

UNITED NATIONS THIRD COMMITTEE – STATEMENT OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
ITEM 66: RIGHTS OF THE CHILD
New York, October 11, 2019

Thank you, Mr. Chair,
Excellencies, dear colleagues,

Bosnia and Herzegovina aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of the European Union. Allow me to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

I would like to thank the UN Secretary General for his report on the steps taken in 2018 to achieve a world fit for children. The report highlights improvements in many aspects of children's well-being, but unfortunately, it identifies many areas with challenges and a significant number of children still being left behind.

Mr. Chair,

As we observe the 30th Anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child this year, I would like to reaffirm the commitment of Bosnia and Herzegovina to upholding and protecting the rights and principles enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. By joining the Global pledge "For Every Child Every Right" we re-affirmed our full respect for the guiding principles of the Convention: non-discrimination; the best interests of the child as a primary consideration in all actions concerning children; the child's inherent right to life, survival and development; and the child's right to express his or her views freely in all matters affecting the child, with those views being given due weight.

In planning and implementing actions on promoting and protecting children's rights, the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina are guided by provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as its three optional protocols, to which my country is signatory.

As one of the first countries to have signed and ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, Bosnia and Herzegovina attaches particular importance to the issue of children in armed conflicts and to the "Children, Not Soldiers" campaign, initiated by the special representative of the UN-Secretary General for children in armed conflicts to end recruitment of children as soldiers.

In order to accelerate the realization of children's rights, Bosnia and Herzegovina has established the Council of Children back in 2013 to serve as a new tool for the development, coordination and realization of agreements for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The purpose of that Council is fostering greater social inclusion of the most vulnerable and excluded children and families, including children from minorities, especially the Roma.

Furthermore, the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina is currently preparing a new Action plan for the period 2020-2023, which determines priority objectives and measures for creating the best possible living conditions for children and families, advancing their psychological growth and social inclusion, as well as participation in decision-making. The Action plan is set forward with the best interest of children and is a mechanism for ensuring better implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. It focuses on eight objectives, which include enhancing the

UNITED NATIONS THIRD COMMITTEE – STATEMENT OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
ITEM 66: RIGHTS OF THE CHILD
New York, October 11, 2019

legal framework of B&H, improving the atmosphere for implementation of the Convention, improving mechanisms of child protection and raising awareness regarding violence against children, strengthening capacities for social and health protection, providing mechanisms of protection for vulnerable groups, especially child refugees, child migrants, and children in conflict with the law.

Mr. Chair,

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight just two of the above-mentioned objectives, namely the right to education and child's right to live in a family environment.

In the framework of the Action plan, the Council of Ministers adopted the Platform for Development of Preschool Education for all children. This state-level strategic framework in education harmonizes preschool education policies with international standards. The preschool enrollment rate for five-year-old children increased significantly, from 31 per cent in 2011/12 to almost 60 per cent in 2018.

Major progress was made in the promotion of children's rights to grow up in a family environment, with a focus on deinstitutionalization of children through prevention of unnecessary family separation, strengthening of family-based alternatives to institutional care, and transformation of public homes for children. A new Foster Care Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina recognizes foster care as a service with financial remuneration.

The campaign “#Every Child Needs a Family” was launched in 2017 in cooperation and with support of the European Union and the UNICEF country team in BiH.

Mr. Chair,

Let me take this opportunity to recognize the UN Country Team in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which continues to support the efforts of Bosnia and Herzegovina to accelerate the universal realization of children's rights by fostering greater social inclusion, especially of the most vulnerable and excluded children and families: children with disabilities, children of minorities, and children in communities that suffer from poverty. This is to be done by reducing disparities and inequalities and strengthening social cohesion among different groups.

We recognize the excellent role of UNICEF as a global leader in promoting and protecting the rights of children and applaud them for proclaiming the principles of “no child left behind” and “reaching even the most marginalized children” in the Strategic Plan, which is in line with achieving the goals of the Agenda 2030.

Mr. Chair,

Bosnia and Herzegovina remains committed to the protection of the rights of children all around the world.

Thank you