

Mr. Chairman,

SLOVENIA

The foundations for the advancement of women and protection of their rights lie in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was adopted more than 30 years ago. Almost universally ratified, the implementation of the Convention should not be set aside. We should also continue to focus on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, the Cairo Programme of Action, the Millennium Development Goals and other commitments to empower women and achieve gender equality.

The year 2010 presented a milestone for empowerment of women and gender equality. This year we witnessed the implementation of last year's achievements. Let me mention just a few of them. The UN Women officially began its work and adopted its first Strategic Plan for 2011-2013. The HRC Working group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice was appointed and held its first session in June. While welcoming the beginning of work of these two new forces in the efforts to achieve gender equality, we would like to give our support to all other actors dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and women's rights.

The role of women is indispensable for the sound functioning of the communities and states. We have been witnessing changes around the world this year. Women of the countries of the “Arab Spring” were at the forefront of demonstrations, protesting along side men. They should also play an equal part in decision making processes about the future of their countries and the transformations of their societies.

Women voices need to be heard when discussing, preparing and making decisions on global issues such as peace and security, development, human rights and environment. We have to continue to fight against gender-based or other forms of discrimination and violence that impede women from exercising their rights.

Slovenia attaches great importance to the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women in its foreign policy activities at all levels. Rights of women have been high on our human rights agenda, the empowerment of women is a cross-cutting issue of our development cooperation.

We pay also special attention to the issue of women, peace and security – to the participation of women in peace-related activities on one hand and to the protection of women and girls during and after the conflict on the other hand. The adoption of our National Action Plan on the implementation of the Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 in November last year reaffirmed our commitments.

Sexual violence in conflict presents the most hideous weapon of war. I would like to reaffirm Slovenia's support to the SC resolution 1960 and the previous resolutions dedicated to the fight against conflict-related sexual violence. Slovenia supports the work of the Special representative on sexual violence in conflict and the Expert Team on the Rule of Law, since investigating these crimes and finding the perpetrators accountable as well as fighting impunity is of key importance in preventing and addressing conflict-related sexual violence.

Let me conclude by warmly congratulating this year's Nobel Peace Prize recipients, the three honourable women who have played a vital role in promoting the rights and role of women and in the advancement of peace and security, development and human rights. We hope that this recognition will give additional momentum to the empowerment of women across the world.