

**Your Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Dear Friends,**

It is with great pleasure and honor that I stand before you today on the 18th anniversary of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This commemorative reception not only celebrates our brave soldiers but also symbolizes the partnership between our nation and your esteemed countries and organizations.

Eighteen years ago, the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina were established, marking a significant milestone in our nation's history. Today, we gather here to reflect on the progress made, the challenges overcome, and renew our commitment to a secure and prosperous future for our country.

The journey towards a credible and capable armed force has not been an easy one for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since its inception, our forces have faced numerous challenges, ranging from post-war reconstruction to the ongoing process of integrating our armed forces within the framework of NATO. Despite these hurdles, we have witnessed remarkable advancements, driven by the steadfast dedication and unwavering commitment of our soldiers.

I take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to our armed forces, their commanders, and civilian personnel for their commitment to the principles of democracy, peace, and stability, which has earned a great respect both domestically and internationally. The Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina have consistently demonstrated professionalism, integrity, and determination in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all our international partners and the diplomatic community for their unwavering support in our nation-building endeavors. Your solidarity, assistance, and valuable contributions have played an instrumental role in shaping the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina into what it is today.

As we look ahead, Bosnia and Herzegovina remains steadfast in its dedication to promoting international cooperation and peacekeeping. We strongly believe that investing in training and capacity building is essential for sustainable peace and security worldwide.

In recognition of this, the Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina are proud to announce their continued pledge to subsidize the course related costs for up to four students nominated by the Troop/Police Contributing Countries at the Peace Support Operations Training Center. We firmly believe in the importance of investing in education and

training for the armed forces, and this commitment reflects our determination to provide military and police with the best possible resources to excel in their duties.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Defense is honored to declare its commitment to nominate up to six instructors to the NATO Defense Capacity Building pool of instructors for the United Nations Mine Action Service Mobile Training Teams. As a nation that values the importance of international cooperation, we understand the significance of contributing to the global peacekeeping efforts. By providing qualified instructors to the DCB pool, we aim to share our experiences and knowledge in mine action and contribute to the betterment of international peacekeeping operations.

By pledging to subsidize international students attending UN accredited courses at the PSOTC and nominating instructors to the NATO DBC pool, we hope to make a meaningful contribution to these efforts.

As we move forward, the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina remains committed in its dedication to cooperation with civil structures and contributing to the overall resilience of our society.

Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina commits to cooperation with civil structures within our country and abroad. This commitment is exemplified by our active engagement in assisting the population during natural and other disasters. Two notable examples of our engagement abroad are our assistance in Türkiye after an earthquake and in Slovenia after devastating floods.

### **Ladies and gentlemen,**

A critical aspect of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina's commitment is our dedication to gender equality and parity within our ranks. We recognize that promoting gender equality is not only a matter of human rights but also essential for the effectiveness and credibility of our armed forces. Therefore, we have taken significant steps towards ensuring equal opportunities, representation, and participation for all.

In this pursuit, the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina has actively engaged with the Women, Peace, and Security agenda, demonstrating our commitment to upholding the values embodied in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325.

One significant milestone in our efforts towards gender equality and parity is our involvement in the WPS Chiefs of Defense Network. The Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as an active member, joins other militaries from around the world in advocating for the inclusion of women in decision-making processes and addressing the unique security challenges faced by women and girls during armed conflict.

Furthermore, the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina has implemented comprehensive training programs to sensitize our personnel about the importance of gender equality,

addressing unconscious biases, and promoting a culture of respect and inclusivity. We believe that these measures are crucial in building a more cohesive and effective Armed Forces that value the contributions and perspectives of all its members.

The Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina understand that gender equality is not achieved overnight, but through persistent efforts and collective commitment. We remain resolute in our dedication to this cause and will continue to strive for gender parity within our armed forces.

Moving forward, we are aware of the challenges that lie ahead. Our focus remains on strengthening our defense capabilities, fostering regional cooperation, and continuing our efforts towards full NATO integration. We are committed to upholding the principles of international humanitarian law and peacekeeping, and we will actively contribute to global security as a responsible member of the international community.

**Excellencies, ladies, and gentlemen,**

As we celebrate this occasion, let us remember all those who have sacrificed their lives in the line of duty. Let their memory inspire us to cherish and protect the hard-earned peace we enjoy today. It is through unity, understanding, and cooperation that we can build a better future, where the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to serve as a beacon of hope and security.

In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude once again to all our international partners and the diplomatic corps for your presence here today and for your continued support. Together, we can strengthen peace, stability, and prosperity in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and contribute to a safer and more secure world.

Thank you.