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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

SECURITY COUNCIL

OPEN DEBATE ON WOMEN IN PEACEKEEPING

STATEMENT BY GEORG SPARBER, CHARGE D'AFFAIRES

Mr. President,

Thank you for convening this open debate on an important and timely topic. Liechtenstein joins many other states in support of women's full, equal and meaningful participation in all stages of building peace – including in peacekeeping operations. We know that women's involvement contributes to effective peacekeeping and thus helps prevent a relapse into conflict. It is therefore important that women's representation in peacekeeping contingents increases rapidly. Stronger political will and leadership are needed to empower women to participate fully, equally and meaningfully at all levels, even more so in times of political transition. The inclusion of women at all stages of the conflict cycle must be one symptom of a broader change, toward a system based on full equality, and away from gender stereotypes that have historically kept women away from police and military roles.

Mr. President,

Women peacekeepers improve the operational effectiveness, accessibility, and credibility of peacekeeping missions by providing contingents with diverse perspectives and a broad range of skills. According to studies women peacekeepers help strengthen relationships with communities,¹ including by

¹ Anita Helland, Kari Karamé, Anita Kristensen, and Inger Skjelsbaek, *Women and Armed Conflict: A Study for the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs* (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 1999).

being able to access information from populations and venues that are closed to men. Strong relationships with communities lead to more successful dispute resolution, and strengthen the ability of missions to fulfill their mandates, including the protection of civilians.

Women's participation in the security sector is associated with fewer misconduct complaints² and improved citizen perceptions of force integrity. They help to mainstream a gender perspective across all components and operations of a mission, and facilitate a cultural change that disrupts harmful gender stereotypes. Female peacekeepers have access to women in conflict, who are often overlooked both as victims and perpetrators. Women peacekeepers also serve as role models. A visible presence of female peacekeepers empowers women and girls in host communities and can raise women's participation rates in local police and military forces, improving the capacity of national forces to take over security responsibilities. Women's participation in peacekeeping contributes to achieving SDG 5 on gender equality and SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions – which are catalysts for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Mr. President,

We note the importance of Council Resolution 2442 in encouraging the deployment of women and the precedents it set, particularly in its endorsement of incentives to bolster numbers of female peacekeepers. We support the measures aimed at implementing its provisions laid out in the new Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy, as part of the Secretary-General's System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity. At the same time, more consistent mission mandates are needed on issues pertaining to women, peace and security. In 2017, only 16% of the 25 gender advisers deployed to field missions or offices of special envoys were at the senior level. More than half were at the P-3 level or below.³ Missions should better incorporate gender advisers into their work as part of the mission leadership structure, and provide them with all resources necessary to be able to carry out their functions.

Member States should increase their efforts to encourage female police and military personnel to participate in peacekeeping operations, and eliminate barriers to women's full inclusion. Improving

² Sabrina Karim and Kyle Beardsley, Explaining sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping missions: The role of female peacekeepers and gender equality in contributing countries.

³ S/2018/900, para. 22

conditions of service and targeted recruitment strategies toward women, in particular through the media, can contribute to these efforts. Moreover, female peacekeepers can only be effective agents of change in environments that are free of discrimination, unfair social norms and attitudes, and when they are not deprived of their rights and opportunities.

Mr. President,

Liechtenstein welcomes and supports your call for questions to the briefers, as a way to make our debates more interactive. We would be interested in their views on the following questions:

How can peacekeeping operations better follow-up with women who leave the missions, in order to learn lessons from their experiences?

Why do police and troop contributors often deploy women to the United Nations at levels lower than their proportion in their domestic security forces?

I thank you.