



# CROATIA

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STATEMENT by  
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- ECOSOC-  
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Mr. President,

I have the honour to address the Economic and Social Council on behalf of Croatia. In aligning itself with the earlier statement delivered by the EU, Croatia would like to make the following additional comments.

Croatia welcomes ECOSOC's High level focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women as a very timely one given that this year marks a number of significant gender-related landmark anniversaries, as well as the Millennium Declaration. Given ECOSOC's role as the central forum for international economic and social issues, it is our hope that key assessments from this Annual Ministerial Review's regarding the MDG debate will be further acted upon at the upcoming summit in September.

We particularly commend the consensus achieved this week to realize the creation of UN gender composite entity. The envisaged formal adoption by the General Assembly tomorrow will mark a significant step towards scaling up UN capacity and operational coherence in gender-related issues. This will play a crucial role in our ongoing efforts to collectively tackle the impact of global crises and work towards the full achievement of the MDGs. We look forward to its timely operationalization and appointment of a strong leadership.

Mr. President,

Croatia attaches great priority to the full realization of women's rights both nationally and globally. Croatia's National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality for the period 2006-2010 serves as its key policy framework for driving domestic efforts in implementing internationally agreed goals and commitments with regard to gender equality and empowerment of women. Its provisions are derived from a solid foundation of established national and international law, and draws upon strategic direction provided by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, UN CEDAW, ILO conventions, the EU's *acquis communautaire*, and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights.

Active implementation of this national policy has resulted in important progress in key major areas as confirmed by a recent multi-sectoral implementation review. Greater public awareness as to women's political, economic and social human rights, scaled up anti-discrimination legislation, campaigns to promote eliminating gender-based violence and increasing political representation of women, as well as strengthened collaboration between the Government and NGOs have been achieved. These are all vital achievements, clearly reflected in improved gender disaggregated statistics, which Croatia intends to further build upon as it drafts its second national Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality for the period 2011-2015.

Mr. President,

Today, Croatia has a female Prime Minister, while women currently hold Deputy Prime Minister and Deputy Speaker positions. Women parliamentarians constitute 25% of the Croatian Parliament while 35% of women have been appointed to high-ranking administrative positions. Ongoing efforts to ensure the full and equal participation of women in political and economic decision-making processes are showing steady progress.



Gender equality issues are being addressed through an enhanced legal framework. Enactments of strategic laws such as the Gender Equality and the Free Legal Aid Acts in 2008, as well as the Anti-Discrimination Act in 2009 are important achievements in this respect. Together, these prescribe amongst other things, the overall prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital or family status and sexual orientation especially in the areas of employment, education and ensure equal opportunities for women and others in all aspects of Croatian society. Close oversight of implementation of anti-discriminatory measures pursuant to the 2009 Law is led by the Public Ombudsman. Furthermore, in recognition of the crucial role NGOs play in the gender arena, current legislation has enabled NGOs to become actively engaged in representing and counseling citizens before civil and administrative court proceedings pertaining to discrimination cases.

In addition to legislative efforts, Croatia is actively pursuing other gender-related policy measures. In addressing challenges posed by unemployment and those encountered by women in the workforce, Croatia is pursuing a national Plan for the Promotion of Employment [2009-2010], adopted pursuant to signing a Joint Assessment of Employment Policy Priorities (JAP), with the the European Commission in 2008. The Government's "Women's Entrepreneurship Development Strategy" is an important contribution for garnering more women-led enterprises through targeted efforts including financial assistance. The steady of women entrepreneurs is currently approaching 30% in Croatia.

Croatia recognizes the crucial role education plays towards empowering women. Croatia enjoys a good progress sheet in terms of access to education for women and girls. National statistics show a continuous increase of female students, with women representing over half of all higher education students. Furthermore, specific gender studies have been incorporated into Croatian universities' curricula.

Croatia attaches the utmost importance to the issue of eliminating violence against women and girls. Through systematic implementation of both the National Strategy for the Protection against Domestic Violence and related Protocols as well as the current National Gender Equality policy, significant progress on this issue has been made.

In conclusion Mr. President,

In placing gender issues high on its national agenda, Croatia expects that these issues will to remain high on the international agenda so as to enable consistent and sustainable progress in gender equality and empowerment. In doing so, the attainment of the gender-related MDGs will be of vital importance. We find ourselves at a critical juncture to ensure a successful summit in September. In order to achieve the 2015 deadline, a concrete strategy with a clear gender perspective, is the required outcome. As such the necessary political will must be harnessed to re-commit ourselves to the full realization of all the MDGs, especially those gender-related goals currently most at risk of not being achieved.

Thank you.