

**Welcoming Note of Ambassador Miroslav Jenča, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia**

Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished guests and participants,

it is my great pleasure to welcome you all warmly to the present conference on “Enhancing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian Region”. My thanks go out to the OSCE and UN Women for organizing this event, and to all of you for your participation in this convention. The great interest this meeting has convoked reflects the importance of the question of how we can enhance the “Women, Peace and Security Agenda”.

Since the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent efforts, the ‘protection’ elements of the “Agenda” have been significantly strengthened. At the same time, there is growing awareness of the fact that the focus should not exclusively be on women as victims, but also on their ability to be agents of peace. Not long ago, in southern Kyrgyzstan, we were able to see both of these roles of women in times of conflict or of strained peace. As an example of our encouragement to the valiant efforts of women to be agents of peace, I participated in the Open Peace Days organized last year by UN Women in Osh and Aravan in southern Kyrgyzstan, and I was very impressed to see these strong and dedicated women who were playing an important role to help prevent further violence. For the same purpose, I also attended the working group meeting on the development of the National Action Plan on implementation of Resolution 1325 in Kyrgyzstan, which was adopted last February, making Kyrgyzstan the first country in the region to start implementing such a National Action Plan, and I strongly want to encourage other countries to follow suit.

We need to fully recognize that the comprehensive inclusion of women is key for successfully maintaining peace and stability on various levels: local, national and regional. Only a few weeks ago, the Security Council suggested concrete operational provisions to improve women’s participation in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding, and to ensure women’s, and women’s organizations’, participation in consultations and negotiations. However, much remains to be done to fully implement the “Women, Peace and Security Agenda” to ensure full

participation of women in all aspects of building and sustaining global, regional and national peace and stability.

In this regard, the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy believes that the potential of women in the *prevention* of conflicts needs to be utilized more fully and consciously in order to come to truly sustainable stability. Currently, Central Asia continues to face a number of complex regional issues which need to be negotiated. However, still far too often, women are underrepresented in these negotiations and account for only a small percentage of all participants in negotiations. We are convinced that the lack of inclusion of women at all levels of conflict prevention efforts has significant negative impact on finding sustainable solutions. This is why the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia strives to ensure that women's views and gender considerations are always taken into account in our conflict prevention activities.

Not only in Central Asia but worldwide, it is paramount to engage in continuous efforts and discussions to ensure that the international community, regional, and local actors jointly and dedicatedly are involved in enhancing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

This event, for which you all have gathered here in Almaty, serves this exact purpose and could not be any timelier. For the next two days, you will take a close look at the "Agenda": at what has already been accomplished at the global and regional levels; at how women can be more effectively included in all aspects of preventing and solving conflicts and in building long-lasting peace; and at which Lessons Learned and Best Practices should guide us in further developing the implementation of resolution 1325. These are just a few of the questions to be raised at this conference.

I am very happy to extend my best wishes for the following discussions and a successful convention.

Thank you very much.