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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT

on the International Women`s Day

**by Ambassador Armen Papikyan, Permanent Representative of Armenia, at the
1262nd Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
March 12, 2020**

Mr. Chairman,

Let me join others and extend my delegation's congratulations on the occasion of International Women's Day. The 8 of March is also a day for assessing and reflecting on the achievements and challenges that our societies face with regards to empowerment of women and advancement of their rights.

25 years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, when the issue of the rights of women finally became a global matter, and after many joint efforts by other International Organizations, including the OSCE, women are still facing different manifestation of harassment and abuse, violence and discrimination.

In my own country, while having many iconic examples in our history on the important role of women such as Diana Abgar, serving as the first female Ambassador of Armenia to Japan back in 1918, we are still discovering the benefits of women's participation in our political and socio-economic life. Major political transformation that took place in Armenia in 2018, where women were at the forefront of those transformations and acted as guarantors for the peaceful nature of those events, was yet another benchmark in our efforts to enhance women participation in public and social life, as well as excellent opportunity to assess the achievements in this regard.

Among those, for example, is the amendment of the Electoral Code so as to increase women's representation threshold from 20 to 25 percent. It is envisaged that in the run up to the next elections the threshold will reach 30 percent. Equally, there is an increased number of women successfully holding high positions in the public administration, and as it was mentioned by the Prime Minister in his congratulatory address, their number will gradually increase. Political and economic participation of women, better social protection and other enabling factors, essential for the empowerment of women and realization of their full potential are among the key priorities of the Armenian Government.

As chair of the 64th and 65th Sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women, Armenia is determined to further promote Gender Equality and women empowerment. The adoption of the Political Declaration highlighting the importance of full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of all women and girls comes at a critical juncture when reiterating political will and clear commitment by states is even more important.

We also recognise the important role of women when it comes to promoting peace and security as such efforts are more effective when women are regarded as equal and full-

fledged partners. In this regard, it is worth mentioning “Women for Peace” initiative by Mrs Anna Hakobyan, spouse of the Prime Minister of Armenia. This initiative provides an important platform for women to promote peace and reconciliation in conflict affected areas. We all agree that women and girls residing in the conflict areas are facing specific challenges and threats. Therefore, it is our strong belief that redoubled attention should be paid to their needs from all relevant actors, including the OSCE. Their full engagement in the peacebuilding and reconciliation is equally important for lasting and sustainable peace.

In conclusion, let me once again congratulate all women, including my fellow colleagues, wishing them every success in their professional and personal life. The benefits of the full-fledged participation of women in the political and socio-economic spheres of our life are yet to be fully enjoyed in our societies.

I thank you.