

**Wystąpienie Pana Ministra Jacka Czaputowicza
na spotkaniu z Korpusem Dyplomatycznym**

Warszawa, Belweder, 29 lipca 2019 r.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me thank you for your presence here today.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your cooperation on various issues concerning our work in the Security Council as an elected member for 2018-2019.

Over a year ago, in April 2018, we gathered here to discuss the main priorities and plans before the first Polish presidency in the Security Council.

Today, right before our second chairmanship, I would like to share with you our main achievements and present our goals for the month of August.

As the Security Council member Poland has accepted shared responsibility for resolving the most urgent global problems.

After more than a year and a half of Polish presence in the Council we can admit, that membership in this prominent body is a truly important and challenging diplomatic work in search of common solutions to the current security crises and protracted conflicts.

Right from the beginning of our membership, Poland has been actively engaged in discussions on a vast number of geographical and horizontal issues.

We have discussed the grave security implications of the conflicts in the Middle East, possible solutions to the problems confronting Africa, the implications of the potential and actual use of weapons of mass destruction.

We have tried to shed some light on the situation in our own region, namely in Ukraine and in Georgia.

Last but not least, Poland as Chair of three sanction committees on Sudan, South Sudan and Iraq, has taken steps to raise the transparency of the Committees work.

We have organized open briefings with participation of affected countries and their neighbors, we have also presented Chair's briefing to the Security Council in the open chamber.

Over the 18 months in the Council, we have translated our horizontal priorities into concrete actions and initiatives in the key areas of Polish interest.

Let me, Ladies and Gentlemen, present briefly our activities so far.

Firstly, one of our main priorities has been **promoting compliance with International Law.**

In May last year, during our first chairmanship, we organized a high-level open debate chaired by the President of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Andrzej Duda.

Promotion of international law was also the theme of meetings on effectiveness of atrocity crimes prevention in December 2018 and the cooperation of the Security Council with the International Criminal Court in July last year, which were co-organized by Poland.

Secondly, another priority area, strictly linked to the International Humanitarian Law, is **protection of civilians in armed conflicts**.

Here we focus primarily on the vulnerable groups mostly exposed to the consequences of military action and discrimination – children, women, people with disabilities and religious minorities.

We undertook various initiatives in the Security Council forum in order to draw special attention to the situation of these vulnerable groups.

Protection of civilians was the subject of one of the main events of our presidency in May last year – a Security Council briefing, which I had the pleasure to chair personally.

So far, during our membership, we have organized a number of meetings on the situation of civilians.

They included:

- an ‘Arria-formula’ meeting on children in armed conflicts in May 2018,
- a side-event on the reintegration of children formerly associated with armed groups in June 2018 and

- an ‘Arria-formula’ meeting on protection of children born of sexual violence in conflict zones, in October 2018.

It was the first Security Council meeting on this subject ever organized.

In May 2018 we also held a side-event on the protection of health and medical personnel in armed conflicts.

In December last year Poland organized an ‘Arria-formula’ meeting on persons with disabilities in armed conflicts.

We regularly stress the importance of respecting the interests of the most vulnerable groups in our national speeches delivered during the meetings of the Security Council.

On 20th June this year, on the initiative of Poland, the Security Council unanimously adopted the first resolution in history on the situation of persons with disabilities in armed conflicts.

The document highlights the need to provide adequate humanitarian and psychological support and inclusion in reintegration process.

The adoption of the resolution 2475 was very well received both by the UN members and non-governmental organizations.

I am also pleased to inform that on 28 May this year, the United Nations General Assembly, acting on our initiative, designated 22nd August as the International Day on Commemorating the Victims and Survivors of Religious Persecution.

The draft resolution was introduced by Poland. I had the pleasure to introduce the draft resolution to the General Assembly also on behalf of Brazil, Canada, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Nigeria, Pakistan and the United States.

We thank you for your support in that matter.

Thirdly, with regard to the new threats to security, this year Poland, acting both as the Security Council member and the current Climate Conference President, has been paying particular attention to the issue of **security implications of the climate change**.

In January this year, the COP 24 President, Mr. Michał Kurtyka, participated in the Security Council open debate on ‘Addressing the impacts of climate-related disasters on international peace and security’.

Additionally, in February this year, Poland organized a side-event at the UN in New York on addressing security implications of climate change by UN missions in Mali, Sudan and the Central African Republic.

When it comes to the regional dimension of the Polish activity in the Security Council, let me concentrate on two main issues.

We pay particular attention to the security situation in our direct and close neighborhood.

That is why, together with our like-minded partners, we are active with regard to **situation in Ukraine**.

The best indicator in this context is the number of meetings devoted to Ukraine, namely eight, since we joined this body.

