PERMANENT MISSION OF THE 
REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA 
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT
By
Mrs. Sanja Zografska-Krteska
Deputy Permanent Representative

68th session of the United Nation General Assembly-Third Committee
Item 28: Advancement of women

United Nations
New York
Wednesday, 16 October 2013

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -
Mr. Chair,

I congratulate you and the members of the Bureau on assuming your respective functions and assure you of my delegation’s support.

The speakers before me accentuated that 21 century should be considered as century of women in which the potential they bring to society could be developed and utilized to its fullness. I couldn’t agree more.

The opportunity has presented with the elaboration of the post-2015 development framework. In the process of examination of all factors that contribute to development, the role of women in broadening the development basis is significant. It is Macedonia’s firm belief that those countries who want to advance fast have to rely on the potential of their female population and must stimulate its further growth. That can be done through education, through empowerment, through women’s increased political participation at all levels.

The Republic of Macedonia aligned itself with the statement made by the delegation of the European Union and shares the position that gender equality and empowerment of women and girls should feature prominently in the post-2015 development agenda as an important factor for inclusive sustainable development. The experience has taught us that having more women in decision-making processes at all levels brings new values to social, economic and political life.

Since the Electoral Code of 2006 the Republic of Macedonia has established a quota of minimum 30% participation of women candidates on the parties’ lists for the election of Members of Parliament and for Councilors in the Municipal Councils. According to the Law, the State Election Commission is authorized to reject a candidate list if the 30% rule is not applied. This regulation allowed for the increased representation of women MPs. In the present composition of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia 34% of MPs are women.

Thanks to the increased number of women in the highest representative body, numerous issues have been discussed and considered in terms of gender equality. Moreover, one noticeable tendency in the past period, which is linked to the increased number of women Parliamentarians, is the enhanced dialogue with the citizens through holding more public meetings and debates. The principle of gender equality is further embedded in the structure and work of the Assembly through its Rules of Procedure. The Rules provide the establishment of the working bodies and Commissions of Inquiry in accordance with the Law on Equal Opportunities between Women and Men. Therefore, the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men at the Macedonian Assembly occupies an important role within the structure of the National Mechanism for Gender Equality. Together with the Women Parliamentarian’s Club, those two bodies constitute mechanisms for implementation of the gender perspective in the highest representative body for policy creation and decision-making.

The situation differs when it comes to representation of women at local level. As a result of 2009 local elections representation of women in the Municipal Councils was 27% and that was an increase of 4.3% in comparison to
the local elections of 2005. However, this representation was uneven, since there
was a great disparity among municipalities. Also, among the elected mayors
there was no woman mayor. This situation has been rectified with the last local
elections of 24 March 2013 when out of 80 mayors, 4 women mayors were
elected. Now, there are 405 elected women councilors, which represents 30 %
of the elected councilors, and increase of 2,8% in comparison to 2009 elections.
This is a testimony that political culture at local level is changing and that political
parties have recognized the need to put more women candidates for mayors and
councilors. These results are indicative of an evolving situation and greater
progress is to be expected.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (which is the lead government
agency for gender mainstreaming) conducts analysis, in regular intervals, for
qualitative participation of women in public and political life at local level with the
aim of determining the causes of lower women representation. The analysis
helps elaborating recommendations for the amelioration of this situation. The first
results of the analysis of November 2011 are published on the website of the
Ministry. They showed that the lower representation of women is not only limited
to the Municipal Councils, but also there were less women employed in the local
administration, in public companies and in their Executive Boards. The
conclusions underscored that more awareness raising and training at local level
is necessary, as well as more efficient enforcement mechanisms for the
implementation of Local Action Plans to eliminate gender disparities between
urban and rural municipalities.

Mr. Chair,

The advancement of women at national level is strengthened with the
adoption of the new Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in January
2012, which further harmonizes our legislation with the European and
international standards. The passing of this Law additionally regulated the issue
of establishing equal opportunities and equal treatment of women and men,
provided the adoption of general and special measures for establishing equal
opportunities, determined the rights and obligations of the entities responsible for
providing equal opportunities, as well as the procedure for identifying unequal
treatment of women and men. This piece of legislation coupled with the Law on
Prevention and Protection against Discrimination of 2010 provide ground for
elimination of double and multiple discrimination, faced in particular by women,
as a result of the intersection of gender with other categories of identity.

The incorporation of gender perspective in policy and practice is further
promoted with the adoption of the Macedonian Strategy on Gender Equality for
the 2013-2020 framework, the National Plan and the Annual Operational
Programme for Gender Equality. For the first time this Strategy was adopted by
the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia in February 2013. Also, a giant step
was made with the adoption of the Strategy for Gender Budgeting 2012-2015, by
which the state administration is obliged to incorporate the principles of equal
opportunities for women and men within their respective strategic plans and budgets with the aim of better addressing gender gaps and inequalities.

In January this year the Macedonian Government adopted the National Action Plan on the implementation of the UNSC Resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security. Its elaboration was supported by UN Women, as part of the regional project on “Advancing the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Western Balkans (2011-2013)”.

Macedonia remains committed to promoting the role of women in peace and security and to preventing violence against women in pre and post conflict settings, as well as during humanitarian crisis caused by natural disasters. These commitments are translated as specific goals in the NAP on UNSC Resolution 1325. Macedonia strongly supports the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls through actions at national, regional and international levels. We welcome the agreed conclusions in this regard of the 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Furthermore, the Republic of Macedonia has been among the states which have endorsed the Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict in New York on 24 September and joined the call for ending the use of sexual violence as weapons of war and ending impunity for such crimes.

At the end Mr. Chairman, let me stress that the further advancement of women is among the Macedonian commitments and pledges, as a candidate for membership in the Human Rights Council for the period 2014-2016. If elected, we’ll devote great attention to the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women at national, regional and international levels, including through working on the universal ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol and on their implementation.

Thank you for the attention.