



**BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

**STATEMENT**

**by**

**H.E.Mr. Zeljko Komsic,**

**Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**At**

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**General Debate**

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**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

Mr. President,  
Mr. Secretary-General,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen!

Mr. President Muhammad-Bande, please allow me to first of all congratulate you on your election as the President of the United Nations General Assembly. I will also use the opportunity to thank Mrs. Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garcia, the previous President of the General Assembly.

I would like to emphasize the importance of the current moment. Amidst quite complex political and geopolitical circumstances, we will next year celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. This organization has faced numerous challenges in the past. I believe that United Nations General Assembly sessions have always been an opportunity to bring together leaders of different countries and have them share their opinions and views on the world situation and, in particular, to find optimal solutions to contemporary global challenges and problems.

In that respect, the United Nations have also faced escalation of conflicts in different areas in 2019, including a major migrant and refugee crisis, followed by terrorism and violent extremism, as well as other forms of violence perpetrated by various extremist groups. There is also the issue of implementation of the Agenda for Sustainable Economic Growth and Sustainable Development, which will be discussed at this session as well.

Mr. President!

United Nations established the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development as a platform where political leaders agree on recommendations regarding the sustainable development matters. This year's Forum session was held in July 2019, where my country, Bosnia and Herzegovina, for the first time presented the Voluntary National Review (VNR) as part of monitoring of the implementation of sustainable development goals in the country, thus sharing our experiences in accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

By adopting the 2030 Agenda, Bosnia and Herzegovina has committed itself to initiating a systematic monitoring and supervision process for the implementation of this global agenda that integrates the social, economic and environmental dimensions of development. Bosnia and Herzegovina takes the view that the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires an agreement on foreseeable, coherent and sufficient funding to achieve sustainable development goals.

For these reasons, we believe that the achievement of the 2030 Agenda goals should strongly and qualitatively contribute to eradication of poverty, reduction of world hunger, protection of the environment, and handling of the evident climate changes. Bosnia and Herzegovina sees the United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development and its transformative nature as an opportunity and a mechanism of change aiming to comprehensively promote the social, economic and environmental aspects of the life of population. We therefore hope that the Review of Implementation Activities for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be finalized by the end of 2019 and submitted to the High-level Political Forum to be held in the coming years.

Mr. President!

Bosnia and Herzegovina believes that the present time offers a special opportunity to change the course of development by creating a self-sustaining environment that will benefit everyone. It is a great honor for Bosnia and Herzegovina to be a part of this transformational

Agenda as a sovereign country and provide our contribution within the worldwide countries family. Successful cooperation with the United Nations encourages our implementation of the 2030 Agenda, which presents an opportunity for Bosnia and Herzegovina to share our own experience, lessons learned, as well as challenges and practices on important life issues with the other United Nations member states and contribute towards strengthening of the international cooperation.

Mr. President!

Activities related to the Euro-Atlantic integration process in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the alignment of the BiH socio-political system with the EU *acquis communautaire*, are at the center of political developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as the country is committed to continuing its activities to stabilize the situation and accelerate the initiated reform processes. The European Commission's Opinion on Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU membership application is a very accurate record of all the reforms required. Some of the reforms require the voidance and annulment of the existing systemic discrimination against the citizens of my country, which, unfortunately, is set out in certain provisions of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as provisions of various legislative acts. Bosnia and Herzegovina will have to undergo a process of maturation in order to reach such a political level that those necessary reforms can be implemented without major socio-political strains.

Furthermore, Bosnia and Herzegovina is actively contributing to regional security efforts in our region. In that respect, I would like to assure you that Bosnia and Herzegovina is a reliable, serious and determined partner to the United Nations, the European Union and NATO. We are particularly determined to strengthen the European security area, committed to fight organized crime, combat terrorism and violent extremism, as well as illegal migration, and to protect the security of national borders in terms of migration management. With regard to international challenges of the modern times, Bosnia and

Herzegovina particularly emphasizes its commitment to global efforts to combat terrorism and violent extremism.

Mr. President!

In addition to internal reforms, Bosnia and Herzegovina also focuses on strengthening regional co-operation, especially when it comes to infrastructure projects in the communications, transport and energy sectors. Internationally, Bosnia and Herzegovina is active within the United Nations and organizations such as the OSCE, the Council of Europe, CEFTA, and other various regional initiatives. We would like to emphasize that Bosnia and Herzegovina in the previous period had a prominent and active chairmanship of the SEECP regional initiative and MARRI, where it invested additional efforts and provided an active impetus to the regional approach to facing current challenges.

Bilateral relations between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the neighboring countries are at the top of our foreign policy priorities. That should be the foundation for continuous improvement of cooperation based on mutual interest and the principle of equality, respect for one another and respect for state sovereignty and territorial integrity. The above might lead to conclusion that the relations between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the neighboring countries are good and intensive. However, due to particular policies of our neighbors, we occasionally witness their activities aimed at realization of their own political interests within Bosnia and Herzegovina. That causes unrest and produces a degree of destabilization in my country, which is neither good, nor does it contribute to development of the desired good neighborly relations.

Mr. President!

The United Nations has primary responsibility for world peace and security. One should not lose sight of the interactive interdependence and complexity of the relationship between peace and security, development and cooperation and especially the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. With the increasing number of

conflicts becoming progressively more complex, we are aware that the United Nations is facing a number of challenges, especially on the African continent and the Middle East. In order to find an adequate solution to numerous crises, Bosnia and Herzegovina supports the United Nations efforts to strengthen the preventive diplomacy sector within the political affairs department. It is of particular importance that all disputes be resolved peacefully, as stated in Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations, which expressly requires that disputes be resolved peacefully and with good will to resolve them. United Nations and Security Council resolutions represent one form of support for such peaceful settlement of various disputes between the countries.

Bosnia and Herzegovina continuously monitors these phenomena and, to the best of its ability, strengthens its capacities in the fight against terrorism, international crime and narcotics production and trafficking, as well as trafficking in human beings occurring within the framework of migration movements. Bosnia and Herzegovina strongly condemns violent extremism and terrorism in all its forms, and finds all acts of extremism and terrorism, regardless of their form, motivation and perpetrators, to be criminal and unjustifiable. Bosnia and Herzegovina is committed to the full implementation of all UN Security Council resolutions aimed at bringing persons involved in the financing, planning, preparation or commission of terrorist acts to justice.

Mr. President!

Bearing in mind the direct correlation between security and sustainable development and the central role the United Nations has in the process of peacebuilding and the creation of basic conditions for the development of post-conflict societies, I would like to emphasize that Bosnia and Herzegovina supports the United Nations' direct activities in stabilizing post-conflict societies by building and strengthening institutions, especially those in the field of the rule of law, protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, security, reintegration and reconciliation processes.

Bosnia and Herzegovina expresses its concern about the ongoing escalation of violence in the world, especially in the Middle East, and I take this opportunity to call for an end of combat activities and for the finding of peaceful solutions. Bosnia and Herzegovina has a principled view that the protection of civilians, respect for human rights and humanitarian law are a necessary priority in international relations.

Bosnia and Herzegovina's foreign policy is focused on maintaining and promoting lasting peace and security in all parts of the world. The activities of Bosnia and Herzegovina in terms of international relations are based on the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final Act and other Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe documents, as well as generally accepted principles of international law. Bosnia and Herzegovina has either ratified or successively taken on the most significant international documents in this field and is ready for full cooperation with other countries, both within relevant multilateral organizations and initiatives, as well as bilaterally, in order to effectively combat proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of deployment.

Bosnia and Herzegovina also advocates all general positions in terms of promoting and supporting all realistic and effective ideas that will lead to the ultimate goal, which is the world without nuclear weapons.

In accordance with the obligations arising from the provisions of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540, regarding the prevention of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of transport, Bosnia and Herzegovina is focused on fulfilling its commitments with an emphasis on strengthening dialogue and non-proliferation cooperation on mass destruction as well as various forms of regional cooperation.

Bosnia and Herzegovina explicitly opposes provision of any support to non-state actors and entities seeking to develop, procure, produce,

possess, transport, transfer or use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their means of transfer. Furthermore, we actively and directly contribute to the United Nations peacekeeping missions, one of the most visible components of the United Nations. As a sovereign country that attaches particular importance to peacekeeping missions, Bosnia and Herzegovina best demonstrates its participation and commitment to peacekeeping through its involvement in United Nations and NATO peacekeeping missions. Bosnia and Herzegovina welcomes the commitment of the United Nations to support the participation of women in peacekeeping missions. I would like to point out with particular pleasure that we are one of the few countries that has been fulfilling its stated goals for a long time, that is, over 20% of women participating in peacekeeping missions.

Mr. President!

I would particularly like to point out that the Agreement on Suppression of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse was signed on January 10, 2019 between the United Nations and Bosnia and Herzegovina, which obliged my country to hold everyone responsible, whether civilian or uniformed, for all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping or other humanitarian operations, including support for a zero tolerance policy towards this type of deviant behavior.

International legal framework is the starting point to exercise the rights of a child, and the International Convention on the Rights of the Child is the fundamental instrument to determine the legal framework and policies of the countries that are the Parties to the Convention, which focus on addressing the issues of the rights of a child. The Country Programme 2015 - 2019 between UNICEF and Bosnia and Herzegovina is particularly important as it further contributes to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as the Development Agenda for the period after 2015.



Racial discrimination, as well as other forms of discrimination, is insufficiently regulated by the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Still, these deviant phenomena are referenced through several features of criminal offenses within the criminal legislation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as lower levels of government. That clearly expresses the commitment of the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina to respect the human rights of all citizens who live there, as well as permanently resident aliens or aliens granted temporary residence on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with respect to all principles of mutual tolerance. However, as I said earlier, certain provisions providing for systemic discrimination remain in the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as established in the four judgments of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, in the Sejdić-Finci, Zornić, Pilav and Šlak cases, as well as the European Commission's Opinion on Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU membership application. Bosnia and Herzegovina must provide for constitutional reforms as well as reforms of various laws in order to meet the European standard, which is the equality of all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in all aspects of life. Such action will require the agreement of domestic political actors to remove obstacles to the continuation of the process of integration into the European Union.

In the area of trafficking in human beings, a comprehensive and multidisciplinary Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2016-2019 aims to improve the support system for combating trafficking in human beings in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We will further modernize this plan and prepare a new one for the coming period.

Mr. President!

The rule of law and international law are firmly established in the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, which is the very foundation of this organization. Bosnia and Herzegovina is committed to promoting the rule of law at all levels - national, regional and international, and firmly committed to contributing towards the

building, strengthening and full respect of international law, including human rights and international humanitarian law. Therefore, I would like to assure you that Bosnia and Herzegovina is committed to respecting its international obligations. That is very important for our contribution to the comprehensive development, preservation and maintenance of peace, and the promotion of human rights, fundamental freedoms and sustainable development.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is fully cooperating with the International Criminal Tribunal Residual Mechanism, which has taken over functions from the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, including judicial functions, enforcement of sanctions, relocation of released individuals and protection of victims and witnesses. The authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina remain committed to ensuring that all persons suspected of war crimes on the territory of the former Yugoslavia must be brought to justice.

Bosnia and Herzegovina hereby reaffirms its commitment to continue negotiations on United Nations reform in accordance with the final document of the 2005 New York World Summit of Heads of State and Government. Reform of the United Nations system is necessary, but such reform must be carried out with extreme care and broadest consensus of the Member States. Bosnia and Herzegovina shares the view that developing countries are underrepresented in the Security Council, which is an appropriate point to hear and discuss the specific issues and problems of developing countries.

Given the sensitivity of the issue, Bosnia and Herzegovina is committed to reaching a compromise solution. Given that the number of Eastern European countries has more than doubled, we expect that the reformed Security Council will be expanded with additional seats for non-permanent members of the Eastern European group of countries. Bosnia and Herzegovina also supports greater representation of African countries, as well as small and medium-developed countries, including the small island countries.

Thank you Mr. President!