*Check against delivery*



Statement by

**HE Mr Boštjan Malovrh, Ambassador,**

**Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the United Nations**

at the

**Annual UN Security Council Open debate on Women, Peace and Security:**

**"Strengthening women's resilience and leadership as a path to peace**

**in regions plagued by armed groups"**

New York, 20 October 2022

Mr President,

We commend Gabon for organizing today's debate. Slovenia aligns itself to the statement delivered by the European Union, the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security and the Group of Friends of R2P.

We welcome the Secretary-General's annual report and its presentation. Together with other accessible information, the findings in the report point to significant setbacks in the global situation of women in recent years. Since 2019 the number of women and girls living in fragile and conflict-affected countries doubled, while military expenditures rose to an all-time high. Appallingly, rape and other forms of sexual violence against children in conflict have increased, and we know that 98 per cent of survivors are girls. The gap between men’s and women’s food security has grown 8.4 times since 2018, while in this same period, the global spending on education has stagnated. In lower and lower middle income countries it decreased by 13.5 per cent on average. We know that girls will endure the worst of this negative trend.

Another negative and deeply worrying trend mentioned in the Secretary General's report is the mutually reinforcing misogyny and authoritarianism, which is on the rise. 'Lessons learned' from recurring conflicts is that efforts at peace and stability will fail in the long-term, if they are not fully inclusive. The full, equal and meaningful participation of women is key to achieving lasting peace, stability and sustainable development. We urgently need decisive steps in the realization of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

During the 30 years of our statehood, women as political leaders in Slovenia have achieved important landmarks. For the first time, we have a woman President of the National Assembly and a record number of women elected to the parliament. We have had a woman Prime Minister, two women Ministers of Defence, and we currently have a third woman Minister of the Interior and a first time woman Minister of Foreign Affairs. A woman has already served as Chief of the General Staff of Slovenian Army and as Director-General of the Police. These achievements are a result and a testimonial of a long-standing national commitment to full, equal and meaningful participation of women in the society, contributing also to Slovenia being the 7th most peaceful country in the world, according to the Global Peace Index 2022.

Women's empowerment is also a long-standing foreign policy priority for Slovenia. Slovenia's Peace Operations Training Centre conducts trainings on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in international missions and operations. From training Venezuelan women in the areas of negotiations, mediation and conflict resolution, to beekeeping workshops for Afghan refugee girls in Iran, from enabling the work of female doctors in Afghanistan, to assistance and medical care for Syrian refugee women and girls in Lebanon, our development and humanitarian projects contain strong cross-cutting elements of women's empowerment. We will raise the share of our development cooperation for gender equality from the current 39 to 60 % by the end of the decade.

Mr President,

We live in the time when no place on earth is out of reach of technology and news travels faster than ever. How can it be, that we have no clear picture of the extent of attacks on or the killings of women human rights defenders? Peace operations reporting should consistently contain sex-disaggregated data on killings of human rights defenders.

In conflict, post-conflict and transitional environments, where women already bear a disproportionate burden of deprivation and are also a target of armed groups, organised crime or even terrorist groups, women's organizations need to be able to provide support. We therefore welcome the Secretary General's call to leadership of peace operations and country teams for annual updates on measures contributing to a safe and enabling environment for women's organizations and women's human rights defenders.

Slovenia will continue to support women's full, equal and meaningful participation in all peace-making, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts.

Thank you.

