



## **Economic and Social Council**

Distr.: General  
8 December 2020

Original: English

---

### **Commission on the Status of Women**

#### **Sixty-fifth session**

15–26 March 2021

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and  
to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly  
entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and  
peace for the twenty-first century”**

### **Statement submitted by Project 1948 Foundation, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

---

\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

On behalf of civil society in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Project 1948 Foundation would like to express our deepest gratitude as we provide a written statement for the Commission on the Status of Women, 2021.

At Project 1948 Foundation, we are dedicated to enhancing gender equality and empowering women and girls in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The country where we work has been placed as the last member state to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

We are confident that women belong in all places that decisions are being made. As candidates, decision-makers, and voters, Bosnia and Herzegovina women are invisible in public life, including democracy campaigns. And, when women are visible politically, they often are presented negatively compared to their male counterparts, and women are marginalized, abused, and often their views and voices are dismissed.

Our photo-voice program helps the global community see through a new lens by telling the story of community concerns through media documentation while amplifying the voice of civil society and using innovative data as a platform for policy-change. Together, our work has unearthed a shared challenge that unites Bosnia and Herzegovina's tripartite state; women make up 50.9 per cent of the population, but less than a quarter of state parliamentarians, just 18 per cent of local councilors, and 5 per cent of mayors.

We strongly urge the United Nations, the Bosnia and Herzegovina tripartite presidency, member states, civil society, and the private sector to move forward in joint efforts in helping Bosnia and Herzegovina achieve the 2030 Agenda with gender inclusiveness furthering the empowerment of women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls across Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Inextricably linked, the improvement of ways to empower women and girls disproportionately affected by an absence of public life harms Bosnia and Herzegovina's journey towards gender parity by 2030. The invisibility of women in politics is a matter of equality. When women are under-represented in decision-making, agreements like the Dayton Peace Accords reach a quick resolution. With a more gender-inclusive approach to decisions, including policies and peace agreements, women are empowered to participate at the same level as men. Women add value that would increase Bosnia and Herzegovina's Gross Domestic Product by at least 16 per cent.

On behalf of women and girls in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we urge the member state to do what it takes to fulfill its commitment to the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. Women have the right to take part in the government of their country independent of gender identity, ethnic background, or socioeconomic status. Women have the right to participate in the formulation of government policy and its implementation, to hold public office and perform all available functions at all levels of government, and the right to participate in non-governmental organizations or associations concerned with the public and political life in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We must commit to not only invest in gender parity, access to public life and decision-making for gender inclusiveness, and the empowerment of women and girls, but we must understand how imperative it is to budget for it. And, by our non-governmental organization estimate, it is clear that meeting such investment in a post-war economy is reachable.

We see obstacles framed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where our organization conducts much of its work for the successful and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. We would like to thank the United Nations for their continued support and partnerships that have emerged through the Economic and Social Council with United Nations Volunteers and the United Nations House of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We strongly encourage everyone in the room to reflect on what it means to say, “Women belong in all places where decisions are being made.” Lastly, Project 1948 Foundation would like to reaffirm our commitment to meet the Beijing Declaration on Platform for Action with decision-makers from a tripartite government and United Nations leaders worldwide.

---