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Statement by Mrs. Dragana Andelić

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of Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Agenda item 28 a); b) – Advancement of Women
Mr. Chair,

Bosnia and Herzegovina aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of European Union on the same agenda item.

Mr. Chair,

This is a great opportunity for all of us to exchange views and thoughts on the commitments and daily efforts for the promotion and protection of human rights, especially for women and girls. We reaffirm our strong support and commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and we believe that the Commission of the Status of Women and UN Women should continue to play a strong role in reviewing the steps taken for its full implementation. In this regard let me say that we also look forward to cooperating with the UN Women Executive Director, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka. We will continue to support her work in order to protect and promote women's rights in the world.
Mr. Chair,

We would like to underline that today women is one of the largest demographic groups in the world facing inequalities, limited choices and restricted freedoms, including in education, health, social protection, decent work, livelihood and economic opportunities. This is the reason why the respect, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, without discrimination on any grounds, must be also the basis of a new global sustainable development agenda rooted in principles of equality, equity and social justice for all.

Much work remains to be accomplished before we and the international community will be able to achieve the various targets set by documents relating the promotion of gender equality, empowerment of women as well as violence against women. We see that refugee and internally displaced women and girls in the various regions in the world are exposed to specific risks and increased vulnerability. We express our extreme concerns about the upsetting level of the humanitarian and refugee crises which have difficult and painful impact on civilians, especially women and girls. This situation requires for genuine strengthening gender-sensitive humanitarian assistance with the systematic and holistic approach.
Protection of women in conflict situations and ending impunity remain our utmost priorities. Bearing this in mind, we fully support the work of the UN in addressing sexual violence in armed conflict, particularly the mandates of the UN Secretary General's Special Representatives on Children in Armed Conflict and Sexual Violence in Conflict and we continue to closely cooperate with them. We acknowledge their active advocacy efforts, inter alia with Governments, in order to address these horrible crimes.
Mr. Chair,

Violence against women is universal issue that persists in every country and presents great obstacle to promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as major impediment to achieving gender equality and empowerment of women. Even though considerable progress has been made in creating the global framework for preventing and eliminating all forms of violence against women, we have to admit that the world is far from ending such violence. Also the root causes of violence against women must not be forgotten, which include women's economic dependence on men, unequal access to education or social and cultural practices. In addition we need to find answer why the progress in our common work is still slow.
The international legal and policy framework is starting point and tool for all stakeholders involved in process to end violence against women. Even though there have been a high number of countries that ratified CEDAW we hope that this process will lead towards universal ratification. Consequently, the implementation of the Convention, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, permanent work with the aim to eradicate violence against women globally has to be recognized as genuine and common value serving for our future.
We are committed that the CEDAW is the basic international instrument for the creation of legal framework and policies of State parties in focusing on gender equality and empowerment of women. The main instrument for the implementation of the CEDAW in my country is the Law on Gender Equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In order to translate the States commitments into practice the Government has adopted the Gender Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina which defines activities, stakeholders and deadlines for all relevant actors and institutions in the society.
Mr. Chair,

The network of institutional mechanisms for gender issues in my country entails all levels of legislative and executive powers. Speaking of the achievements on the State level, progress has been made toward the institutionalization of gender equality standards, reflected in a great number of systematic laws which contain standards that prohibit discrimination and gender based violence. The State legislation and actions to combat violence against women are in line with international standards. In this regard, the Gender Action Plan contains a strategy for the promotion of gender equality in all spheres of life and work, while at the same time important initial steps in implementation have already been made. However, this is only the starting point to tackle such issues. Spectrum of violence is broad and complex, and we are aware that our work requires particularly comprehensive approach. Hence, I strongly believe that every society can and should make additional efforts to stand up for education, protection and justice.
Following the adoption of the Gender Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina a dual approach focusing both on gender equality and empowerment of women was adopted. We invested significant resources into developing public policies with the aim to ensure gender equality. In this regard the Financial Mechanism for the Implementation of the Gender Action Plan in B-H (2010-2014) was created and recognized as an example of good practice in the area of local ownership and aid effectiveness.

We need to underline that the Gender Action Plan is a necessary framework for the creation and adoption of other sector specific public policies in the area of domestic violence, Implementation of UN Resolution 1325 “Women, Peace and Security in B-H”, Status of Rural Women, Gender-Responsible Budget which all contribute to a coordinated approach of different sectors of the government.
We assess cooperation of Bosnia and Herzegovina with relevant UN bodies to be constructive and on satisfactory level. This is reflected in our efforts to fulfil our obligations towards the UN Treaty Body System in the field of human rights in a timely manner. In this regard the relevant authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina have submitted, among others, as combined the fourth and fifth reports on implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which has been considered on the 55th session of the CEDAW in July this year.
I would like to remind you that by the adoption of Action Plans for Roma in the areas of employment, housing and health care, and by previously adopted Plan of Action of the educational needs of Roma, as well as joining the Decade of Roma Social Inclusion 2005 – 2015, Bosnia and Herzegovina has committed itself to work on the problems of the Roma population, which is the largest and, by all parameters, poorest and most vulnerable minority in the country. When it comes to protecting the rights in a form of an institutional framework, Roma women actively participate as members in the work of the Roma Committee of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Committee is an advisory body of the Council of Ministers and is mandated to consider the most important issues to resolve the status of Roma in the country. Particularly distinctive was the involvement of Roma women in the design and implementation of the Action Plan for health care as well as preparing the revised Action Plan on the educational needs of Roma population. Education, as the key to overcoming Roma poverty, is necessary to ensure the social inclusion of Roma and is closely linked with employment, health care and housing. In the revised Action Plan, the role of Roma mothers is specifically emphasized in the preparation for the inclusion of Roma children in the education system.
Speaking on impact of armed conflict on women and girls and gender-based violence in conflict, full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) is deemed as highly important and thus all necessary provisions have been incorporated into my country’s Gender Action Plan. Furthermore, we emphasize the importance of the full involvement of women in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, early peace-building and post-conflict planning, as well as the need to enhance their role in decision-making processes.
I would also like to reiterate an important fact that integrating gender perspective into peacekeeping policy and advancement of participation of women in UN peacekeeping operations is fundamental for more effective performance on the ground. We spare no effort to advance this issue and in this regard I would like to inform you that relevant authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina have adopted a policy that one third of nominated candidates for peacekeeping missions must be women.
Mr. Chair,

In the recent decade Bosnia and Herzegovina has made significant steps to eradicate all forms of discrimination and to establish effective mechanisms to ensure that all victims of gender and sex based discrimination can seek remedy. Today all relevant material and procedural legislation contain relevant provisions relating to any form of discrimination. Victims of discrimination can seek protection against discrimination in disciplinary, civil and criminal procedures depending of the type of discrimination. Protection against discrimination was reinforced with the adoption of the Law on Preventing Discrimination in Bosnia and Herzegovina establishes a system of referring victims of discrimination to available legal remedies for protection of rights provided for in the said laws.

However, combating all forms of discrimination and ensuring equal treatment is only one part of our gender main-streaming efforts. The other part focuses on efforts with the aim to ensure equal opportunities for women and men, boys and girls of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
I would say that prevention as well as combating all forms of discrimination should be focus of all our activities and genuine efforts. We have to work for the future, which means more work on political will, allocation of resources and accountability mechanisms in order to ensure the implementation of strategies and programs.

I thank you for your attention.