

## **SECURITY COUNCIL**

### **OPEN DEBATE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY RESPONDING TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN SITUATIONS OF CONFLICT- RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

**(NEW YORK, June 2 2016)**

#### **PERMANENT MISSION OF ITALY TO THE UN**

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to commend the French Presidency for organizing this debate as we approach the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict and thank the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon; Zainab Bangura; Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, and Fatima Ahmed for their briefings. Italy aligns itself with the statement (to be) delivered by the European Union and wishes to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

After the adoption of resolution 2253 condemning the abduction of women and children for sexual exploitation and trafficking and of the Presidential Statement in December, Italy welcomes the consolidated involvement of the Council on the issue of human trafficking and looks forward to the SG report on progress to implement better existing mechanisms countering trafficking in persons. The UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the expertise of specialized agencies such as UNODC represent a solid basis for the upcoming report and its follow-up mechanism.

The relevance of today's debate is that it links this emerging issue with the consolidated set of resolutions on Women, Peace and Security and Sexual Violence in Conflict: resolution 1325, recognizing that peace is inextricably linked with gender equality and women's leadership; resolution 1820, adopted during Italy's last term in the Council and with our active involvement, on sexual violence in armed conflicts; resolution 2242, promoted by Spain last December, on the gender dimensions of violent extremism.

This link is today extremely relevant. It is recent news that ISIS uses social media, to buy or sell sex slaves, also as a means of funding. Mass migration flows, a phenomenon that Italy has been witnessing for a long time now, continue to include conflict-related sexual violence as a deliberate form of persecution to displace populations with thousands of new refugees and migrants fleeing their homeland.

Italy's response to this very complex issue is multifaceted. First, promotion of an holistic approach. To this end, we have put forward a Migration Compact, based on a strong, unwavering commitment to humanitarian principles – saving lives at sea (almost 350 thousand since 2014) - and on concrete and achievable goals to address the root causes of migration, while at the same time disrupting the business model of traffickers.

Second, strengthening the justice response, by ratifying and implementing relevant instruments to combat human trafficking and protect the victims. Among them, let me mention the Palermo Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its Additional Protocols, including those on the trafficking of migrants and the slave trade.

Third, tailored training for Peacekeeping operations. Italy hosts the Centre of Excellence for Stability Police Units (CoESPU), which organizes since 2005 training courses for specialized Police units, including courses on the protection and promotion of human rights and International Humanitarian Law and on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). The personnel trained – over 8000 so far - joins the “Formed Police Units” (FPU) to be deployed in UN peace missions or of regional organizations.

Among international efforts that Italy supports with conviction, let me recall the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI), launched at the 2013 G7 by the United Kingdom.

Mr. President,

given the alarming figures on the use of sexual violence by terrorists and extremist groups much remains to be done. I wish to make two points, as food for thought:

1) we need to help victims of conflict-related sexual violence to come forward and to report because statistics we have are far from being exhaustive (practitioners in the field estimate that for each rape reported in connection with a conflict, ten to twenty cases likely go undocumented);

2) we need to strengthen the specific aspect of mediation in the WPS agenda: we believe it has yet to be fully exploited in all its potential. In line with our strong belief that in the UN we need to mainstream mediation in all main agendas, we intend to do so by working together with UN Women.

These suggestions cannot be decoupled from specific efforts to protect and empower women and girls. Only empowered women can contribute more effectively to sustainable peace and security and act as a preventive force to eliminate sexual violence in conflict and related trafficking. Italy remains committed to achieving the goal of empowering women and girls.

I thank you.