

Statement by Slovakia at the Open Debate of the United Nations Security Council

Conflict Prevention
21 August 2014
(Unofficial Transcript)

Mr. Ružička (Slovakia): We are definitely not living in an easy time. Even the summers are not as they used to be.

Allow me to express our appreciation to you, Sir, for organizing this important open debate on conflict prevention. Its importance is reflected in the Council's adoption of resolution 2171 (2014), on the topic under discussion. We would like also to thank the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for their briefings and the work that they do.

Slovakia fully aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union and its member States. In addition, I would like to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

Efforts aimed at preventing conflicts right from their inception have long been an integral part of the Organization's efforts in securing peace and stability. Nevertheless, the need for effective prevention of violent conflicts has been steadily gaining in relevance, especially since the end of the Cold War. Cases such as the genocides in Rwanda, the ethnic wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the State failure in Somalia point to the need to find the means to prevent conflicts from escalating into war, human disasters and regional instability. Slovakia attaches great importance to conflict prevention processes within and outside the United Nations framework.

The causes of conflict and the processes of peace are complex — political, economic, social, territorial, historical, ethnic and religious. There are also new causes of conflict, such as terrorism and organized crime, both of which have conflict in their nature and are difficult or even impossible to mediate or negotiate beforehand. But certain signs are almost always there. It is up to the parties, countries, nations and people at risk to utilize all possibilities and to mobilize the international community to take preventive action.

Today we have various useful tools that can assist in the effective prevention of conflict. Among them, I will mention two — the 2011 report on the theme "Preventive diplomacy: delivering results" (S/2011/552) and General Assembly resolution 65/283, entitled "Strengthening the role of mediation in peace settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution".

The United Nations is not alone in advancing preventive action. Regional bodies have also increasingly taken up their own initiatives for preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention. There may possibly be no regional body that has no programme for conflict prevention. What we have to do and what we need is closer cooperation and interaction on this issue between the United Nations and regional organizations.

Prevention cannot be entirely successful without addressing the root causes of conflict as well as its enabling and facilitating factors. Credible and in-depth security sector reform (SSR) has been proven to play a crucial and decisive role in reducing or even eliminating conditions facilitating conflict outbreak. SSR contributes to conflict prevention in a direct and indirect way. Transparent oversight and uniform control over all forces and factions directly prevent the renewal of national as well as inter-State conflicts through spreading trust and predictability. Security sector reform may not be a primary preventive instrument, but it definitely is a preventive tool to create conditions to avoid a relapse of the conflict, especially if duly executed in its complexity, starting with security, democratic governance and the rule of law and followed by development activities.

Since poverty, unemployment and poor living standards are among the main causes of conflict, timely and appropriate investment in sustainable development — inter alia, but not exclusively, to

the eradication of poverty, programmes for inclusive education and activities for employment, especially for young people — are crucial for long-term investment in sustainable peace in the conflict area.

We also have other tools. The concept of the responsibility to protect, especially its first preventive pillar, is another tool for preventing mass atrocities. I would also like to highlight the important role of the International Criminal Court. It serves not only as an independent and impartial judicial body, prosecuting in those situations where a national jurisdiction is unable or unwilling to address the issue of accountability, but its authority also has a preventive impact.

In conclusion, some studies consider following principles to increase the understanding of conflict dynamics aligned with local specifics to serve conflict prevention efforts. We may wish to look at these.

First, share, but do not align conflict analyses.

Secondly, align conflict analyses with local understandings and terminology.

Thirdly, research drivers of peace separately from drivers of violence.

Fourthly, study the micro-determinants of success in preventive action.

Fifthly, begin a dialogue on the coordination of preventive actions on the regional level and on an internal level with the non-governmental organizations.

Lastly, ensure sufficient and flexible financing for preventive action. The ratio is 1:60 — \$1 for peace protection, \$60 for peace restoration.

In conclusion, let me assure the Council that Slovakia will fully contribute to the implementation of the commitments set out in the resolution adopted today.