

**Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Conflict, June 24<sup>th</sup> 2013, Security Council Chamber**

*Statement by Ms. Enstrom, Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations.*

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and my own country, Sweden.

I would like to begin by thanking the United Kingdom presidency for having organized this open debate and the Secretary-General for his briefing. I also express warm thanks to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bangura and Special Envoy Jolie as well as to the representative of civil society for their crucial role in developing, advocating and implementing this agenda.

We welcome the adoption today of resolution 2106 (2013), which, together with resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009) and 1960 (2010) complement landmark resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. All five Nordic countries are sponsors of today's resolution.

We also welcome the United Kingdom's initiative on preventing sexual violence in conflict and the subsequent Group of Eight declaration, which we hope will enforce the already existing array of mechanisms within the United Nations and at the regional and national levels. The focus on sexual violence is important but should not come at the expense of the broader agenda on women, peace and security.

In my statement, I would like to focus on three issues: the need to strengthen the participation of both women and men in efforts to prevent sexual violence; the need to strengthen national ownership and to build capacity at the national level to effectively fight impunity; and the need for accountability, to end the culture of impunity for such crimes.

The full and equal participation of women and men in conflict prevention and peacebuilding is fundamental to combating sexual violence. Solutions must encompass all sectors of society, both in peacetime and in times of conflict. Women must not be seen merely as victims but as active participants who are central to all efforts to combat sexual violence in conflict.

Experience shows that women's involvement in peace processes can lead to more legitimate and lasting agreements. We need women to participate actively not only in United Nations field operations and missions, but also in national and local institutions.

Efforts to end sexual violence in conflict must include scrutiny of how gender roles are shaped and upheld in peacetime. Societies that view men as superior create an environment that is conducive to sexual violence in armed conflict.

As Minister for Defence, I would like to emphasize the importance of integrating a gender perspective in peacekeeping operations. If we neglect information from 50 per cent of the local population, missions will be less successful. If we do not include half the population in our security assessments, we cannot address the security needs of the whole population.

Two months ago, I visited Mali, a country whose northern regions are currently experiencing conflict.

As in any conflict situation, it is the international community's responsibility to ensure accountability for the atrocities committed, including sexual violence. We welcome the United Nations-led

peacekeeping operation to Mali, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, and the deployment of a senior women's protection adviser from the outset. It is in all our interests that operations include a gender perspective and awareness of sexual violence in conflict.

The Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations, established last year, supports military organizations in applying a gender perspective in operations. The centre is a hub for the exchange of knowledge and experience in this area.

On the issue of accountability, if a State is unwilling or unable to investigate and prosecute such international crimes, the ICC and other international tribunals play a crucial role. But the ICC is a court of last resort. Together we must build political support and technical capacity so as to enable the effective prosecution of sexual violence at the national level.

We also call on the Security Council sanctions Committee to focus on sexual violence crimes and to use its powers to combat impunity, and we welcome the gender provisions contained in the recently adopted United Nations Arms Trade Treaty.

We commend the contribution of the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, as well as the Justice Rapid Response, which serves to support the strengthening of the national capacity to investigate and prosecute such crimes.

Let us not forget the importance of providing justice for those men and women who are victims of crimes of sexual violence. The crime itself causes pain, trauma and psychological stigma for survivors. It is crucial that services be in place, including access to emergency contraception and safe abortion. The right to make decisions about one's own body, life and sexual health is a basic human right. Survivors must know that they are not alone and that justice can be done.

In closing, let me commend the Council's crucial work in advancing the women, peace and security agenda. But let me also reiterate our expectations that the Council will make use of its powers in order to achieve our common goal: to end sexual violence in conflict once and for all.