

THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SIXTY-SEVENTH SESSION
THIRD COMMITTEE
AGENDA ITEM 28: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

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S T A T E M E N T

by

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Mr. Chairman,

Since this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor in the Third Committee this year, I would like to join other delegations in congratulating you and other members of the Bureau on your election. Let me assure you of our full support and cooperation in conducting the work of the current session of the Third Committee.

Serbia aligned itself with the EU statement on this agenda item.

Mr Chairman,

Gender equality is essential for the human rights of all. Full participation of women in decision-making in the fields of economics, politics, security and justice, as well as better access for women to work, education and social opportunities is a prerequisite of development and prosperity of our societies. However, various forms of violation of human rights and discrimination against women still persist, in particular against vulnerable groups of women such as Roma, refugees and IDPs, minorities, disabled, rural women etc. Violence against women in all its forms is a phenomenon that occurs everywhere in the world and has to be addressed with utmost importance with particular focus on prevention and aimed at its full elimination.

As a state party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol, Serbia is strongly committed to its implementation and fully supports the work of the CEDAW Committee. My Government supports the activities of UN Women and commends, in particular, the tireless efforts and inspiring work of Mrs. Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director of UN Women, in advocating for gender equality and empowerment of women worldwide, including within the UN system. We also recognize the importance and salute the activities of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, as well as a relatively new Working Group of the Human Rights Council on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice, established in 2010.

Mr. Chairman,

The Republic of Serbia developed a solid normative and institutional framework for gender equality and empowerment of women, while gender equality mechanisms have been established at all levels of Government – national, provincial and local. The Directorate for Gender Equality has established the Forum for Dialogue with the organizations of civil society in order to enhance dialogue and promote more efficient exchange of information, views and prospects between mechanisms for gender equality at national and local levels and the civil society. Aware of the need for the bottom-up approach the focus of current efforts is at further developing and empowering local gender equality mechanisms.

In 2009 the Government of Serbia adopted the Law on Gender Equality as well as the National Strategy for the Advancement of Women and the Promotion of Gender Equality. Recognizing the need to tackle the problem of violence against women in a comprehensive way, Serbia adopted the National Strategy for Preventing and Combating Domestic and Partner Relationship Violence against Women that includes four strategic areas: prevention; improvement of the legislative framework for combating domestic violence; introduction of multi-sectoral collaboration; and development and strengthening of victims' protection system.

Mr. Chairman,

Serbia recognizes the significance of, 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. In that regard, I am pleased to inform you that the National Action Plan for the implementation of UN SC Resolution 1325 "Women, Peace, Security" has been adopted in 2010 and its implementation is underway. For the purpose of implementing the NAP, the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of Defence and the UN Women was signed in September 2011. In March 2012, the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia and the UNDP, organized an international conference in Belgrade to mark the beginning of the implementation of the regional project "Supporting the Integration of Gender Equality Values in the Security Sector Reform in the Western Balkans". Serbia is also actively engaged in Women Police Officers Network (WPON) in South East Europe. Just a few days ago, on 13 October, in order to commemorate the International Day for Disaster Reduction, the Committee on Human and Minority Rights and Gender Equality at the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia held a session on the topic: "Women and Girls –The Invisible Force of Resilience". The meeting was co-organized with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Serbia and the Sector for Emergency Management of the Ministry of the Interior. The aim was to raise public awareness on the role of women and girls in emergency situations and mobilize action in introducing the gender perspective in the disaster risk reduction strategy.

Mr. Chairman,

In recent years Serbia has been active at national and international levels in promoting the role of information and communication technologies for the empowerment of women and girls. At the Plenipotentiary Conference 2010 of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) held in Mexico, the Republic of Serbia proposed and the Conference adopted the newly revised Resolution 70 – "Gender mainstreaming in ITU and promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women through information and communication technology", setting a base for the creation of a "Global Network of Women ICT Decision Makers" under the auspices of the International Telecommunication Union. Furthermore, the Plenipotentiary Conference adopted the amendment to launch "International Day of Girls in ICT" with the

aim of encouraging girls and young women to expand their spectrum of career options to include ICT and to use ICT for social and economic empowerment. Global Network of Women ICT Decision Makers has been officially launched in February 2011, during the 55th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, while the commemoration of the International Day of Girls in ICT was held in April this year in New York when the ITU new global strategy "Tech Needs Girls" was launched.

Let me conclude by quoting the words of the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, "Equality for women and girls is not only a basic human right it is a social and economic imperative. Where women are educated and empowered, economies are more productive and strong. Where women are fully represented, societies are more peaceful and stable."

Thank you, Mr. Chairman