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STATEMENT
by Mr. Alexander Yakovenko,
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation,
at the ECOSOC Substantive Session, High-Level Segment

New York, July 1, 2010

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Women's rights and elimination of sexual discrimination belong to the agenda of the leading international and regional organizations such as the UN, Council of Europe and OSCE to which the Russian Federation is a member. The global financial and economic crisis complicates achievement of gender equality goal and makes these issues by far more prominent and of high priority. In this regard the major task is to elaborate specific measures to overcome gender consequences of the crisis and to protect women's rights under such circumstances.

Russia is open to an international dialogue on all gender matters. In particular, Russia will soon present its sixth and seventh progress reports on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.

We attach special importance to the UN activities to prevent violence against women. Thus, we share the view of the UN Secretary-General that every member-state should elaborate its own strategy to fight this evil. We support the global campaign of the Secretary-General "Unite to End Violence against Women" as well as his new initiative "Network of Men Leaders" which envisages to engage the male population in it.

Mindful of the need to reform the UN gender architecture and to create its new composite entity, we believe that to be effective it should be based on the principle of geographical universality and have a mandate covering all countries as unfortunately, there is not a single state that is free of women's rights violation.

Mr. President,

The Russian Federation fully shares the approaches of the international community to the concept of gender equality as a key element in achieving sustainable social and economic development and comprehensive human capacity building.

Empowerment of women and gender equality are among Russia's domestic policy priorities implemented in keeping with the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Outcome Document of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly as well as on existing legislation of the Russian Federation on human rights.

Implementation of the National Priority Projects of Russia on health, education, housing and agriculture facilitates the comprehensive gender equality, empowerment, advancement and non-discrimination of women. Women are the most active part of the Russian society. We believe that even in the hard times of economic crisis women should have the right to make full use of their potential through an ideal balance between their family life and professional activities. To this end we develop ad hoc vocational skills refreshment courses which serve the interests of women who bring up children to facilitate their return to work.

Women represent half of our national labor force. They provide a solid base for many spheres of economy, they are the motive force of entrepreneurship, especially small and medium enterprises. They represent majority of our civil servants and become more prominent as law-makers, political leaders and social activists. Women in Russia are at the helm of three important Federal Ministries which deal with basic needs of our people. I mean the Ministry of Health and Social Development, the Ministry of Economic Development and the Ministry of

Agriculture. Governors of two most developed regions of Russia, namely St.Petersburg and Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous District, are women.

In Russia efforts are made to create sustainable demographic situation. The basis for it is the health and wellbeing of mothers and their children. Integrated measures to provide medical mother-and-child assistance, to improve reproductive health and to provide financial grounds for a higher birth rate are also being implemented. The results of these efforts are evident – 2009 became the first year of birth-rate growth.

Nowadays special attention is paid to the elimination of violence against women including violence in family. In Russia for this purpose we aim our efforts primarily at the elimination of the roots of violence against women and its consequences. Necessary political, legislative and practical measures are also being adopted. Family problems, violence against women and children are monitored by law enforcement, health, education and social bodies. Women's NGOs and the network of non-governmental crisis centers established by them are also involved in these activities.

Mr. President,

Gender equality means in practical terms the creation of conditions for women to enjoy their rights. That will contribute to economic growth and prosperity. To achieve this goal joint efforts of all UN Member-States are needed. Only then women will not only enjoy the right for equality but will also have all possibilities to fully use it.

Thank you, Mr. President.

