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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

SECURITY COUNCIL – OPEN DEBATE

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY - CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE

STATEMENT BY KATHRIN NESCHER-STÜTZEL

FIRST SECRETARY

Mr. President,

We thank Uruguay for providing us with an opportunity to speak on this important issue. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank Ms. Zainab Bangura for her excellent work as Special Representative for Sexual Violence in Conflict over the past five years and welcome the new SRSG, Ms. Pramila Patten. We look forward to working with her.

Mr. President,

The most recent report by the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence is just as appalling as the previous ones and leaves little hope that the use of sexual violence as a tactic of war – by all parties of a conflict – is on the decline. Moreover, it emphasizes that in most cases, the suffering of the survivors of this sickening human rights violation does not stop with the violation itself; stigmatization and shame exacerbate their situation further, often causing

further trauma and reluctance to report such violations, letting perpetrators go unpunished.

Accountability is a key ingredient of our joint efforts to eradicate conflict-related sexual violence. International criminal justice mechanisms have significantly advanced our efforts to fight impunity: In 1998, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda broke new ground, when it found – in the Akayesu case - that sexual assault constituted an act of genocide. In March 2016, the International Criminal Court found Jean-Pierre Bemba criminally responsible for rape committed by his subordinates both as a war crime and crime against humanity, in accordance with the principle of command responsibility. These judgments are significant steps forward in the criminalization of sexual violence. They send a clear message that impunity for sexual violence as a tool of war is not an option. We commend the Prosecutor of the ICC for including charges related to sexual and gender-based crimes in many of her ongoing cases and for prioritizing these crimes as reflected in the policy paper produced by her office.

Where the ICC does not have jurisdiction, we have to look for other options. In the case of Syria, the newly established international, impartial and independent mechanism to support prosecution for the most serious crimes under international law, the IIIM, currently offers the only promising path towards accountability for the crimes committed there, including sexual violence, and for justice for the Syrian people and a sustainable peace for the country. The Terms of Reference for the mechanism note the need for dedicated expertise on sexual violence. We call on all States to continue their political and financial support for the mechanism.

Mr. President,

Women and girls are more likely to become victims of sexual violence in conflict situations. Yet we must not forget that men and boys are also affected. While data on sexual violence against males is still sparse, estimates suggest that as many as one in three survivors are male. The response to the issue has been insufficient: psychosocial and medical services offered to male survivors are limited, in post-conflict situations transitional justice mechanisms often adopt a gender-binary interpretation of sexual violence, identifying women as victims and men as perpetrators – thereby de facto denying access to important reparations and health services to male survivors. We commend the drafters of resolution 2331 on human trafficking in conflict in adopting gender-inclusive language with regards to survivor programs and services and encourage others in doing so as well.

Resolution 2331 is of particular importance to Liechtenstein. It identified a correlation between human trafficking, sexual violence, armed conflict, terrorism and transnational organized crime. In short: it showed that the eradication of human trafficking and modern slavery requires a truly comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach and the inclusion of a diverse set of stakeholders. Liechtenstein, together with the UNU and the United Kingdom, has published a set of 10 action ideas for Security Council last year on denouncing and disrupting human trafficking and modern slavery and protecting its victims, some of which were reflected both in the SG report on Trafficking in Persons as well as in resolution 2331. To further investigate the disruption aspect, focusing in particular on how to detect and disrupt financial flows associated with trafficking, Liechtenstein has organized another workshop with UNU in March of this year

that brought together leaders from the financial sector, including financial regulators, investigators and prosecutors, as well as Member States and civil society representatives. The product of the workshop, a limited set of concrete, actionable ideas and recommendations to assist the financial sector, regulators and other stakeholders in the fight against modern slavery and human trafficking, is scheduled to be presented during the High Level Political Forum in July 2017 and the High Level Week in fall 2017.

Finally, Mr. President, let me underline that the most efficient method to end conflict-related sexual violence is ensuring that it does not happen in the first place. Liechtenstein commends SG Guterres for his focus on prevention and would like to recall that more than half of the current Membership has signed the ACT Code of Conduct on Security Council voting – pledging to support timely and decisive action by the Security Council aimed at preventing or ending the commission of genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes, which can also encompass sexual violence. We call on the remaining Member States to join our efforts in ensuring the Security Council delivers on its mandate as outlined in the UN Charter and assumes the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

I thank you.