of the pandemic.

Under these difficult circumstances, the UN peacekeeping operations have a special role to play in the support to the local communities in their handling of the pandemic. Slovakia is supportive of the robust and comprehensive approach taken by the UN, to ensure that complicated political processes are continued, stability is maintained, and civilians are protected while the pandemic is contained.

I would like to reaffirm Slovakia's support for the UN 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.

Slovakia has been active troop and police contributing country since its admission to the UN. Currently we have our peacekeepers deployed in UNFICYP and UNTSO missions and have participated in military and civilian missions of the EU, NATO and OSCE.

Mr. President

Slovakia fully supports 2020 review of UN Peacebuilding architecture, which offers a timely opportunity for adapting to immediate challenges to sustaining peace posed by the pandemic. It underscored the need for stronger partnership with international and national health and financial institutions and reaffirmed the advisory, convening and bridging roles of the PBC in support of a coordinated and coherent international response to the crisis.

We need to achieve enhance interlinkage of peacekeeping missions for more effective use of instruments promoting peace, security and stability, including integrated planning and implementation and assessment to ensure consistency and coherence. COVID-19 pandemic reiterates the need for effective, agile and responsive UN peace operations.

Last but not least we should keep working to smooth the transition from peacekeeping to peace building and ensuring a joined-up approach across the UN system, donors, and other stakeholders.

Mr. President

Reviews of peacekeeping mandates must consider the existence of exit strategies that seek to help lay the foundations for the long-term and sustainable peace. Member states increasingly view Security Sector Reform (SSR), as embedded in UN Security Council resolution 2151 (2014), as an important priority for peacekeeping, including for timely conclusions of peacekeeping missions.

For years, Slovakia has identified SSR to be one of the key elements for effective conflict prevention and successful post-conflict rebuilding and stabilization. The direct experience from many UN peace missions and operations clearly shows that a nationally led and inclusive SSR is a key to developing security sector institutions that are non-discriminatory, representative of population and capable of effectively responding to the specific security needs.

As has been said many times before, peacekeeping is a unique tool, but the pursuit of long-lasting political solution is key, and the mandates of peacekeeping missions must evolve consistently with the context and needs on the ground.

Mr. President,

The UN Peacekeeping architecture needs to adapt to the new type of challenges that the world is facing such as climate change and environmental degradation. Particular attention needs to be on how the COVID-19 pandemic is creating new and amplifying existing problems such as socio-economic divides, gender inequalities, increased insecurity for women and girls and other vulnerable groups.

Slovakia strongly supports UN Secretary-General's call for cessation of all hostilities and implementation of global ceasefire as well as call for an urgent and coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic through three lines of action: tackling the health emergency, focusing on the social impact of the crisis and the economic response, and working to "build back better."

Slovakia encourages a collective response to the COVID-19 crisis, which if adequately addressed, may also bring opportunities for advances in peace processes and for multilateralism.

I thank you.