

**Security Council Open Debate on Women, Rule of Law and Transitional Justice in Conflict-Affected Situations, October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013, Security Council Chamber**

*Statement by Ms. Čolaković, Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations*

Bosnia and Herzegovina appreciates the convening of the Security Council's semi-annual debate on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). We would like to thank the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of UN Women for their comprehensive briefings. And we extend a warm welcome and our gratitude to the representatives of civil society for their presentations today.

We believe that the Security Council, UN Women and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict will ensure that the United Nations works in a concerted and coordinated manner that will strengthen the capacity of the United Nations system to match its commitment to gender equality with the leadership, resources and expertise needed to advance achievements on the ground. The development of additional indicators to track the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) is a significant step in broadening the women and peace and security agenda.

We also recognize the positive contribution of the Security Council to the rule of law, which is one of the key aspects of conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. We fully agree with the prevailing position that justice, including transitional justice, is a fundamental building block of sustainable peace in countries in conflict or post-conflict situations. Delivering justice and security in respect of the rule of law mitigates conflict, helps reduce the risk of relapse into further conflict and creates conditions conducive to sustainable development.

With regard to the most recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2013/525), we note with satisfaction that the attention from the international community to the issue of sexual violence in conflict has increased. We therefore call upon all stakeholders to continue their efforts to reduce and eliminate the high incidence of threats faced by women and girls in contemporary armed conflicts. However, we realize that despite the urgency with which practices in implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) have improved, there remains a deficit in opportunities for women on both the national and international levels. To exercise leadership, there remains an ongoing underrepresentation of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, protection and peacebuilding processes and efforts.

Conflicts create situations in which women and children are the ones most affected by the deterioration of living conditions and fundamental rights. Violence and the deprivation of rights often go hand in hand with conflict. Efforts to fight impunity, provide assistance to victims and hold perpetrators accountable must be intensified and better coordinated. Regrettably, sexual and gender-based violence often continue after peace deals are reached, due to insufficient investment in protection and prevention strategies, or weak security and justice institutions. We are aware of the fact that peace cannot be sustained unless women play a critical role in the process. We therefore underscore the importance of the full and effective involvement of women at all stages of peace processes and of giving them an equal role in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, as well as in early peacebuilding.

We affirm our commitment to the rule of law as an imperative for political dialogue and cooperation. In that regard, with the aim of improving the overall situation of women victims of rape, we are making efforts to finalize the drafting of a programme for victims of rape, sexual abuse and torture in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2013-2016. At the State level, a draft transitional justice strategy has been developed to create an acceptable platform for efficient and realistic mechanisms and activities to correct the injustices and heal the traumas resulting from the armed conflict in the 1990s.

We also emphasize that Bosnia and Herzegovina fully supports the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), the provisions of which have been incorporated into the Bosnia and Herzegovina gender action plan and the action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Besides defining goals and activities, the action plan includes an introduction, an analysis of the de facto situations, and eight goals with strictly defined activities, deadlines, the definition of responsibility and partners. In this regard, through the action plan, we have shown our dedication to increasing the representation of women in decision-making positions at all levels of power in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition, we are undertaking efforts to increase the number of women

in military and police forces and to ensure their inclusion in executive positions within such forces.

Increasing the number of women in peacekeeping missions and introducing gender perspectives into the training of participants in peace missions are further priorities for us. We are also making additional efforts to strengthen capacities in fighting trafficking, decreasing the danger of mined areas, improving support networks for women and girls who were victimized during the war, and increasing the knowledge and capacities of civil society. Furthermore, the gender equality agency started a project on the implementation of the resolution 1325 (2000) action plan at the local level in cooperation with the non-governmental organization Women BH and with the financial support of UN Women. This project represents an innovation not only in Bosnia and Herzegovina but also at the regional level.

While much has indeed been accomplished, a great deal remains to be done to obtain real results for women on the ground. To that end, it is of vital importance for all United Nations stakeholders, and especially the

Security Council, to continue to use appropriate tools at their disposal for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). At the same time, Member States need to take decisive action accompanied by clear goals, baselines and indicators to monitor and assess its implementation. The goals for the future have already been identified. We must now find the will and persistence to achieve them. I assure the Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina's full cooperation in this endeavour.

In conclusion, I wish to underscore that we support the Council's adoption today of resolution 2122 (2013), which we were pleased to sponsor.