

THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

SIXTY-FIFTH SESSION
THIRD COMMITTEE
AGENDA ITEM 28: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

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STATEMENT

by

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Mr. Chairman,

The large number of speakers under this agenda item vividly testifies that the issue of gender equality and the advancement of women is high on the political agenda of the UN member states. Serbia joins all other countries in welcoming the creation of the "UN Women" as a new composite gender entity that will provide for more coherent action aimed at achieving equality between women and men and full respect for the human rights of women worldwide. My delegation would also like to congratulate Ms. Bachelet for her appointment as Executive Director of the UN Women.

My country aligned itself with the EU statement on this agenda item. Given the limited time for the statement, I shall try to focus on the recent developments in my country related to the issue of empowerment and advancement of women.

Serbia has established a clear overall policy and adopted a legislation framework for promoting the rights of women and gender equality. It includes laws, regulations and a set of strategic documents, while gender equality mechanisms are in place at national, provincial and local levels.

The Law on Gender Equality entered into force in December 2009. It provides for the establishment of equal opportunities in the fields of employment, social and health protection, family relations, education, culture and sports and in political and public life. The Law also provides for special measures to eliminate gender-based discrimination and for the legal protection of persons subject to discrimination.

In cooperation with UNIFEM, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of Serbia is in the process of implementing the project entitled the Promotion of Economic and Social Rights of Women in Serbia/Strengthening the Capacities of Government Institutions to Develop and Implement National Policies and the Legal Framework on Gender Equality and the Monitoring of the Realization of Economic Rights of Women. The project is aimed at implementing the Law on Gender Equality and other regulations related to the area of economic and social rights of women. The project also envisages a number of seminars focusing on the strengthening of the capacities of the relevant Ministries.

The National Strategy for the Advancement of Women and the Promotion of Gender Equality and the Action Plan for its implementation were adopted in February 2009 and August 2010 respectively. The Strategy is harmonized with other strategic documents, in particular with the Strategy for the Reduction of Poverty in Serbia and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. Proceeding from the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Strategy encompasses six key areas for the advancement of women and the promotion of gender equality in Serbia: rights of women to participate on an equal footing with men in decision-making; eradication of economic inequality between men and women; gender equality

in education; better health care for women and gender equality in health policy; prevention and suppression of all forms of violence against women and the establishment of a comprehensive system of protection for women victims of violence; promotion of gender equality in the media and the elimination of gender stereotypes and hate speech.

By adopting the Family Law in 2005, Serbia has undertaken to lay the systemic foundations to address violence against women. The Law on Gender Equality provides for special measures and programmes for victims of domestic violence that envisage provision of shelters, social, legal and other assistance and a compensation to the victims of violence. Government agencies are responsible for planning, organizing, implementing and financing the measures aimed at raising public awareness concerning the need to prevent domestic violence.

Mr. Chairman,

As a country of the region that went through a period of conflicts and intolerance in the recent past, Serbia recognizes the significance and is fully committed to the implementation of Security Council cornerstone resolution 1325, as well as all subsequent Security Council resolutions related to women, peace and security. To that end, let me inform you that the National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSC resolution 1325 has been recently completed and submitted to the Government for adoption. Furthermore, I am glad to inform you that the Ministry of Defence of Serbia, with the support of the Ministry of Defence of Norway, is hosting a two day international conference entitled "Women in Security Sector – United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325". The Conference has commenced in Belgrade today. We believe that it will contribute to the raising of awareness on the importance of the implementation of resolution 1325, as well as to the strengthening of regional cooperation in that regard.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, let me say that all these activities of my Government in achieving full gender equality and empowerment of women are being conducted in close cooperation with the civil society and relevant regional and international organizations.

Thank you for your attention.