



PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Statement

by

Mr. Róbert Chatrnúch
Deputy Permanent Representative of Slovakia
to the United Nations

at the

**“Ensuring access to MHPSS in Conflict,
Post-conflict and Humanitarian Settings”**

(Mental Health and Psychosocial Support)

Arria-Formula, Mexico, 25.3.2022

Thank you Mr. President.

Excellences,

armed conflict and natural disasters cause significant psychological suffering, which is acute in the short term, and negatively affect well-being of the affected population in the long-term. Slovakia appreciates the convening of this meeting, which is indeed very timely, due to the worsening humanitarian situation in the world. Russian unprovoked aggression of Ukraine has caused the fastest-growing refugee crisis in Europe since WWII, with more than 3 million people having fled the country since the war began a month ago, and with 6,5 million more people being internally displaced as a direct result of the war. Furthermore, global humanitarian crisis is expected to deteriorate as a direct consequence of Russian invasion in Ukraine, causing extremely high prices of food and energy and pushing millions of people into poverty.

Physical and mental suffering of the millions of displaced persons from Ukraine, Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan or Myanmar should be a matter of concern for the Security Council. Ethnic, religious, or political violence as well as food insecurity, water scarcity and extreme weather events take a toll on our mental health and jeopardize global peace and security. Many of these displaced people are particularly vulnerable – children, elderly, people with disabilities, pregnant or breastfeeding women, or people with underlying physical or mental illness. As a result of each conflict, lives are lost, families are separated, livelihoods are left behind, and health and social status is compromised. It is therefore imperative that mental health services and psychological support are integrated in all humanitarian assistance.

Dear colleagues,

one in five people living in conflict zone suffer mental disorder. Conflict aggravates the suffering, divides societies, and enhances mutual fears and powerful hatreds. Mental health and psychological support services not only help people in distress, but also help build trust, social cohesion, resilience and peace. Addressing psychological issues is therefore critical for peacebuilding initiatives and humanitarian and development programmes.

Slovakia supports the Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychological Support in Emergency Settings, developed by the Interagency Standing Committee. We are not neglecting the mental health and psychological well-being of refugees arriving to Slovakia from Ukraine, as their homes are destroyed by Russian aggression. Professional psychological help is being deployed to the border in order to help alleviate their distress. The experience with the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe should provide impetus for integrating Mental Health and Psychological Support services in all UN activities.

Excellences,

mental health is health and it should enjoy equal recognition, attention and financing as physical health. We commend the government of Mexico for convening this discussion and we fully support the initiatives to integrate Mental Health and Psychological Support services into humanitarian response plans as well as post-conflict recovery on a global level.

I thank you.