



CONSIDERATION OF THE UPR REPORT OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Mr President,

This statement is read on behalf of Save the Children, the Working Group on Child Rights and Protection and the CSOs coalition 'Stronger Voice for Children'. We welcome the report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the acceptance by the Government of most UPR recommendations regarding children's rights.

1. Violence against Children

In particular, we welcome the government's acceptance of UPR recommendations 107.74, 107.75 and 107.88 related to violence against children, calling for the explicit legal prohibition of corporal punishment of children in all settings, enacting legislation explicitly prohibiting the practice and implementing the Strategy on Combating Violence against children 2011-2015. Violence against children is hidden and not yet perceived as a social issue. Verbal and psychological violence and bullying, particularly cyber violence and bullying are not recognised as an increasing danger, with the daily use of social media by most of children and adolescents. The regulations and standard which are applied in the protection of children from violence in "real life", should be applied in the protection of children from violence, abuse and exploitation on the internet, adapted to the specificity of the virtual space.

We call on the government to implement these recommendations, in particular by defining strategies and plans for the protection of children from violence, abuse and exploitation on the internet and protect children from harmful content.

2. Children without parental care

UPR recommendations 107.18 call on the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina to step up its efforts to guarantee children's rights, particularly in the field of social protection and education. Though no specific recommendations were put forward by the UPR working group with regards to children without parental care, we view it as an integral component of the right of all children to social protection.

In this respect, we call on the government to take the following measures:

- a. adopt nationwide strategies for deinstitutionalisation of child care and re-allocate existing budget funds from institutional to alternative family-based forms of care;
- b. to ensure the development of services and capacity building for childcare professionals to adequately support vulnerable parents and their children;
- c. to ensure the legal prohibition of the placement of children under the age of 3 in any form of residential care in all relevant entity and cantonal legislation on social protection.

The Working Group on Child Rights and Protection and CSOs coalition 'Stronger Voice for Children' appreciate the Government's willingness to consult with civil society in the UPR process and is looking forward to the Government's continued cooperation with civil society organisations in the follow-up to the UPR recommendations.

Thank you.