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Editor-in-Chief: Nadja Podobnik, Editors: Vesna R. Bernard and Maja Cerkovnik
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SLOVENIA TO ASSUME PRESIDENCY OF HUMAN SECURITY NETWORK IN JUNE

Slovenia is gearing up for its one-year stint as the chair of the Human Security Network, an informal group of states united by a common goal of solving open humanitarian issues. Slovenia will take over the presidency from Thailand at the Network's ministerial session in Bangkok on 1 and 2 June and is expected to pass it over to Greece at the next year's ministerial session, expectedly in May 2007 in Ljubljana.

During its presidency, Slovenia will seek to contribute towards international peace and security while at the same time respecting human rights. The country sees being active in the area of human security as an opportunity to contribute towards international peace and security while respecting the basic human rights and the rule of law.

Having formed no special task force at the ministry, Slovenia aims at carrying out its newly-assumed duties as part of the activities of the Department for International Organisations and Human Security at the Foreign Ministry. The ministry has no special budget for the presidency, as participation in the Network's meetings is part of its regular activity.

HOW THE HUMAN SECURITY NETWORK FUNCTIONS

A unique form of cooperation of foreign ministers, the Network is formally not an organisation, so it has no budget or secretariat. Instead, the ministers as respected personalities, point to key issues in the area of human security. The ministers work towards implementing their ideas in those international and non-governmental organisations that are suitably positioned to launch initiatives on solving and preventing problems in the field.

The Human Security Network was established in 1998 on the initiative of Norway and Canada and emerged from a campaign against landmines.

It includes Austria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, Slovenia, Thailand, and South Africa as an observer. It holds two annual ministerial meetings, one during the changeover of the presidency and the other on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. The representatives of permanent missions of the Network's states at the UN also hold regular meetings in New York and Geneva.

EXPANSION OF THE HUMAN SECURITY NETWORK



Slovenia's Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel (left) and Thailand's Foreign Minister Kantathi Suphamongkhono (photo: Slovenian Foreign Ministry)

SLOVENIAN PRESIDENCY TO TOUCH ON NEW ISSUES

Slovenia wants to continue with the activities launched by its predecessors at the helm of the Human Security Network and also open several new topics, with violence against children being one of them. The country will try to get the Network involved in drafting a global United Nations study on violence against children which will be presented by the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan at the UN's General Assembly session in September.

Slovenia is also considering staging an international conference on the Prevention of Violence against Children and Human Security in Ljubljana in cooperation with the NGO TOGETHER Foundation. The conference would also discuss the protection of children during armed conflicts and try to implement the experience of the TOGETHER in the field.

The relatively small number of states participating in the Human Security Network and their geographical dispersion have prompted the Network to define the criteria under which new states could join it. Expansion criteria were endorsed at the sixth ministerial meeting of the Network, which took place in May 2004 in Bamako, the capital of Mali. Costa Rica was only country to have joined the Network since then.

The state wanting to join the Network must first ratify the Ottawa Convention on Anti-personnel Landmines. It must sign the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, ratify or express the intent to ratify the six major conventions on human rights, and cooperate with the human rights bodies of the United Nations.

The candidate country also has to respect women's rights and the principle of equality, respect children's rights and keep the public informed on education in the area of human rights and on the importance of children's rights.

Slovenia would like to see more countries joining the Network to contribute to a better balance of interests between countries from different continents.

SLOVENIA THE 9TH COUNTRY TO CHAIR THE NETWORK

Slovenia was invited to take part in the Human Security Network in September 1998 on the sidelines of the session of the United Nations' General Assembly. In the same month the country also attended the Network's first meeting of foreign ministers. Slovenia will be the Network's ninth chair.

The first country to preside over it was one of its proponents, Norway, which chaired it in 1998/99. It was followed by Switzerland, Jordan, Chile, Austria, Mali, Canada and Thailand. Slovenia will be succeeded by Greece.

As the Network's chair, Slovenia will moreover strive to upgrade the UN's World Programme for Human Rights Education. It would also like to increase the role of the Network in reforming the United Nations, especially regarding the launch of new bodies, such as the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission.

The country also intends to promote a concept of "responsibility for protection" which calls on the international community to protect inhabitants of a country when the country itself is unable or unwilling to do so, and continue the Network's activities in landmine clearing.

HUMAN SECURITY NETWORK'S ID

Official name: Human Security Network

Established: 1998

Number of participating states: 13 + one observer

Number of countries to have already chaired the Network: 8

Duration of presidency: one year

Areas of activity: respect for human rights, protection of civilians in armed conflicts, activities aimed at prohibition of anti-personnel landmines, fight against AIDS, fight against human trafficking, prevention of poverty.



Logo of the Human Security Network

THE NETWORK'S AREAS OF ACTIVITIES

As an informal group of states, the Human Security Network identifies and brings to international attention topical issues in the area of human security and promotes conflict prevention, or conflict solving. The group is currently dealing with the efficiency of international institutions which are active in the field of

Every country in the Network hosts a ministerial meeting at the end of its presidency. The meetings have so far taken place in Bergen (1999), Luzern (2000), Petra (2001), Santiago de Chile (2002), Graz (2003), Bamako (2004), Ottawa (2005) and Bangkok (2006). Slovenia is scheduled to stage its ministerial meeting in May 2007 in Ljubljana.

MINISTERIAL MEETINGS OF THE NETWORK

A ministerial meeting is the closing act the presiding state organises when it completes its one-year stint as the chair of the Human Security Network. The last such meeting took place between 18 and 20 May 2005 in the Canadian city of Ottawa, when Canada passed the presidency of the Network over to Thailand.

The Ottawa meeting focused on the reform of the United Nations and a report drafted by the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in March last year. It also touched on a study on non-governmental armed groups in West Africa, small arms and light weapons and the future of the Network. The meeting concluded with a ministerial statement on the UN reform which mainly dealt with Annan's report. The meeting also decided to accept Costa Rica as a participating member of the Network.

This year's ministerial conference will be staged by Thailand in Bangkok on 1 and 2 June, and Slovenia is scheduled to hold its meeting next year in Ljubljana.

human security and with the reform of the UN Commission on Human Rights.

One of the Network's important fields of activities is fight against anti-personnel landmines, with the group calling for the universalization of the Ottawa Convention on Anti-personnel Landmines. The Network moreover collaborates with the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance (ITF).

The Network is also active in human rights education, the protection of children in armed conflicts, the control of small arms and light weapons, the struggle against AIDS, the fight against human trafficking and poverty.



Participants of the Network's 7th Ministerial Meeting, Ottawa, Canada (photo: Slovenian Foreign Ministry)