Key Messages for the PR of Slovakia's remarks at the Ambassadorial-level Consultation of the Peacebuilding Commission 2020 Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture "Full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peacebuilding."

Electronic consultation

[Which priority area of the WPS agenda strengthens women's participation in peacebuilding? What challenges remain for women on the ground?]

- *In his last SG Report on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS), the Secretary-General outlined that <u>increasing the number of women in national security services</u> is one of the six priority areas of the United Nations and its Member States to address persistent challenges in implementing the WPS agenda.*
- *The promotion of women's meaningful participation in the security sector is critical in efforts to build inclusive, accountable, and legitimate institutions for sustainable peace and development.*
- *While some gains have been made in improving the proportion of women in the security sector, there remains significant male dominance in security professions, in particular in decision-making positions. Assessments of the barriers to women's participation in national security sectors found that women are deterred from joining the security sector because of social, cultural, legal, political, and institutional barriers[1].*
- *Such barriers to women's participation in national security sectors impact on the capacity of the State to effectively prevent conflicts, respond to security needs of the population and contribute to international peace and security.*
- *Whilst some of these barriers are amenable to practical solutions (e.g., building bathrooms for women where only male toilets exist), most of them require consistent and genuine political leadership to gender-responsive security sector reforms strategies and actions that promotes behavior change and transform patriarchal norms deeply embedded within the security sector culture and with the society as a whole.*

[What improvements are needed in the UN PBA? What lessons can be distilled from PBC engagement on WPS in conflict-affected countries to guide the Commission's future response in countries and regions under its consideration and in its advisory role of the Security Council?]

- *To address these barriers, **<u>firstly</u>,** the United Nations peace operations and country teams need more **predictable, adequate and targeted financing to support national security sectors to undertake concrete measures to attract and retain qualified women candidates,** including by developing gender-sensitive human resources policies, eliminating gender bias in the hiring process, and improving the work environment within the security sector by delivering gender equality awareness training, adopting codes of conduct and establishing accountability mechanisms to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence in the workplace.*
- *Thanks to the support of the PBF, the United Nations has been able to deliver support to gender-responsive security sector reform in a few countries. But the funding to this area is still very low. In many contexts, the United Nations and donor's capacity have been dispersed, resulting in duplication of efforts and missed opportunities to support peacebuilding processes.*
- *<u>**Second**</u>, notwithstanding the importance of tracking progress on commitments made by Member States to increase the proportion of women at all levels of the security services, there are currently no **systematic efforts to collect and make available data on the percentage of women in** national armed forces, police, immigration, intelligence, corrections, and other security sector institutions around the world.*
- *<u>**Third,** the</u> effective inclusion of women in the security sector requires strong national leadership and political will. The United Nations and Member States should **strengthen their good offices, advocacy on the promotion of***

- [1] You may or not include in the speech (as this comes from the report of the HL Round on Gender Parity and SSR: "*In some contexts, women are deterred from joining the security sector because of social stereotypes about the nature of their work. The social conditioning starts early – from the kind of education that girls get to the types of jobs they are channeled to in society. In some contexts, women are not encouraged to join the security sector due to the lack of trust in the security forces but also due to limited education opportunities and financial resources. In other contexts, women who have joined the security sector face other persistent obstacles, such as gender bias in the recruitment process, male-centered facilities, uniforms and equipment, assignment to non-combat 'feminized' functions (administration, logistics), unfriendly policies for maternity leave and childcare, sexual harassment at the security sector work place, and limited promotion and career"*

women's leadership at all levels and stages of security sector reform processes. Investing in **strategic partnerships with women networks** *in the security and defence sectors is also crucial to achieving inclusive political solutions.*

- **<u>Fourth</u>,** *the PBC should strengthen its advisory role to the* **Security Council, encouraging it to more clearly call peace operations to support women's meaningful participation and leadership in all stages of security sector reform processes.**

[How effective has the PBC Gender Strategy been to inform, catalyze, and support the Commission's work in support of WPS agenda?]

- **<u>Fifth</u>,** *while the PBC Gender Strategy has played an essential role in identifying priorities areas of work for the Peacebuilding Architecture (PBA), more needs to be done to* **ensure** *that these priorities are mainstreamed throughout of the PBA structures, tools, and funding allocation, as well as in the 2020 Review of the PBA. The PBC Gender Strategy outlined security sector reform as one of its thematic priorities areas of work. The review of the PBA should* **assess progress made in this area and provide clear recommendations on how we could strengthen the PBA structures to support national security sector reform efforts to increase the number of women in security and defence services***, in line with the WPS agenda.*