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STATEMENT by
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Access and Participation of Women in Education and
Science in the Republic of Croatia

Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-fifth session

Priority Theme:

**Access and participation of women and girls to
education, training, science and technology, including
for the promotion of women's equal access to
employment and decent work**

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Mr. Chairman (Chairpersons), distinguished delegates, participants,

It is my great pleasure to address the Commission on the Status of Women, and to contribute to the priority theme Access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work.

The Republic of Croatia strongly supports the role of the UN and the efforts it invests in many countries worldwide, to improve education and literacy as a part of fundamental women's human rights, as well as one of the most important Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. Chairman, allow me to take this opportunity to share with you some facts and figures on the situation in this area pertaining to the Republic of Croatia.

I am proud of the fact that, no gender gap in access to education has been recorded: male and female students are equally represented at all levels of education. However, women are deprived in the total number of students who enrol in universities (with 55%), as well as in the total number of students who graduate (with 59%). It is important to add that 76% of all graduates in science, technology and engineering are women.

This increasing trend of highly educated women has been continuous for the last forty years. If this development continues we can expect significant growth in the labour market – for the benefit of women.

Nevertheless, the choice for occupation for women in Croatia is still influenced by traditional gender roles. For instance, among university graduates, women are still underrepresented in the field of computer sciences (16,7%) and engineering (20,4%), while men are overrepresented in this area. However, by way of contrast, women make up 73% of all authors of scientific publications.

It is important to note here recent research which shows that approximately 80% of Croatian citizens support the equal rights of both genders to education.

On the basis of these facts, national strategic priorities in the educational sector comprise the introduction of gender-sensitive education at all levels, including the removal of gender stereotyping, systematic gender equality training for teachers, staff and public awareness campaigns. These priorities are being implemented through various

Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality, MDGs national indicators, and are clearly regulated under Croatia's Gender Equality Act.

Recently introduced measures aiming at reaching national indicators in this area included amongst other things; a new *Učebnikohidaru* which prescribes the removal of stereotypes from school textbooks, gender equality in teacher training programme, and initiatives to include gender equality into human rights education curriculum.

Distinguished participants; in addition, 1 female director position out of 15 33% women employed in the research and development sector has reached gender parity and made significant progress. The fastest growth of female participation in research sector has occurred in the business sector where their ratio amount of 44% in the government research sector, women mainly representing 52%.

Turning to higher education, with 44% of the total number of academic staff being women, in Croatia we have nearly reached equal representation. However, female representation at the full professor rank is lower and increases to the level of lecturers and assistants where women make up 53%. In higher education institutions only 14% of women hold rector, and 17% dean positions. Despite this, the number of women holding leading positions in public research institutes is notably better, with 40% of directors are women.

In conclusion, allow me to highlight that our goal and priority in the area of science, research and development is to further stimulate girls' development from early schooling in the so called "male area of interest" and continue by studying in the technical fields such as engineering and information technology. We believe that this is the necessary path to pursue in order to create a competitive workforce in a world led by new technologies and highly skilled labor market.

Thank you very much for your attention.