

*Statement by Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Lithuania
Mr. Neris Germanas
at UN Security Council Open Debate “Addressing Impunity: Effective Justice for Crimes of Sexual
Violence in Conflict”
New York, June 24, 2013*

I would like to start by congratulating the United Kingdom, Presidency of the Security Council for the month of June, for holding this important debate. Lithuania associates itself with the statement made by a representative of the European Union.

In my national capacity let me express Lithuania’s full support to the recommendations contained in the latest report by the Secretary General. Let me also commend the Special Representative on sexual violence in conflict for her personal dedication and commitment.

To tackle impunity, sustained comprehensive efforts are needed at the national level to guarantee the prosecution of conflict-related sexual violence and support for the survivors. The Council could make a major difference by supporting early establishment of national reparation programmes as well as developing a more robust monitoring and reporting system.

National action plans on the implementation of Resolution 1325 are an important tool that should be fully utilised. Lithuania’s national action plan, adopted in December 2011, contains a variety of measures aimed at women’s empowerment through education, networking, and development of skills. It has direct linkages with Lithuania’s development cooperation programmes, which include a strong gender element. All pre-departure training for Lithuanian military and police personnel participating in international missions includes specific training on gender issues.

Lithuania has strongly supported the inclusion of gender-based violence and violence against women and children among the mandatory assessment criteria for arms exports in the International Arms Trade Treaty.

Mr. President,

The DDR and SSR processes, including stringent vetting of personnel, provide an important window of opportunity for effective justice for victims of sexual violence in conflict. Security sector reforms must include provisions on the personal accountability of the police and the military, all the way up to the leadership.

Establishing effective oversight, transparency, as well as human rights and gender training for security sector personnel are instrumental in countering the culture of impunity. My delegation welcomes the Secretary General’s recommendation that blanket amnesties should not be applied where conflict-related sexual violence is in question. My delegation strongly supports the implementation of zero-tolerance policy towards sexual misconduct in the UN peace-keeping ranks, including the relevant provisions in all peace-keeping mandates.

We call on the Security Council to use the tools at its disposal in a more systematic way, including the setting up of commissions of inquiry, individual targeted sanctions and referrals to the International Criminal Court.

Mr. President,

We must show iron-clad determination and political will to stamp out impunity for sexual crimes as a tool of war. Statesmen, political and religious leaders, women's groups, community elders, journalists, human rights defenders and advocates of the rights of the victims must join forces to generate global consensus on the need to end impunity and pursue accountability at all levels.

By doing so, we shall give back the voice to the victims of sexual violence in conflict and create a powerful deterrent for all those who may be tempted to resort to sexual crimes as a tactic of war.

I thank you, Mr. President.