



*Permanent Mission of Montenegro to the United Nations
Opening remarks of the Vice-President of the Executive Board
of UN-Women H.E. Ambassador Ivana Pajevic
First Regular Session 2017*

Your Excellences, special guests, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentleman,

I would like to begin my statement by thanking for the election to be Vice-President of the UN Women Executive Board in 2017, which is a great honor for my country, Montenegro and myself. This is not only a great honor but also a great incentive to further promote rights of women, through both domestic and international actions.

The realization of the rights of women and girls is fundamental for achieving universal respect for human rights, securing long-lasting peace and ensuring sustainable development. Combating extreme poverty, struggling for development and for peace goes hand in hand with empowerment of women that represent half of our society.

The Agenda 2030 provided us with an opportunity to place gender equality and the empowerment of women at the center of the international development agenda, through a systematic integration throughout all goals and indicators and through a standalone goal. We should renew our efforts to ensure that in every country and every community girls and women are valued equally with boys and men. They should be given the same opportunities to grow and learn, and participate, and be protected from violence.

Montenegro strongly believes that women must be leaders and key participants in political and economic decision-making, in prevention, resolution and recovery of conflict. Promoting gender equality and tackling violence against women, both at home and internationally, is a priority of Montenegrin Government. We believe where women live free of violence, have equal access to education, healthcare, political and economic opportunities, societies are healthier, more prosperous and more peaceful. This is our goal and I would like to assure you of a full engagement of my Government and me personally in that regard.

Your Excellencies,

It is our joint commitment to champion this agenda around the world. We need full dedication, commitment and strong engagement of the Board, the Bureau, all Member States and Secretariat, as this is an exciting and challenging moment for our organization, and indeed for women everywhere.

We live in an increasingly divided world, fractured by violence, conflict and political breakdowns, a world of disproportionate effects on women and girls that are going to be felt for years to come. However, UN Women recognizes the need for decisive action in reversing these trends, as well as the need for new ways of building peaceful and resilient societies and trying to avoid backsliding on equality, rights and empowerment of women and girls.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It has never been more important to work together as the Executive Board will adopt the new four-year Strategic Plan for UN-Women at the second regular session. It represents UN Women contribution to Agenda 2030 over the next four years, and it is the framework for next quadrennial budget.

It is taken what is learned from the midterm review of the current Strategic Plan to help shape UN Women approach. The Plan is aimed at further important contribution to advancing women agenda and it will help us all to ensure our focus stays tightly on target and on being 'fit for purpose' and improve our performance in order to make the Strategic Development Goals a reality.

Distinguished colleagues,

Some of you had an opportunity to attend yesterday informal workshop on the Strategic plan. I would like to thank everyone who took part and gave its contribution to it. Throughout the day, we were able to hear the preliminary assumptions of UN-Women in designing its new Strategic Plan as well as to give views on the presented options. It is very much appreciated the way that the UN Women is leading the process in transparent and collaborative manner as it allows that member states' views are taken into consideration at an early stage.

The discussion on the Strategic plan will continue today with a presentation on its linkages to QCPR. The QCPR sets out the strategic directions for each entity, including for UN-Women, to deliver-as-one in support to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and in developing the new Strategic Plans accordingly. It provides great opportunities as it reaffirms the centrality of gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of operational activities of the UN development system and calls for all entities to continue to invest in women.

The Executive Board will be briefed today on UN-Women's humanitarian programming. As we will hear at the briefing, it is estimated that women and children are 14 times more likely to die during natural disasters. We need to change statistics and look at ways of making humanitarian action not failing for women and girls if we are to build truly conducive environment for gender equality.

It is also important that UN-Women's normative and coordination mandates in supporting Member States, other UN organizations, and other humanitarian partners to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment are integrated into their humanitarian work. In this way, coherence will be improved as well as operational effectiveness and efficiency.

Your Excellences,

The aim of our work is not to have the discussion on gender equality in this room. We should always keep in mind that we are stronger when we uphold the equality of all our people - and that includes our women and girls around the world. We must translate our collective commitments into action and 'invest' in women and in hope for the future of our humanity. Success in today's world and implementation of Agenda 2030 is not possible if we ignore the talents and potential of half of our society.

Women should be regarded as assets and we should stand as advocates and positive voices for UN-Women, gender equality and women's empowerment. I can assure you of my personal commitment to it.

Thank you!