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PERMANENT MISSION OF
THE REPUBLIC OF
ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

Statement

**in response to the address by the Special Representative of the OSCE
Chairperson-in-Office on Gender on the occasion of International
Women's Day
as delivered by Ambassador Armen Papikyan
at the 1464th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
07 March 2024**

Madame Chair,

The delegation of Armenia warmly welcomes Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office Ms. Liliana Palihovici to the Permanent Council and thanks her for the insightful address on the occasion of International Women's Day.

Gender equality and women's empowerment are multifaceted and cross-cutting issues encompassing all pillars of the OSCE from peace and security to human rights, sustainable development and economic well-being. And in this regard it is critical to adopt a holistic and cross-dimensional approach.

Armenia attaches great importance to the empowerment of women and gender equality, including through gender-responsive regulations to ensure the promotion of women and their full, equal and meaningful participation in all spheres of public life. The Armenian Parliament has achieved a record of more than 35% of women in the legislature, which is a major step towards achieving gender equality and empowerment of women in the political sphere. Promoting women entrepreneurs is also a priority for the Armenian government, especially in STEM. As an example, today women's participation in the Armenian ICT sector is around 40% - twice as much as the international average.

Building on the progress achieved in the ICT industry, Armenia has been working to underpin international efforts for bridging the gender digital divide.

It should be also mentioned that the government of Armenia has concluded the development of 2024-2028 gender-equality strategy and action plan which is currently in the process of adoption. Armenia has a good track record of advocating and promoting gender equality both at national and international levels. In this regard, it should be recalled that the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index of 2023 has recorded progress in Armenia, which ranks 61st among 146 countries.

Madame Chair,

Women, Peace and Security agenda and the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 are also among the priorities of the Government of the Republic of Armenia. The third National Action Plan of Armenia in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 is currently under development.

Armenia promotes full, equal, and meaningful participation of women including in the defence sector as a key prerequisite for sustainable and lasting peace. To this end, in June 2023 Armenia's National Assembly passed a law on women's voluntary service in the military. The new law gives women aged 18-27 the opportunity to voluntarily sign up for 6 months of service.

Madame Chair,

The OSCE participating States, by adopting the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality demonstrated a commitment to addressing gender-based violence against women and girls, especially in the context of armed conflicts. Reflecting on the 20th anniversary of the Action Plan is an important moment to assess the progress, the failures and gaps in implementation of these commitments.

Women and children constitute the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflicts. It is deplorable that in the 21st century, women continue to face persistent and unacceptable levels of violence, abuse, and torture. In recent years in our region, we witnessed growing violence against women, which in concrete cases amounted to atrocities, the brutality of which goes beyond any elementary norms of the civilized world, let alone international humanitarian law.

Therefore, we have always advocated strengthening the link between security and human rights. Unfortunately, we must admit that the OSCE's performance

in this regard has been far from perfect and our Organization failed to react and act during the massive use of force, weaponization of food, mass atrocities and ethnic cleansing which created new challenges for Armenian women and exacerbated the plight of those affected by conflicts. This ambivalent stance of the Organization further promoted an atmosphere of impunity with regard to violence against women and girls in other parts of the OSCE.

In conclusion, Madame Chair, we can only hope that the promotion and protection of human rights, in particular the rights of women, especially those affected by conflicts will be pursued by this Organization not only in words but also in deeds.

Thank you.