

**Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Council, April 17<sup>th</sup> 2013, Security Council Chamber**

*Statement by Mr. Schaper, Permanent Mission of Netherlands to the United Nations.*

My delegation welcomes today's debate. While we align ourselves with the statement made earlier by the observer of the European Union (EU), we would like to make some remarks in our national capacity that complement those made by the observer of the EU and other speakers underlining the importance of the topic of women, peace and security.

The Netherlands has for decades put gender equality at the heart of all its policies. Internationally, we support female leadership, the follow-up of resolution 1325 (2000), women's economic empowerment and the elimination of sexual violence against women. Equal rights and opportunities for women and their full participation in society and decision-making are important not just for the security of women; women are powerful agents for peace, stability and prosperity in any society.

Violence against women, especially sexual violence, has an enormous impact on many aspects of family and society. For example, it is used to this day as a weapon of war to break down societies.

The Netherlands welcomes the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Sexual violence in conflict" (S/2013/149) and in particular supports its recommendations in four areas.

First, we support enhancing monitoring, research and reporting, as well as putting in place an appropriate mechanism or procedure by the Security Council to systematically monitor commitments by parties to conflict so as to prevent and address conflict-related sexual violence.

Secondly, we advocate involving civil society organizations and effective cooperation with the signatories of national action plans.

Thirdly, we support the recommendations on increasing attention given to the role of small arms, as was successfully done in the negotiations on the Arms Trade Treaty.

Fourthly, we favour strengthening the role of the International Criminal Court as the ultimate resort in fighting impunity against the most serious crimes.

Because of the important role of women, since 2007 the Netherlands has invested in national action plans, together with civil society organizations, research institutions and other Government institutions — altogether more than 40 partners. The objective of those partnerships is to create an enabling environment in which women are better able to take a leading role and to participate in political decision-making processes. Within the United Nations, the Netherlands wants to continue its proactive role within the United Nations Human Rights Council, the General Assembly and the Commission on the Status of Women. We are also committed, and a long-term supporter of, the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women.