

**Mr. Galbavý (Slovakia):**

We thank the Russian presidency for convening this open debate. We appreciate the leadership and commitment of the Security Council to gender equality in international peace and security. We especially commend Spain and the United Kingdom for their efforts in establishing and co-chairing the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security. I would also like to commend the UN-Women and its partners for their numerous ongoing initiatives related to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Slovakia welcomes the establishment in September of the women and peace and security national focal point network, which will periodically share and exchange lessons learned and best practices.

While aligning ourselves with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union, I wish briefly to highlight a few additional points in my national capacity.

As pointed out by speakers before me, the challenge we face in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda is not a lack of a normative framework, but rather the significant gaps that exist when it comes to its implementation. That is a fact despite the overwhelming evidence of the contributions women bring to prevention and peacebuilding efforts as agents of change. Resolution 2242 (2015) provides a critical tool for the international community to make tangible progress towards gender equality and peace.

The equal participation and involvement of women in peace and security is a cross-cutting issue and gender expertise is needed in all areas, including security sector reform. The participation and involvement of women is key to operational effectiveness, local ownership and strengthened oversight. Increasing the recruitment of female staff, preventing human rights violations and collaborating with women's organizations contribute to creating an efficient, accountable and participatory security sector that responds to the special needs of both women and men.

Slovakia underlines the importance of the effective implementation of resolution 2151 (2014), on security sector reform. That landmark resolution underscores the importance of the equal and effective participation and full involvement of women in all stages of security sector reform. It underlines the vital role of women in preventing conflict and in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, as well as in strengthening civilian protection measures in security services during the reconstruction process. It suggests including more women in training for security personnel and calls for effective vetting processes in order to exclude perpetrators of sexual violence from the security sector.

In conclusion, we underline our continued support for the zero-tolerance policy of the United Nations and the approach of zero impunity for all military, police and civilian personnel of the United Nations in the area of prevention and protection against sexual violence in peacekeeping operations. We support resolution 2272 (2016), which requested that the Secretary-General assess whether a Member State had taken steps to investigate allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, held the perpetrators accountable and informed him about the progress of investigations when determining its participation in peacekeeping operations.