



**Statement by H. E. Mr. Michal Mlynár, Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the UN
Open debate of the Security Council on Women, Peace and Security**

Mr. President,

Slovakia aligns itself with the statement of the European Union.

Allow me to express my gratitude for organizing this open debate on Women, Peace and Security on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) – focusing on its better implementation. In our view, it is essential that the Security Council continues to systematically and consistently advance, advocate for and promote a holistic Women, Peace and Security Agenda in all its work and decision-making.

It is significant to contemplate the fact that in the first five years since the adoption of resolution 1325, only 15 percent of Security Council resolutions included explicit references to Women, Peace and Security issues. Between 2017 and 2019, however, this number increased to approximately 70 percent.

I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his 2020 Report on Women, Peace and Security and commend his leadership as well as commitment to this important agenda. My delegation shares and supports the Secretary-General's view that all approaches to conflict prevention, resolution and recovery efforts must put at their core women's full, equal and meaningful participation and rights, including respect for bodily autonomy. This, however, requires more than tackling discrimination. Placing women at the centre of peacebuilding efforts must involve ensuring that there is a solid foundation from which to build for inclusive participation of women.

Mr. President,

I am glad to share, that my Government approved the first National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 for 2021–2025, and we therefore joined 86 other UN Member States that have their 1325 NAPs. This is yet another tangible example of our commitment to the implementation of the WPS agenda. As I stated last year, increasing the number of women in our armed forces has been and continues to be a long-term policy of Slovakia, and despite numerous challenges associated with the current global pandemic, Slovakia remains active in peacekeeping around the world. The UN Mission in Cyprus (UNFICYP), for example, involves 241 members of the Armed Forces of Slovakia, including 25 women. I would also like to draw your attention to Slovakia's standing in the Global Peace Index (GPI). As of 2020, my country has maintained her standing in the top 25 with a score of 1.57.

Allow me to reiterate the importance of having gender-sensitive Security Sector Reform (SSR) strategies throughout all their planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation phases. We believe Member States should redouble their SSR-related efforts to not only address but also prevent sexual and gender-based violence. Women must continue to be promoted as equal leaders and discrimination or stereotyping of women must be firmly and publicly denounced. Women are capable of so much if given the opportunity. It is our collective responsibility to provide and protect those opportunities.

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 about women's roles in societies, including their participation in peace processes, eliminated.

Our support for gender equality and women's empowerment is also reflected in the projects of Slovak development cooperation. Slovakia financially supports the implementation of the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons regional project aimed at strengthening gender equality at the Ministries of Defence and Armed Forces of selected Western Balkan countries.

Slovakia is currently in the process of drawing up 3 key strategic documents on strengthening the role of women in the society - the National Strategy for Equality between Women and Men and Equal Opportunities 2020 – 2025 and its Action plan and the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women 2020 - 2025.

Mr. President,

The whole world is currently facing a surge of unprecedented crises engendered by the global COVID-19 pandemic, which undoubtedly has and continues to impact also the United Nations' peacekeeping work around the world. Nonetheless, the challenges that we faced prior to the pandemic, but did not manage to solve remain with us. It is our sincere hope that as an organization we centre our approach on solidarity and protection of the most vulnerable, including and in particular women and girls.

In conclusion, my delegation believes that the United Nations must be equally representative of and responsive to the needs of not only all countries, but also all human beings alike. In order for us to be successful in tackling the current health and socio-economic crises, responsible, inclusive and emphatic leadership matters. We need to unite and work together and in solidarity to not only protect the women and girls of our world today, but to ensure the full enjoyment of all human rights also for future generations.

I thank you.