

**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. Sparber, Permanent Representative of Liechtenstein*

At the outset, let me join others in welcoming the report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2012/33). For the first time, it informs us of the dire situation regarding the use of sexual violence as a method of warfare in country-specific situations. Let me also welcome the dedication with which the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Margot Wallström, and her team have operationalized and implemented important obligations deriving from resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1960 (2010). We are pleased to see that the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements on conflict-related sexual violence are now included in the mandates of various United Nations missions and that the terms of reference of women protection advisers have been agreed upon.

Sexual violence is used not only as a method of warfare during armed conflict, but also as a means to surreptitiously continue conflict after the guns have fallen silent. Sexual violence can be an important indicator in determining when conflicts might turn violent or when a conflict relapses into violence. To fulfil its mandate towards conflict prevention, it is therefore imperative that the Council continue to receive information on sexual violence, including on situations of concern that are not on its agenda.

Sexual violence not only attacks the dignity and the body of the victim, but also tears at the fundamental social fabric of the community. To build sustainable peace, sexual violence must be addressed throughout all stages of conflict resolution processes, starting with ceasefire agreements and the presence of adequate gender expertise at the peace table. When provisions on sexual violence are not part of ceasefire agreements, such violence can be used, in effect, to continue acts of war, thereby undermining efforts to reduce violence and leading to a cycle of vengeance.

Moreover, research shows that when sexual violence is not addressed in the early stages of mediation efforts, the issue is likely to be ignored throughout later efforts to create and maintain peace. Hence, we welcome the work of the Department of Political Affairs to produce guidance for mediators on addressing conflict-related sexual violence in mediation processes and throughout conflict resolution efforts. In that context, it is worthwhile recalling that United Nations-endorsed peace agreements can never promise amnesties for genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity or gross violations of human rights.

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) has significantly advanced international law by including sexual violence in the definition of crimes, in particular, as a crime against humanity. The ICC therefore represents an important mechanism in the fight against conflict-related sexual violence. We call on the Council to use all means at its disposal to strengthen the fight against impunity for those violations by making better use of targeted measures, including sanctions and referrals to the ICC. In addition to collecting information

on trends and perpetrators of conflict-related sexual violence, we must simultaneously ensure that support services for victims are sufficiently funded.

My delegation has therefore pledged to continue its financial support for the ICC Trust Fund for Victims, which adopts a gender-based perspective across all programmes and specifically aims to assist victims of all forms of sexual and gender-based violence. The Trust Fund provides direct assistance to victims, and thus has an immediate impact on the ground.

As a member of the group of five small States, my delegation is a long-standing supporter of the consistent mainstreaming of the Council's thematic agenda into its country-specific work. To support the Council's efforts in mainstreaming its thematic agenda on women, peace and security, my delegation organized a workshop, from 28 to 30 January in Schaan, Liechtenstein, hosted by Foreign Minister Aurelia Frick, on the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda in Afghanistan. The workshop was organized in close partnership with the Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination at Princeton University, and was supported by the delegations of Afghanistan and Germany.

Since the findings and recommendations are related to today's consideration, allow me to remind the Council of the outcome report of the workshop. We believe that the inclusion of some of the recommendations within the renewed mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan would lead to an increased participation of women in peace processes, as well as more reliable information with regard to the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.