

Position Paper for the General Assembly Plenary

1. Conflict Diamonds

Slovenia is deeply concerned about the trade in conflict diamonds recognising it as one of the most pressing matters of international relevance. Being directly linked to the furtherance of armed conflicts, the support of rebel activities against legitimate governments as well as the massive proliferation of armaments of all kinds the illegal diamond trade has contributed to and allowed for some of the most horrific human rights abuses. Diamonds have in fact fuelled the conflict in Sierra Leone, destabilising the country for the better part of three decades, stealing its patrimony and robbing an entire generation of children putting the country last on the UNDP Human Development Index. Similar atrocities including the killing and displacement of thousands of civilians, the raping of masses of women and the abuse of children as soldiers can be related to the efforts of various groups to control diamond mines in Angola and the Congo. Whereas the legitimate diamond trade has proven to be of great importance for the producing countries like Botswana and South Africa, the benefits of which can be clearly seen today it is this kind of trade aimed at facilitating war that has a devastating effect for the concerned countries and the people living in and around them. Given these scales of devastating effects Slovenia strongly commits to the fight against diamond smuggling and hopes for an even greater sense of urgency from the international as well as the business community involved in the diamond trade. Slovenia believes that the GA Plenary is an excellent forum to discuss and establish methods to achieve a swift resolution of the problem and address the implementation of already established concepts. In this regard the Republic of Slovenia strongly supports the certification scheme established by the Kimberley process of 2002 and calls on all governments to fully participate and to work together in order to maximise its implementation through genuine compliance and monitoring. Other measures like the development of better technologies to identify rough diamonds - as it is being conducted in consultation with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police - or the creation of an UN led Independent International Diamond Standards Commission to permanently monitor the conduct of governmental and corporate responsibility in the global diamond industry should also be considered. While it must certainly be acknowledged that the governments of the concerned countries have recently taken important initiatives to address the problem it is Slovenia's opinion that these initiatives cannot be successful without further financial assistance of the international community. Slovenia believes however that financial aids to stop the traffic of illegal diamonds would be nothing but mere gratuity. It would rather be a major blow to international terrorism which for significant parts relies its financing network on money laundering schemes connected with the smuggling of raw materials including blood diamonds. To counteract in this regard is a primary interest to Slovenia.

2. Pharmaceutical Companies, Medicine and Disease

Slovenia strongly commits itself to the fight against HIV/ AIDS and other diseases throughout the world. At the beginning of the 1990's Slovenia itself was affected by an epidemic of drug abuse. In contrast to other countries in the Central and Eastern European region there is however no evidence of a substantial spread of HIV infections among the growing population of injecting drug users. This can be attributed to the development of successful programmes including numerous prevention, health-care and social rehabilitation programmes which have been established in co-operation with the association of non-governmental organisations. In this regard Slovenia wishes to express its readiness to share its knowledge and experience with other countries as well as to participate in regional and global efforts to combat the HIV/ AIDS epidemic. Slovenia is aware of the fact that in most of the cases disease goes hand in hand with poverty. The overwhelming majority of infections with fatal diseases occur in developing countries. We therefore support recently enacted initiatives aimed at achieving and accelerating the substantial price reduction of life-saving medication making it accessible for a greater part of the world. These initiatives require the engagement of UN bodies – as seen in the “3 by 5” initiative as well as the commitment of NGOs and the pharmaceutical industry. We therefore welcome the establishment of the

Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria which has provided better access to antiretroviral drugs and- as we believe- will continue to do so even more efficiently with the engagement of pharmaceutical companies. In this regard Slovenia is particularly concerned however on the current trade rules on drug patents preventing competitors from cheaper distribution and limiting the access of the world's poorest. As the recent incidents in South East Asia have once more revealed there are challenges that can only be met when the whole of society and the international community are ready to respond. It is clear what the duty of the developed countries and the international community is. Slovenia is aware of this responsibility and will contribute to joint efforts to the best of its abilities.

3. Strengthening the UN System: A Follow- up to the Agenda for Change

Slovenia shares the common notion that the UN is in desperate need for reforms. In order to stand up to the demanding challenges of the contemporary world important reforms in various fields will prove to be inevitable. Slovenia actively participates in the efforts for the reform of the UN. We are aware of the necessity of a sound financial basis and therefore encourage a clear commitment of all the UN member states to pay their contributions in full and on time without conditions. More important however Slovenia also addresses the necessity of structural changes within the respective UN bodies to strengthen the organisation's capacity. In this context Slovenia supports the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the Secretary General's reform efforts. In regard to the Security Council it is our belief that in order to reach the first goal of its existence it should be representative for the whole organisation with all its members and for the entire world community. The Security Council must reflect the reality of today's world. We therefore support reforming the Security Council and the enlargement of its membership. Any expansion should be aimed at strengthening the council's effectiveness taking into account new economic and political powers and enhancing equitable geographic representation. Reforms should take place in both the categories of permanent and non permanent members. In order to avoid a decrease of efficiency we believe that the upper limit for the council's size should not exceed a total of 25. In order to keep with the principles of equitable representation enlargement in the field of permanent members should include countries from the underrepresented regions of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, Slovenia believes that the use of the veto by the permanent members needs to be transparent and possibly limited in scope. Furthermore Slovenia welcomes the increased capacity of civil societies and NGOs to interact with the UN. These organisations have proven to be of great importance in contributing to solutions through innovative approaches without the often bureaucratic governmental frameworks. Slovenia has long established strong partnerships between governmental institutions and civil society organisations especially with the Slovenian National Committee for Unicef. By incorporating these kind of contributions on a global scale we will make the whole of society more sensitive to the actual problems of people in different parts of the world.