



**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR KHOJESTA FANA
EBRAHIMKHEL FOR CND AND CCPCJ EVENT – “USING
GENDER INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION IN THE WORK OF
VIENNA-BASED INTERGOVERNMENTAL BODIES”**

Monday 25 November 2019; 10:00 a.m.; Room C1, Vienna International
Centre

H.E. Ambassador Alena Kupchyna, Chair of the CCPCJ
H.E. Ambassador Abbaker Altayeb Bakhet, Chair of the CND
Esteemed International Gender Champions,
Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me thank the Secretariat to the Governing Bodies for organizing this event that is very near and dear to me. I wish also to thank H.E. Ms. Alena Kupchyna and H.E. Mr. Mirghani Abbaker Altayeb Bakhet for their insightful remarks.

One of the main priorities of the strategic plan of the Embassy and the Permanent Mission of Afghanistan in Vienna is women empowerment. Women empowerment is a priority for the Government of Afghanistan and we stand committed to promoting and protecting human rights and especially women's rights.

Women are the majority and moving reality for our future. Afghanistan is a young democracy and over 65% of the population in Afghanistan is under the age of 25 and more than half of this young population are girls and young women. This is the reason of our optimism for the future of Afghanistan - The youth, girls and boys.

Ladies and gentleman,

As a first female Ambassador of Afghanistan in Vienna, I'm greatly honoured to have joined the *International Gender Champions*, which gives me the opportunity to continue my work in promoting equal rights for men and women.

As an International Gender Champion I have pledged to contribute to the empowerment of women and to address existing disparities between men and women, with a view to eventually achieving gender equality.

I am committed to closely cooperate with colleagues at the Vienna-based organizations to advance women's rights and to tackle violence against women, inclusion through resolutions, declarations and statements.

I am dedicated to help to facilitate provision of additional education and professional opportunities for girls and women.

I am inspired to convince men and women about the advantages and necessity of gender parity, and to generate momentum to realize our group's vision of full gender equality as a pre-requisite for peace, human rights, prosperity and well-being of all.

Ladies and gentleman,

On a personal note, let me say that I had a leading role in the creation of Afghanistan's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (**NAP 1325**) and I have also established the **Association of Afghan Women Diplomats**.

My country has developed a **National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security**. This plan focuses on women empowerment in four pillars: (1) Participation, (2) Protection, (3) Prevention and (4) Relief and Recovery.

As part of the **protection pillar** of our Plan, we have improved our **legal structure** through the enforcement and amendment of legislations, to safeguard women, from all types of violence and discrimination.

Our revised **Penal Code**, which entered into force in February 2018, has been expanded in criminalizing all forms of conflict-related sexual violence, as a war crime, crime against humanity, and an act of genocide. Under our law on *Elimination of violence against women* (EVAW law) various awareness-raising activities are being carried out, at all levels nationwide, including in provincial committees. All cases of crimes against women, are investigated and referred to the judicial institutions, based on various national legislations, and EVAW Law. Our security and judicial institutions have taken new measures for accountability of crimes committed against women, including sexual violence. These measures have had a notable impact on deterrence, leading to a decrease in crimes against women.

We have also increased the number of female prosecutors and judges so that women are able to speak openly about any alleged crime. This has been an effective reform in the **judiciary sector**, where women are now more able to speak-up about any violence against them.

We are pleased to report that public awareness initiatives have reached new levels of progress, broadening wide network of actors and advocates. As such, public lectures, workshops, and conversations on EVAW law are conducted in collaboration with Islamic figures, religious schools, teachers, and other figures.

I am proud to have played a **leading role** with my colleagues in the development of the NAP and as a member of the Steering Committee will continue to have a central coordinating role for the implementation of this plan and to achieve our goals regarding women empowerment in

Afghanistan and to share our lesson learned and best practices regarding women empowerment in the Region and abroad.

Ladies and gentleman,

Women now hold positions in the Government and 28 percent of seats in the Parliament; they have senior positions in the security forces and in the justice sector. Women in Afghanistan engage in start-ups and other private sector businesses, and we have national women teams in football and cycling, to name only a few areas of progress.

In conclusion, let me say that despite the tremendous gains that have been made in Afghanistan on women empowerment in recent years, much remains to be done in terms of gender equality. But I am sure that with the increased political will of the government to address gender inequality and empower women there is a window of opportunity to push women's rights and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda forward in Afghanistan.

To celebrate the week of Eliminations of Violence against Women I would like to invited you to the panel discussion specific to Afghan women empowerment on 27 November at the VIC.

Thank you!