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STATEMENT BY H.E. MRS. MONICA CODINA TORT
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Mr. Secretary General,
Madam Chairperson,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

As the Executive Secretary of UNECE pointed out in her opening address to the preparatory meeting of the Economic Commission for Europe for the revision of the implementation of the Beijing Action Platform (1995) and the results of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations (Beijing +5) in the year 2000, the reality of the situation of women in the various regions and countries of the world is very diverse. Thus although some countries have already consolidated a great deal of work related to gender diversity, others - and among these the Principality of Andorra - are just beginning to work on the subject.

During these last ten years, our country has made a great effort in promoting and consolidating the social and legal status of women. Among the main steps in promoting gender equality in Andorra in the legislative and regulatory spheres and in the empowerment of women we would stress:

- Adhering to the Convention on the elimination of all kinds of discrimination against women which came into force in the Principality on 14 February 1997 and the ratification of the optional Protocol to the Convention on 14 October 2002;
- The "*Llei qualificada*" 14 of 3 November 2004 amending the law on marriage which suppresses article 13 which obliged a widow or divorced woman to wait for 300 days before remarrying. This amendment corresponds to the need to adapt current legislation to social developments in recent years as well as the obligation to fulfill, respect and guarantee the undertakings assumed by the Principality of Andorra in the European and international fields in matters of gender equality and the prohibition of any manner of discrimination against women;
- The ratification of the European social charter (revised) in 19 articles and 10 paragraphs (relating to the protection of the rights of national and immigrant working women and their families) and its coming into force on January 1 last.
- The definition for the first time domestic violence as a crime in the recently amended Andorran penal code; we would add that this penal code has not been approved by the groups and associations of women in the country with regard to the definition of abortion, since article 8 of our Constitution *recognizes the right to life and fully protects it in its various phases*)
- The legislative reform under way with regard to the social security service

which provides for reforms to improve the conditions of elderly women, housewives, widows and orphans in the country's social security system as well as the benefits for maternity leave;

- Last but not least, we would like to stress the first draft of the "Law on social care" which underlines that the promotion of real equality between women and men is a social concern and that it is the government's responsibility to see to its achievement.

2001 was an intense year for the efforts made by the government of Andorra in promoting women's rights and thus, by the government decree of 6 June 2001, the first Secretary of State for the Family was appointed on a proposal from the Minister of Health and Welfare. This office was set up as a unique, well defined structure which fully includes all aspects related to women.

With regard to equality between women and men, the executive power entrusted the Secretary of State for the Family with the task of setting out directives to develop the projects conceived and planned on the basis of an analysis of the influence which the economic, social, political and cultural contexts exercise on the structure of the family and its members (women, children, elderly persons and men).

This aim led to a survey on gender inequality in the domestic, labour and health environments in the Principality of Andorra which could give an orientation to the setting up of priority action lines.

On 22 June 2001 there was the official presentation of the Protocol for action in cases of domestic violence (PAVD) under the auspices of the Ministries of Health and Welfare and Justice and Internal/Domestic Affairs with the purpose of being an instrument for the coordination and the procedure of the various actions of agents involved in the issue so as to effectively address domestic violence in Andorra.

In this way a first line of work was encouraged from the viewpoint of equality of women and men and, over and above the Protocol and continuing in the same line, the government made an undertaking to society in the form of setting up concrete policies to strive for a more just and equal relationship between the members of society.

One month later, on 10 July 2001, Andorra presented its initial report to the Committee on the situation and follow up to the Convention for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW).

After these presentations, the Committee received with satisfaction the proposal of the appointment of the Secretary of State for the Family as a mechanism to deal with questions relating to women, to attend to the application of the Beijing Action Platform and praised the government for its undertaking to include the Committee's recommendations in its four-year plan.

The Secretary of State for the Family has given a maximum of public awareness to the contents of the Convention and its optional Protocol by distributing in March the 8th 2003, copies of a publication drawn up to celebrate the International Day of Women, in schools, university community, libraries, teaching centers, national and local public amenities and services, professional colleges of psychologists, doctors, nurses and midwives and lawyers and among the population at large, to ensure that this information should be universally available.

And the government of Andorra is following attentively the provisions of international bodies with regard to the equality of opportunity and has specifically entered into a relationship of technical cooperation with the Council of Europe.

During 2004, in order to set up priorities with regard to the elaboration of a national action plan for the promotion of equality between women and men, the Ministry of Health and Welfare in cooperation with the Directing Committee for gender equality of the Council of Europe (CDGE) organized a seminar which was held in the capital of the Principality.

With regard to all this work carried out, the conclusion has been reached that the promotion of the perspective of gender among the various departments of government must be a most important priority task and that work must be begun on it to be able to implant a crosscutting policy on gender at the governmental level.

Thus the strategic lines directing work carried out in the action plan for encouraging the equality of opportunity between women and men have been redefined as:

- Encouraging social participation and leadership by women.
- The struggle against violence in the home.
- The woman-work binomial.
- Care for vulnerable groups, especially single women with family responsibilities and elderly women.
- The incorporation in other government departments of the perspective of gender as a transversal axis in designing actions.

Each of these strategic lines takes the concrete form of general and specific aims and actions making up the programs and projects which the government of Andorra is carrying out to achieve equality between women and men, thus completing the program which the Secretary of State for the Family has laid down following the recommendations of CEDAW.

In this context, one should note the campaign for raising awareness aimed at the whole population of Andorra which has been carried out this last year under the slogan "DO YOU BELIEVE IT? TOGETHER WE ARE ON OUR WAY TO EQUALITY" and has promoted the equality of opportunity for the men and women in our country to achieve a more just and equitable society, making the right to equality before the law recognized by article 6 of our Constitution an effective reality.

Currently, we are in the process of drafting the 2nd and 3rd reports on the status of the Convention for the elimination of all types of discrimination against women in Andorra.

With regard to the implementation of the millennium goals, it should be noted that through the interministerial commission for international cooperation, my government has set in motion the following up the millennium declaration as a basic criterion for granting subsidies to projects established by civil non-profit bodies in the field of social development and also for allocating our contributions to international bodies and agencies.

In this manner, priority has been given to projects which include the question of gender equality in their designs and implementation as well as those which aim at protecting the higher interest of children and those which favor human rights and democracy.

For 2005 the government has assigned 0.6% of the total budget for projects and actions of international cooperation. We would note that of the projects subsidized by the Ministry of Health and Welfare in the field of international cooperation and cooperation for development, about 25% have been specifically aimed at encouraging equality of opportunity between women and men.

The preparation of Beijing +10 has made it possible to evaluate the achievements, share and compare experiences and understand what the situation of women really is in our countries. But it has also enabled us to identify worldwide, regional, national and local lacunae which now need to be filled in order to give effect to the clause of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which says that *"the respect of the dignity inherent in all members of the human family and of the equal inalienable rights of each and every one constitutes the basis of freedom, justice and peace in the world"* (Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

On the other hand, I would like to underline that Andorra fully supports the Ministerial declaration of the *Francophonie* on the promotion of the status of women and gender equality, more particularly I would like to emphasize the need for the suppression of the feminization of poverty, the obstacles to the freedom of expression and decision-making and the violence against women and girls, such as feminine genital mutilation, crimes of honor and forced marriages.

Indeed without equality between people there is no justice or development or democracy and the fact is that together we, the women and men of the peoples of the world must evolve towards equality and there is still much to be done. Let us hope that the result of the follow up of the World Conference on women of Beijing ten years after in the context of the work of the 49th session of the CSW will guide the work that needs to be done by our governments for the next five years. In Andorra, we are committed to continuing in this line.

Thank you.