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## Security Council

Open debate

### **Women and peace and security**

New York, 17 April 2013

Statement by H.E. Mr. Paul Seger, Permanent Representative

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*Unofficial translation*

Ms. President,

In this moment, as we speak, crimes of sexual violence are committed in many places of the world. Let us therefore keep in mind the urgency of the matter we are discussing today and the need for concerted action that should guide our efforts here in New York, in our capitals, as well as in the very conflict and post-conflict zones.

Switzerland would like to thank and congratulate the Secretary General and the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Zainab Hawa Bangura, as well as her team for the work that lays the basis for this report. This is the first report under the mandate of the new SRSG, whom we warmly congratulate for taking office, and the second of the Secretary General to respond to the requirements of Resolution 1960. To compile this information is no easy task, but I think the report shows that it can be done and it is necessary that it is done.

Switzerland welcomes the fact that SRSG Bangura is committed to continue the work commenced by her predecessor. We believe that strengthening the understanding of sexual violence as a tactic and consequence of war is of continued importance as it is the key to the kind of meaningful preventive action that is so urgently needed. The Human Security Report Project provides a valuable recommendation in this regard when it highlights the need to better understand what causes the difference in wartime sexual violence rates in its report "Sexual violence, education, and war: beyond the mainstream narrative". We further welcome the additional priority of SRSG Bangura of fostering national ownership, leadership and responsibility in addressing sexual violence. It is very much in line with our understanding of an international accountability framework for war and post-war situations.

We note with interest the important links that the report draws between sexual violence and active displacement policy. For the first time, it reveals the connections between sexual violence, forceful displacement of a population and the exploitation of natural resources.

The Secretary General formulates a number of useful recommendations. Let me highlight three:

1. We highly welcome that the Secretary General expresses the need for access to safe emergency contraception and services for termination of pregnancies resulting from rape. Women and girls should not be forced to carry out pregnancies that are a result of a serious crime against them. All too often they neither receive reparations nor any other form of support from their own community or from the international community. At the same time, where women and girls who decide to give birth cannot keep the children, measures to protect the rights of these children need to be put in place, including options for national adoption.
2. This leads to a second issue: reparations. They can have a transformative effect and should be part of post-conflict transformation initiatives. As UN Women demonstrates in a recent paper, reparations are “the most victim-centered of transitional justice measures”. Here we are required to think out of the box. We need to connect measures of humanitarian aid, peacebuilding and development in a meaningful way that leads to *real* impact – that is to the empowerment of women. This is important because empowerment is one of the key prevention measures.
3. Finally, Switzerland hears the Secretary General's call for recruitment of Women Protection Advisors as members of UN assessment teams. We draw your attention to the Justice Rapid Response, an intergovernmental stand-by facility that can provide the international community with rapidly deployable expertise. JRR in cooperation with UN Women and the International Institute for Criminal Investigations have set up a roster of Sexual and Gender Based Violence experts with various backgrounds. Switzerland is one of the initiators of JRR and we are convinced that this timely initiative can contribute to fulfill obligations under the Resolutions 1888 and 1960.

Let me finally remind you of the important intersections between Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict and the Protection of Civilians discussions. We welcome strong links between the two subjects and a coherent work of the Security Council when dealing with it.

Ms. President,

Let me fervently reiterate Switzerland's commitment to the cause.

Thank you.