

Security Council Open Debate on Women, Rule of Law and Transitional Justice in Conflict- Affected Situations, October 18th 2013, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Ms. Freimane-Deksne, Permanent Mission of Latvia to the United Nations.

Latvia aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and would like to make a few remarks in its national capacity.

I thank the Secretary General for his report (S/2013/525), as well as the Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director UN Women, High Commissioner Pillay and Ms. Balipou for their statements.

Latvia welcomes today's adoption of the resolution 2122 (2013) on this very important topic and looks forward to the high-level review in 2015 on progress and obstacles in implementing resolution 1325 (2000). We believe that a global study highlighting best practices, implementation gaps and challenges and priorities for further action on women and peace and security will greatly contribute to that end.

There are three main issues that I would like to address today: first, women's participation at all levels of decision-making in conflict and post-conflict settings; secondly, United Nations gender expertise; and, thirdly, coordination within the United Nations and outside on women and peace and security in order to minimize costs and to maximize the impact on the ground.

Turning to the first topic, let me emphasize that women should be involved and participate in the whole crisis cycle, from the prevention and resolution of conflict to reinstating justice and the rule of law in post-conflict settings. Women play a particular role in voicing women's rights and concerns early on and in preventing backsliding on women's rights in post-conflict governance. There is no justice without women's participation at all levels of public decision-making, and there is no participation without women's economic security and full access to public services. All aspects of women's participation should be addressed equally, and greater attention should be paid to the full range of human rights violations that women experience in both conflict and post-conflict settings. Latvia, as one of the countries that endorsed the declaration of commitment to end sexual violence in conflict and sponsored resolution 2106 (2013), on the same topic, earlier this year, welcomes the progress made in the monitoring, prevention and prosecution of gender-based violence in conflict. However, efforts should be continued in that regard and the protection of women and girls should be carried out on a larger scale.

There can be no real impact on women's rights on the ground if the United Nations and other international partners are not leading by example. Women should be adequately represented at different levels in peacekeeping and special political missions. Appropriate training on gender-specific issues should be provided for military, police and civilian personnel deployed to international peace operations. United Nations gender expertise is crucial for capacity-building and the increased engagement of women in peacemaking and peacebuilding processes. In that regard, Latvia welcomes the review commissioned by UN Women, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and other United Nations institutions on the deployment and coherence of gender expertise across the United Nations system in post-conflict contexts and encourages building on its recommendations. Initiatives launched by UN Women and DPKO, as well as early and active involvement by the Special Envoys of the Secretary General for Sahel and the Great Lakes Region, show that, through common efforts, real results on the women and peace and security agenda can be achieved.

Finally, let me underline the importance of gender mainstreaming and coordination within the United Nations and between different international organizations active on the issue of on women and peace and security. Recent intergovernmental outcomes identified gender equality and women's empowerment both as a thematic priority and a cross-cutting issue in promoting development. The quadrennial comprehensive policy review provided new political impetus to coordination and accountability for gender mainstreaming in the United

Nations system, already launched by the United Nations system-wide action plan on gender equality and the empowerment of women. We welcome the fact that resolution 2122 (2013) provides for more regular briefings to the Council on women and peace and security issues and for the Council's increased attention to those issues in other thematic areas of work, as well as while establishing and renewing the mandates of the United Nations missions.

We fully agree that, in order to effectively address threats to the security of women and girls, the links between the United Nations work in political, human rights and development fields should be strengthened. Moreover, better coordination should be ensured among all organizations on the ground. It is time to consolidate knowledge and expertise and choose the most effective ways to deliver the best results for women and girls in conflict and post-conflict settings.

In conclusion, let me reiterate Latvia's commitment to the promotion and protection of women's rights at all levels and in all contexts, as well as our readiness to actively contribute to common efforts in the effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).