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STATEMENT

By H.E. Mr. Milorad Šćepanović
Permanent Representative of Montenegro to the United Nations
at the Third Committee of the 66th session of the United Nations General Assembly
Agenda item 28 - Advancement of Women
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Mr. Chairman,

As this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor during this session, I would like to congratulate you and other members of the Bureau on your election and assure you of the full support of the delegation of Montenegro in your efforts to lead the work of the Committee to the successful conclusion of the issues and challenges before us.

Mr. Chairman,

Recognizing the importance of the Convention on Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and in order to better implement the commitments enshrined in the document, the Government of Montenegro closely cooperates with international organizations and academic institutions. As a result of this cooperation, Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, as part of its regular agenda, is undertaking activities on the political empowerment of women, their participation in political and public life, and their greater representation in decision-making processes. Integral part of these activities includes recently adopted Electoral Law which defines an obligation for inclusion of at least 30% of women on electoral lists, as well as sanctions which consist of returning the electoral list if it is not in compliance with the law provisions.

In cooperation with the European Commission and UNDP, the Government of Montenegro has launched the IPA Program for Gender Equality which will be implemented in the next three years and which focuses on three main issues: women's political participation, economic empowerment of women, and domestic violence.

Furthermore, in the past, cooperation between national and local mechanisms for gender equality has intensified. Six municipalities have prepared local action plans for gender equality. Approval of action plans of all remaining municipalities is expected in the near future.

Mr. Chairman,

Regarding the issue of domestic violence, after the adoption of the relevant law in 2010, the Domestic Violence Protection Strategy has been adopted in July of this year. Prepared with the support of UNDP, UNICEF and OSCE experts, Strategy defines goals and activities for improvement of social and overall protection of women which include harmonization of existing and adoption of new regulations, improvement of social and other protection for victims, raising awareness, development of programs for prevention of domestic violence, development of multidisciplinary treatment model for the prevention and protection from domestic violence, and cooperation between all stakeholders in protecting victims, and ensuring psychosocial treatment to the perpetrators. The process of creation of Commission for coordination, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the Strategy is currently ongoing.

Recognizing the problem of violence against women, national mechanism for gender equality, since its inception, has participated in the Global Campaign of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence. Campaign is organized in close cooperation with UN Women, UNDP and OSCE.

Mr. Chairman,

Government of Montenegro pays greater attention to improvement of the status of marginalized women and vulnerable groups, such as rural women, elderly, unemployed, women with disabilities, and Roma and Egyptian women. For these vulnerable groups, special action plans are prepared. The new Action Plan for Achieving Gender Equality in Montenegro for 2013-2017 will give more attention to the economic empowerment of these vulnerable groups, as a basis for achieving a better overall position in the society. Bearing in mind the importance given to the situation of women in rural areas, several training programs are being implemented to grant rural women equal access to labor market and the acquisition of appropriate skills, particularly in the field of information and communication technologies. An analysis was conducted of the needs and situations of women in rural areas, leading to the development and implementation of the Action Programme for the Empowerment of Rural Women.

Mr. Chairman,

Fully acknowledging the contribution of non-governmental organizations and the entire civil society in promoting gender equality, the fight for women's rights and against all forms of discrimination based on sex, as well as elimination of violence against women, the Government of Montenegro has also recognized the need to develop continuing and expanding cooperation with civil society through relations based on constructive dialogue and consultative process. Montenegro considers such cooperation a foundation of a democratic society based on broad and active participation of all stakeholders.

Thank you very much.