

# THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

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SIXTY-FOURTH SESSION  
THIRD COMMITTEE  
AGENDA ITEM 62: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

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## STATEMENT

by

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Mr. Chairman,

The deliberations on this agenda item today and during the last two days and the commitments expressed by States to continue to take further steps in the field of the empowerment and advancement of women are a clear indication that this issue is high on the agenda of international and national fora. Yet, the way towards achieving full equality between men and women has not been and is not either fast or easy. This and next year, we shall commemorate a number of important anniversaries - the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as a milestone document in this field, as well as the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of UNSCR 1325 (2000).

While aligning itself with the statement of the delegation of Sweden on behalf of the European Union on this agenda item, my delegation would like to draw the attention to the measures implemented and activities undertaken at the national level with regard to the advancement of women.

The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia provides for the creation of equal opportunities, introduction of special interim measures aimed at achieving full gender equality, prohibition of sexual abuse, equality in marriage and family and freedom to decide on childbirth, as well as special protection for mothers.

Several gender equality mechanisms have been established in recent years in Serbia at country, provincial and local levels. The Gender Equality Council, as an expert advisory body of the Serbian Government established in 2004, is comprised of representatives of relevant Ministries, representatives of civil society and experts in the field of gender equality. The Council analyzes and evaluates the situation in the field of advancement of women and proposes short- and long-term measures to the Government to achieve full gender equality and strengthen the position of women. The Directorate for Gender Equality within the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy established in 2008 is tasked with drafting laws and strategies aimed at improving the situation of women, implementing the ratified international instruments in this field, promoting the policy of equal opportunities and conducting awareness raising campaigns. The

Directorate has established close cooperation with UN entities such as UNDP and UNIFEM, as well as with the Council of Europe and other regional and international organizations in this field. In addition to the mechanisms established on the governmental level, the Parliament of Serbia has its own Gender Equality Committee which examines the laws and other regulations, reviews policy making and the implementation of the laws by all the bodies responsible to the Parliament. One of the four deputies of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Serbia has primary responsibility to deal with gender issues. Various gender equality mechanisms have been established also at the level of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, as well as at local levels. Local Gender Focal Points exist in over 70 cities and municipalities.

The National Strategy for the Improvement of the Position of Women and the Advancement of Gender Equality was adopted in February 2009. An Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy has been completed and is in the procedure of adoption. Recently, the Government submitted the draft Gender Equality Law for adoption in the Parliament.

It is also worth noting that during the last few years various tailor-made training programmes in the field of gender-related issues have been implemented within the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, as well as within the National Anti-Trafficking Council and the National Anti-Trafficking Team.

As a result of these measures, the number of women in decision making bodies in all three branches of government, in public administration and the media, as well as in all walks of political and cultural life has increased significantly. The Speaker of the Parliament and the Ministers of Finance, Justice and the Youth and Sports are women. There are more women than men in the judiciary (64 per cent) and they include the Presidents of both the Constitutional and the Supreme Courts. The presence of women in the police and the military is also increasing. Women play a very active role in the civil society and some of the most prominent NGOs are led by women.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would like to stress that Serbia fully supports the activities undertaken so far, as well as the ongoing efforts at the international level, aimed at improving the situation of women worldwide. My country is committed to continue to work on ensuring full equality between men and women through inclusion of highest international norms and standards in this field in its national legislation, enactment of new laws and strategies and their full implementation and through education and information campaigns, aimed at raising public awareness on the significance of the advancement of women.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman