

15th UPR Working Group session,
Geneva, 30 January 2013

Madame President,

We would like to welcome the delegation of Serbia to the UPR Working Group session and thank the distinguished for the introductory statement.

We welcome the national report of Serbia on the follow-up of the accepted recommendations which clearly indicate the achievements of the country in the field of promotion and protection of human rights during the last four years.

We note with appreciation the recent measures put forth by the Government concerning the enforcement and improvement of the activities of the Ombudsman in the country. The recent upgrade of the Ombudsman of Serbia to "A" status by the International Coordinating Committee should be also mentioned in that regard. We recommend Serbia to continue its measures with regard to the better regulation and mainstreaming of the operation of the Ombudsman.

As it was mentioned in the national report, the Government of Serbia is taking appropriate measures in order to strengthen the position of women in a high-level decision making process, such as the adoption of specific laws on the issue, as well as the National Strategy for Improving Position of Women and Promoting Gender Equality of 2009. We recommend Serbia to further its endeavours with a view of positively affecting the participation of women in the field of economy, education and health.

Taking into account our own bitter experience, we fully understand the challenges faced by Serbia because of the large-scale presence of refugees and internally displaced persons in the country. However, in spite of all these hardships the Government has successfully managed to address the needs and necessities of this vulnerable group of people. The excellent cooperation established with the Office of High Commissioner for Refugees and IOM to that end should also be highly commended. While welcoming the adoption of the National Strategy on Resolving the Issue of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons for the period 2011-2014 we would like to mention that the Republic of Azerbaijan is also closely following the positive outcomes of the International Donors Conference held last year. We recommend Serbia to continue its effort for addressing the challenges of refugees and IDPs in the country.

Thank you for your attention.