

Statement by Mr. Matej Marn, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Slovenia to the UN, at the Security Council open debate on conflict prevention

Thursday, 21 August 2014

Mr. President,

I would like to thank the UK Presidency for organizing this important debate. Ongoing wars and conflicts around the globe from Gaza, Syria, Iraq, and Ukraine to Central African Republic and South Sudan, particularly the suffering of civilian population, including women and children, more than merit such a debate at this time.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for Human Rights for their insightful briefings. I would like to use this opportunity to also thank High Commissioner Pillay for her tireless efforts in advocating human rights in the past six years and wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

Slovenia aligns itself with the statement, delivered earlier by the representative of the European Union.

Mr. President,

The images we are receiving from conflicts raging around the world are heartbreaking and saddening.

What makes them even more unacceptable is the fact that they occur despite of our consistent work over the past decade on issues related to conflict prevention and peaceful resolution of disputes. We have been persistently building a broad framework which had led us to the point when it needs to get implemented and the words of the Charter be put into practice carrying out operational prevention.

The Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. In order to be able to uphold this responsibility, the Security Council should strengthen its early warning mechanism.

In this regard we see a merit in organizing regular horizon scanning meetings with high UN officials, including the Special Advisers on the prevention of genocide and Responsibility to Protect and the High Commissioner for human rights. We would also encourage the Secretary-General to use more often the possibility in accordance with Article 99 of the Charter to bring to the attention of the Council any matter which he believes may threaten the international peace and security. Against this background the Council should take preventive measures.

However, as it is still most often the case, the international community, including the UN, deals with the crisis when it is too late, when the violent conflict developed its dynamic that is difficult to turn, which leads to costly interventions. What is seen as political considerations often overrides concerns over International humanitarian law and human rights violations.

All violent conflicts today show the vital importance of the early warning and prevention part of the conflict cycle, the part that we have learned to understand so much better in recent years.

Progress to date would not be made without dedication and expertise of Secretary General's Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect whose functions include acting as an early warning mechanism to prevent potential situations that could result in mass atrocities, as well as the important role of special representatives for Sexual Violence and Children and Armed Conflict. The Secretary-General's Rights Up Front initiative addresses these lacunae and we welcome the established internal coordination system in the UN, hoping that it will soon be put to practice meaningfully, including within UN Country Teams.

When conflicts cannot be prevented, the Security Council should act promptly to end them. Furthermore, if genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity are threatening or on-going, it is imperative for the Permanent Members of the Council not to exercise the right of veto in taking necessary measures to prevent or address such situations. In cases where such atrocity crimes were committed, accountability for these crimes is crucial not only to prevent future atrocities but also to build confidence in the society. Slovenia is a strong supporter of the International Criminal Court to ensure accountability where necessary.

Mr. President,

Slovenia welcomes the resolution adopted by the Council today. Conflict prevention and peaceful dispute resolution are at the core of our foreign policy priorities. In this respect, we pay particular attention to the use of mediation as part of a larger toolbox for preventing and resolving conflicts and achieving sustainable peace, also by enhancing the UN's mediation efforts and promoting the use of mediation and capacity building at all levels.

Given the vital importance of preventing and resolving conflicts and preventing their recurrence, we must continue with the advancement of mediation mechanisms, building of mediation capacities and supporting the inclusion of women, and strengthening cooperation between the UN and regional actors in this respect.

We also need to pay more attention to the education that will foster a culture of peace, tolerance and prosperity.

I thank you for your attention.