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Statement by

H.E. Mr. Czeslaw Walek

Head of the Czech Delegation, Deputy Minister for Human
Rights of the Czech Republic

at 54th session of the Commission on the Status of Women
High Level Plenary

New York, 2 March 2010

Mr. Chair,

Your Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

It is an honor and privilege to address this session of the 54th Commission on the Status of Women on the occasion of celebrating the fifteenth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action on behalf of the Czech Republic. Allow me to commend the Commission on its important work and congratulate on assuming the important duty to guide us through the work ahead. Aligning with the Spanish statement on behalf of the European Union, I reassert the commitment of the Czech government to the Beijing Platform for Action as well as Millennium Development Goals.

Talking about particular achievements of my country in this area I believe that it is an existence of the Council for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men as a basic consultative mechanism of the Czech government with representatives of civil society on gender issues. The role of the Council, which has been established in 2001, is to consult, initiate and advice on governmental policies from gender perspective. Council consist of 28 members, half of which are representatives of the government (mostly deputy ministers) and half of which are representatives of civil society, experts on gender issues. Currently, the Council has four committees concerned with specific topics – reconciliation of work and private life, institutional support for equality of women and men, prevention of domestic violence and equal representation of women and men in politics. The Council as such represents the mechanism of involvement and cooperation with civil society organizations, especially women’s organizations at the country level, which is an essential point in implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Active promotion of gender equality is a priority for my government; it is a part of its Policy Statement. On policy level the government adopted a National Action Plan, called “Priorities and Procedures of the Government in Promoting Equal Opportunities for Women and Men” to implement the obligations originating from the Beijing Platform for Action. The fulfilment is annually evaluated and updated by the Government. The Plan consists of seven critical areas, which generally derive from the Beijing Platform for Action and also from the EU Roadmap for equality between women and men. It includes inter alia institutional support for gender equality, women and men in decision-making, gender-based violence or equal opportunities for women and men at work, including support for the reconciliation of work and private life.

At the present time the Minister's for Human Rights Michael Kocáb main focus in area of gender equality is aimed at a draft amendment of electoral acts which should bring a minimum of 30 percent of both women and men on the electoral candidate lists. The Minister now strongly advocates this crucial measure among politicians and public as well.

Mr. Chair, aligning with the Spanish statement on behalf of the European Union I would like to welcome efforts on creating the new gender entity since a coordinated international approach is a big step forward to promote gender equality around the world. As many already pointed out there are few indispensable elements, when talking about such entity, these are: sufficient operation capacity on the country level, sufficient funding and most importantly civil society participation. We join other EU countries in its priority to bring this process to a successful conclusion during 2010.

Mr. Chair,

A successful enforcing of the gender equality is a barometer of a development of a particular society. The more gender equality, the more satisfaction with own life, the easier way from the economic and financial crisis, the more in the new world we are. We can not and must not go back, and follow the old, ancient behavioral patterns and customs with obligatory private woman and public man. Actually it is impossible. We have to go ahead. One of the effective tools to do this is undoubtedly the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Czech government strongly believes gender equality is a keystone of democracy and will continue to struggle to fulfill the commitment of promoting human rights of all.

Thank you