With regard to **Georgia**, last year on 8th of August, Poland together with the EU partners, initiated a Security Council discussion on the developments in the region, particularly in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Additionally, Poland does not stay indifferent to the issue of the **peace and security in the Middle East**.

We are actively engaged in the discussion on, among others, Syria, Iraq, Yemen or Middle East Peace Process.

This interest was also broadly reflected during this year's Ministerial to Promote Future of Peace and Security in the Middle East organized in Warsaw this February.

Excellencies,

Let me now present the main Polish initiatives during our forthcoming presidency in the Security Council in August.

A number of UN high-level Security Council meetings, will reflect long-term Polish priorities for our membership in the Council.

On **August 2nd** an open debate on children in armed conflicts will be organized in cooperation with the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict, Ms. Virginia Gamba.

An annual Secretary General report on children in armed conflict will be presented during the debate.

Based on the findings of the report, the UN member states will attempt to establish what progress has been achieved and what new challenges have emerged in the UN's work to prevent the killing and maiming of children, as well as combating sexual violence against children in situations of armed conflict.

We will also discuss the means to better protect and support children with disabilities during and after conflict - in line with the previously mentioned UN Security Council resolution on the situation of persons with disabilities in armed conflicts.

The next event will be a high-level briefing on international humanitarian law on the occasion of 70th Anniversary of the Geneva Conventions.

The anniversary falls on August 12th, however the UN Holiday – Eid al-Adha falls on that actual date, therefore the briefing will be held on **August 13th**.

Let me recall you that the Geneva Conventions of 1949 were adopted to improve the fate of wounded and sick in armed conflicts in the field and at sea, to guarantee humane treatment of prisoners of war and to protect civilians in time of war.

After 70 years the conventions remain the most universally applicable treaties in international relations. Members of the Security Council are under obligation to make efforts to ameliorate implementation of international humanitarian law. During the briefing we would like to discuss the use of existing measures and mechanisms to ensure respect of international humanitarian law and to reflect on practical steps

to be taken to address the most urging challenges to international humanitarian law in contemporary conflicts.

The briefers of that meeting will be: Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and representatives of the UN Secretariat and the civil society.

The main event - a debate entitled *Maintenance of international peace and security: Challenges to peace and security in the Middle East* - will be organized on **August 20th**

The main aim is to discuss practical measures to tackle the challenges in the region with emphasis placed on importance of respecting international law as well as the risk of armed conflicts hampering regional stability.

We expect that the Security Council members and participants from the region will reflect upon ways of easing tensions caused by the recent developments in the Persian Gulf. In particular they will discuss threats posed by proliferation of weapons, including the mass destruction weapons and how to strengthen maritime and aviation security.

Finally, an informal meeting open to all UN members on advancing the safety and security of persons belonging to religious minorities will be held on **August 22nd**. On that day we will celebrate for the first time the International Day on Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence based on Religion or Belief.

The objective of the meeting is to analyze the scale of the problem and to discuss ways on how to pre-empt violence

impacting persons belonging to religious minorities, also by early warning and preventive mechanisms.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, will be among speakers.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

this is important personally for me as a foreign minister that I will personally preside over all of these high level four meetings in August, starting this week.

Apart from that a series of regular Security Council meetings and a review of mandates of several UN missions will be held.

Regarding the Middle East, there will be three regular meetings on the situation in Syria concerning political and humanitarian aspects as well as the use of chemical weapons issues, a meeting on the situation in Yemen, a briefing on the Middle East peace process and a meeting on the situation in Iraq (related to the UNAMI mission).

For Poland particularly important will be Security Council consultations on the UN peacekeeping operation in Lebanon (UNIFIL) since this autumn 230 Polish soldiers will join this mission. Planned meetings on the African continent will concern the situation in Darfur , Somalia, the UN Regional Office for Central Africa , and the DPRK sanctions regime will also be discussed at the end of August.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Poland is the candidate for the United Nations Human Rights Council for 2020-2022. We perceive our candidacy as a natural continuation of Poland's non-permanent membership in the Security Council and our activity in all three pillars of the United Nations system: peace and security, human rights and development.

Our priority areas include fundamental freedoms and rights of marginalized groups, in particular children, persons with disabilities and persons belonging to religious minorities, as well as good governance and strengthening the civil society.

If elected to the Human Rights Council we will promote the notion of human rights as the enabler of peace, security and development..

We kindly request your support during the forthcoming elections to the Human Rights Council in autumn.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me recall the words of John Fitzgerald Kennedy:

“There are risks and costs to action.

But they are far less than the long-range risks of comfortable inaction.” (end of quote)

In the eve of entering our second presidency in the United Nations Security Council we strongly believe that we will act together in order to find collective solutions to challenges to peace and security in the world.

Thank you for your attention.