

Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Conflict, June 24th 2013, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Ms. Baeriswyl, Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations.

Sexual violence is one of the most devastating weapons of war. It wreaks intense destruction on the bodies and souls of the victims. It disrupts families, displaces communities and destroys entire societies' basis for reconciliation. That is why Switzerland would like to thank the delegation of the United Kingdom for organizing this debate and for making conflict- related sexual violence a priority for both the Security Council and the Group of Eight. We would also like to thank the Secretary-General and the other briefers for their valuable contributions. We hope that today we can together generate a strong political will that can enable us to improve the implementation of the existing Security Council instruments, strengthen the mechanisms of national and international law and increase assistance to the victims.

In an unprecedented partnership, civil society organizations, the Council and the United Nations as a whole have put in place a visionary framework based on five resolutions on women and peace and security. That framework not only asks us to fight sexual violence effectively in times of conflict, it also commits us to supporting women as active agents for change. The United Nations has developed indicators; the Security Council has created a mandate for a Special Representative and made the decision to establish the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements mechanism. With our partners from Liechtenstein, Switzerland has supported the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, PeaceWomen and the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders in making available to Council members a bulletin of monthly action points, a handbook and even an iPhone app, and in ensuring close ties between policymaking levels in New York and the realities on the ground. All these instruments and resources should be utilized in order to implement the framework based on resolution 1325 (2000) without further delay. We therefore gratefully welcome today's resolution 2106 (2013), which will support those efforts.

First and foremost, however, prevention is essential. We must break the cycles of violence. All parties to a conflict must make specific commitments to combat sexual violence and hold perpetrators accountable. I would also like to voice a particularly serious concern about the fact that the risk of systematic sexual violence often increases considerably after or around high-level visits. It is therefore imperative to ensure careful follow- up and to prevent acts of revenge by strengthening local capacities.

In his latest report (S/2013/149) the Secretary- General encourages Member States to include specific training courses for their peacekeeping troops. Nevertheless, our methods have not been sufficiently successful in fighting these crimes. That scourge continues to undermine the credibility of United Nations peacekeeping missions — not to mention the immense harm done to the individuals and communities affected by the behaviour of those who were deployed in the field to protect them and ensure peace. The zero- tolerance policy must be urgently implemented, and everyone must be resolutely committed to bringing perpetrators to justice.

International humanitarian law prohibits rape and other forms of sexual violence. Such crimes can constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide. International tribunals, especially the International Criminal Court, play a key role in punishing and preventing such crimes. For that reason, it is crucial that all States lend their full support to those institutions, not forgetting that the fight against impunity for perpetrators of sexual violence must primarily be carried out at the national level.

Let us never forget that the very *raison d'être* of the United Nations, as set out in its visionary

Charter, is the abolition of war and all related crimes. As John Lennon sang, “You may say I’m a dreamer, but I’m not the only one”. All around the world, men and women, communities, civil society organizations, United Nations staff and representatives and country representatives are working hard to prevent and abolish war. Switzerland is steadfastly committed to joining in those efforts.