

**Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security (Sexual Violence)**

23<sup>rd</sup> February 2012, Security Council Chamber

*Statement by H.E. Mr. Guerber, Permanent Representative of Switzerland.*

Mr. Guerber (Switzerland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Human Security Network, namely, Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, Norway, Panama, Slovenia, Thailand, South Africa as an observer, and my own country, Switzerland.

We would like to thank the Togolese presidency for having convened this important open debate on women, peace and security, an issue that is at the core of the Human Security Network.

Let us further thank the Secretary-General for his report and his Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Margot Wallström, for her outstanding work and commitment to this sensitive and complex issue. The Human Security Network shares the views expressed by the Secretary-General in his recommendations to the Security Council, Member States, donors and regional organizations.

Since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), we have witnessed significant advances in this field, including resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1960 (2010), the creation of the post of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, as well as the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, which contribute significantly to strengthening the cooperation between the United Nations system and Member States in order to prevent crimes against women and girls. In addition, they help to improve the efficiency of the national judicial systems in ensuring the rule of law and bringing perpetrators to justice, including to the International Criminal Court.

However, it is deeply disturbing that today we continue to witness rapes of women, girls and children in general, in countries in armed conflict but also in other situations, including post-conflict situations. We recognize the efforts made by some Governments to put an end to these crimes, to strengthen judicial systems and to bring those responsible to justice. However, as the Secretary-General's report (S/2012/33) shows, progress remains slow, and in practice the perpetrators of crimes against women and girls often go unpunished.

The Human Security Network therefore urges Member States to increase their efforts to prevent conflict-related sexual violence by undertaking all necessary efforts to implement all applicable legal provisions in the matter. The primary responsibility is theirs. But, at the same time, this constitutes a challenge for the international community as a whole, especially for regional and subregional organizations. Their role in supporting the efforts of those countries is crucial. The message must be clear; there shall be no impunity for the perpetrators of such crimes, and the countries affected and the international community will not rest until there is accountability and justice is done.

The provision of genuine support, protection and the relevant services to the victims and their families is equally as important as rendering justice. In that context, the support given

at the community level is vital. Projects that directly assist victims and their families to help them overcome the trauma inflicted upon them are of particularly great value.

One of the key issues in a post-conflict country is security sector reform. Security is not a “men’s issue”; it is a gender issue, and women must be involved in all relevant discussions and negotiations from their inception, and they must also be part of the higher military ranks, which is where security-related issues are usually discussed. The gender perspective must be part of the reform and training of all security forces.

The Human Security Network emphasizes the importance of the full and equal participation of women in political processes, including in peacemaking and peacebuilding. Their involvement ensures the success of those processes. At the same time, conflict-related sexual violence and the specific needs of women and girls have to be addressed adequately, both in ceasefire agreements and in peace agreements.

Preventing crimes is as crucial as delivering justice and supporting the victims. To that end, we have to be able to improve the early warning systems and monitoring mechanisms already in place and to build upon them where needed. They must be capable of detecting signs of possible crimes and must mobilize the political and judicial authorities in order to prevent them. They must involve all relevant levels, from the community level to the provincial and national levels. Regional organizations can also play an important role in the creation of an efficient early warning system.

Finally, we appreciate the information provided on the progress made in implementing the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements. The collection of timely, accurate, reliable and objective information on conflict-related sexual violence is crucial to tailoring the Council’s responses, as well as to enhancing action to prevent sexual violence. We also wish to encourage the deployment of women protection advisers to United Nations peacekeeping and special political missions in order to strengthen the response of the relevant mission components to conflict-related sexual violence.

We strongly hope that the Council will be able to reach an agreement on the presidential statement later today.

*(spoke in French)* I will now make a statement in my national capacity. A more detailed version of my statement can be found in the distributed text.

Resolutions 1888 (2009) and 1960 (2010) on women and peace and security constitute a robust machinery, which demonstrates that the Security Council and United Nations members are firmly resolved to move from advocacy to the effective implementation of their commitment to combat conflict-related sexual violence. The establishment of new mandates always raises the crucial issue of coordination and the efficient use of existing structures.

We welcome the fact that it is intended to preserve the full flexibility of the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements in order to adapt them to the country-specific needs and circumstances. In that regard, we would like to underscore the importance of the continued

and transparent communication of the Office of the Special Representative with United Nations country teams so as to foster ownership and results-oriented implementation of the new structures and processes in the field.

We note with great satisfaction that several activities have been launched with UN-Women. We hope that such productive cooperation will continue. Switzerland recently contributed 3 million Swiss francs to the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, which is administered by UN-Women.

The Secretary-General's report on conflict-related sexual violence contains useful recommendations to the Security Council, Member States and regional organizations. I would like to recall three of those, in particular.

First, prevention is a priority as it is an essential part of our efforts to protect, in which many stakeholders have a role to play. Specific and timebound commitments to put an end to all acts of sexual violence and to bring their perpetrators to justice can help to break the cycle of violence.

We strongly support more systematic measures to enhance protection against sexual violence and prevention of its recurrence through transitional justice mechanisms. Such measures should link the fight against impunity and recognition of victims' rights, for example through appropriate reparations, but also include strengthening the national capacity to combat the causes of violence and, at the same time, to prevent new cases.

Secondly, in resolution 1820 (2008), the Security Council resolved to take acts of sexual violence into consideration when establishing or renewing State-specific sanctions regimes. That opportunity should not be forgotten. It thus provides the means to take targeted measures against, for example, the parties and individuals mentioned in the Secretary-General's report on sexual violence in conflict.

Finally, in his report, the Secretary-General calls on the parties to include training on conflict-related sexual violence in training programmes for peacekeeping troops. In that regard, I would like to draw the Council's attention to the handbook prepared by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, entitled "Standardized Best Practices Toolkit on Gender and Policing in Peacekeeping Operations". The handbook was co-financed by Switzerland.

The structures set up by resolutions 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009) and 1960 (2010) are still in a testing phase, and only proof of the reality will make it possible to assess their effectiveness. The path is steep and rocky. However, we should move forward prudently and resolutely in strengthening the protection architecture. The establishment of the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict is a significant part of that course.