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**STATEMENT BY
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FEDERATION TO THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS ON MILITARY SECURITY
AND ARMS CONTROL, AT THE 1060th PLENARY MEETING OF THE
OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION**

25 October 2023

**Agenda item: Security Dialogue
Subject: Women, peace and security**

Madam Chairperson,

We are grateful to the Canadian Chairmanship for organizing a plenary meeting on United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on women and peace and security. We welcome the keynote speakers, whose presentations on the whole confirm the progress made in enhancing the role of women in addressing security issues.

We regret that, despite the balanced concept of today's meeting distributed by the Canadian Chairmanship, a familiar group of delegations have continued in their statements to reduce the discussion to the furtherance of narrow bloc interests, as illustrated by the anti-Russian narratives of the West. Once again, false propagandistic clichés have been voiced that have nothing to do with reality and certainly prevent a fruitful exchange of views on a problem as complex as the protection of women in armed conflict. We categorically reject the groundless accusations against our country voiced by the delegation of Ukraine and its transatlantic sponsors.

Madam Chairperson,

Turning to the topic of today's meeting, we should like to stress that Russia has always paid great attention to the subject of women, peace and security. The role of women in managing the issues of nuclear non-proliferation, arms control, confidence- and security-building measures and global security in general is important and multidimensional.

Female Russian specialists regularly participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions, and also in ensuring the security of our country by serving in internal law enforcement agencies and the armed forces of the Russian Federation, including as part of the special military operation.

It is true that men have always been the most dominant force in defining the outlines of strategic stability and conventional security. But women have repeatedly occupied leading positions throughout

history, also significantly influencing areas of hard power. Today, the presence of women among decision makers continues to grow. This is also confirmed by worldwide statistics.

Unfortunately, many women in the OSCE area and beyond continue to face gender-based prejudice and discrimination, which often denies them the opportunity and frustrates their ambitions to assume positions in the politico-military sphere. In terms of achieving equality of opportunity for both sexes, it is important to ensure that women's contributions are valued and recognized and that their concerns and needs are taken into account in decision-making.

In that respect, it should be emphasized: in the more than two decades since United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 initiated the discussion on women, peace and security, it has become abundantly clear that the primary role in the protection of women in conflict lies with national governments. Measures taken by organizations such as the United Nations and the OSCE (within its mandate, of course) should be aimed at supporting and complementing the efforts of States.

Madam Chairperson,

The gender factor is important, but it should not be abused. Security issues, especially those related to nuclear and conventional weapons, concern all of humanity. In this area, and in the field of disarmament and arms control, politicians and other decision makers do not and should not have a gender.

Let us clarify what is meant here. While some (women and men alike) have always sought to defuse tensions and to foster peace and the political and diplomatic settlement of conflicts, others, on the contrary, have advocated the use of force to resolve problems and have supported intervention and war. Some of these hawks have been women, including Margaret Thatcher, Hillary Clinton and Liz Truss. Why, though? For reasons independent of gender – ideological views, personal beliefs, attitudes towards national security, and so on – some people are inclined by their nature to militant behaviour. However, when reason triumphs over genetics, opportunities for non-military solutions and diplomacy open up.

In that regard, it would also be premature, to say the least, to link an increase in the effectiveness of addressing non-proliferation, disarmament, global security, strategic stability and international peace solely to the need to take into account the gender factor. We are convinced that equal representation does not necessarily lead to a better outcome. Its achievement imposes the same responsibility on all decision makers, regardless of whether they are born female or male.

The Russian Federation has long developed its own approach, which has proved its effectiveness. In our country the approach is meritocratic. We look at talent, ability and merit regardless of gender. We take the view that the highest positions should be held by the most capable members of our society, regardless of their gender. That is why the very notion of gender quotas in our country seems demeaning to women and raises legitimate questions for men. According to the latest statistics, around 40 per cent of Russian diplomats are women, including experts in the most important areas of peace and security. All of them obtained their positions not through the artificial imposition of quotas, but thanks to their abilities and merit.

Madam Chairperson,

Of course, today's discussion would not be complete without highlighting the situation of women in conflict regions. In our view, the importance of the gender factor in strengthening security in areas affected by the actions of armed and terrorist groups should not be overestimated. The primary emphasis here should be on swiftly resolving the crises themselves.

The unprecedented outbreak of violence in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict zone resulting from the attack by Hamas on 7 October is causing a catastrophic rise in the number of civilian casualties on both sides. The Gaza Strip is on the brink of a humanitarian disaster. We deeply sympathize with all the victims, we mourn the dead, and we offer our sincere condolences to their families. There must be an immediate ceasefire and humanitarian corridors to provide urgent assistance to all those in need.

According to the World Health Organization, half of those killed in shelling in the Gaza Strip are women and children. As at 17 October, 115 medical facilities had been attacked, most Palestinian hospitals were not functioning and there were acute shortages of water, electricity and medicines. Most of the innocent residents of Israel who have been injured and taken captive by Hamas militants are also women and children. What is this if not the hell of war?

However, all this apparently does not matter to the US Government in Washington, which was initially opposed to any humanitarian initiatives. By blocking two Russian resolutions in the United Nations Security Council on an immediate ceasefire between Israel and Palestine, the first co-sponsored by dozens of States and supported by numerous Arab countries, and then by vetoing Brazil's calls for peace, they have condemned hundreds of Palestinian and Israeli women and children to die in the ever-growing flames of the conflict. By merely paying lip service through their distorted neoliberal interpretation to the gender resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, they are denying the women of Palestine and Israel their most basic and fundamental right – the right to life.

The same is true of the fake lamentations of the armourers of the Kyiv regime regarding the suffering of the women and children of Ukraine affected by the conflict. This is a cynical demonstration of double standards that has been going on since 2014. We would remind those present of the cover-up by the Kyiv regime, with the backing of Western governments, of real cases of crimes by Ukrainian military personnel committing violence against civilians in the People's Republics of Donetsk and Lugansk. For example, the monitoring mission of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and other human rights organizations have for years been publishing reports on the numerous cases of men and women accused of collaborating with these two republics being beaten, tortured with electricity, threatened with rape and forced to strip. Detainees are not provided with medical care and receive death threats and sexual threats, not only to themselves but also to their families. But for the collective West, which has been obstructing a peaceful settlement for almost a decade, it appears to be the norm for combat aircraft to be sent against the women of Donbas, for NATO military equipment to destroy their homes, and for their children to "sit in cellars" during shelling, as stated by former Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko. I want to stress: these are very courageous, strong-spirited women who have been through a lot. They are now Russian women. And our country will do everything for their protection and safe future.

Madam Chairperson,

This discussion has once again confirmed that no international or regional organization will be able to make a proper contribution to the advancement of the women, peace and security agenda while women representing regions regarded as "undesirable" by some States are denied free expression and the right to life and see their needs neglected. The Russian Federation is doing its utmost to change this state of affairs. We confirm our willingness to share our experience in tackling problems in connection with United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 and to draw on the positive practices of other countries, and remain open to co-operation with the international community on all aspects of this issue on the relevant platforms.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.