Excellencies,
Distinguished members of the Expert Mechanism,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor to be with you today. Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this important discussion, drawing on my country's experience in advancing the right to development by prioritizing peace and security as the foundation of progress. Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a post-conflict country, is often highlighted in UN discussions as a case offering practical, field-tested "good practices" that link peace and security with the right to development.

In the years following the conflict, and with the establishment of a constitutional order under the Dayton Peace Agreement, Bosnia and Herzegovina embarked on a complex recovery process—consolidating peace, preserving stability, strengthening democratic institutions, and promoting the rule of law. We recognized early on that peace is not only a precondition for development, but an essential component of meaningful social and economic progress.

This is what makes Bosnia and Herzegovina a **useful example** of how post-conflict societies can operationalize the right to development through peace and security frameworks.

We do not claim perfection in our practices, nor do we suggest that we excel in every area on the agenda. However, we stand as a meaningful example of the role of diplomacy and mediation in post-conflict peacebuilding and institution-building. Our experience underscores the importance of support from international and regional organizations, the value of regional alliances and cooperation, and the central role of the rule of law in restoring trust, supporting reconciliation, and fostering inclusive and just societies.

At the same time, we openly acknowledge the **shortcomings within our system**—areas that require continued improvement to ensure the full and equal enjoyment of rights for all our citizens. Yet, despite these challenges, we have made significant strides and demonstrated leadership in areas long recognized as critical to the peace and security agenda.

This is particularly evident in our **commitment to gender inclusion and the empowerment of women** in Bosnia and Herzegovina across multiple spheres. Not least among these efforts is our support for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence—empowering them to seek justice, rebuild their lives emotionally, economically, and socially, and share their stories. In doing so, we hope to contribute

to healing, a sense of closure, reconciliation, truth, and to give purpose through education for future generations.

So, dear colleagues, allow me to highlight some of our efforts and achievements towards building a stable and inclusive society grounded in the rule of law, democratic governance, and respect for human rights, which underscore the importance of resilience, cooperation, and inclusive policies in shaping a stable and prosperous future for all citizens.

By consolidating peace and security, we have created a safer environment for our citizens and conditions conducive to economic growth, investment, and the effective delivery of public services, which in turn enabled significant international engagement in institution-building, disarmament, security sector reform, refugee return, economic recovery, rule of law, and transitional justice. With the support of the United Nations and its agencies, the European Union, NATO, the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Monetary Fund, and other partners, Bosnia and Herzegovina implemented wide-ranging reconstruction and stabilization measures, followed by investments in infrastructure, education, and economic reform have been supported by a more secure and predictable climate, strengthening social cohesion and expanding economic opportunity.

Regional and international integration has played a vital role. Our strategic orientation toward EU and NATO integration reflects a long-term commitment to peace, stability, and development. Engagement with the European Union, including through the Stabilization and Association Agreement and candidate status, has provided a framework for advancing reforms. Similarly, membership in the Council of Europe and cooperation with the OSCE have helped align legislation with European human rights standards and strengthen democratic oversight of the security sector.

In disarmament and demining, supported by international partners such as UNDP, Bosnia and Herzegovina has reduced risks from surplus weapons and unexploded ordnance. The work of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Center has enabled not only the active addressing of this devastating remnant of war, but also the safe use of land, supporting returns, agriculture, local economic activity, and tourism, as well as building expertise that was valuable and recognized.

We have also undertaken comprehensive **security sector reform**. The 2005 defense reform established unified armed forces under civilian control, contributing to trust-building and institutional coherence. Complementary reforms in policing, governance, and anti-corruption demonstrate that security must be understood

broadly—as accountability, rule of law, and public trust. Through participation in peacekeeping missions and cooperation with international organizations, Bosnia and Herzegovina has evolved from a recipient of assistance into a contributor to global peace and security. It positioned BiH as both a **beneficiary and a provider of knowledge on peace and security** by sharing expertise from our own post-conflict experience.

Economic recovery has been supported by infrastructure development and private-sector growth. Strong monetary stability, a robust banking system, and liberalized trade are now among our key strengths. **Monetary stability**, in particular, has created a predictable environment for citizens and investors alike, reaffirming the close link between economic and human security. Improved connectivity, energy investments, and the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises have supported diversification and regional integration, though continued reforms remain necessary.

Dear colleagues,

Efforts to strengthen the rule of law and advance reconciliation reflect our holistic and inclusive approach to development and deep understanding of their interconnection.

Strong, inclusive, and accountable institutions are the backbone of both peace and sustainable development. Strengthening the rule of law, justice systems, and access to justice remains essential. For example, property law reforms enabling individuals to reclaim their homes were central to the successful return of over one million displaced persons, contributing not only to justice but also to economic recovery, social cohesion, and dignity. Since 2019, the European Union has emphasized rule-of-law reforms as a key requirement for accession. Efforts continue to align institutions with European standards, enhance accountability, and safeguard judicial independence, including through new legislation targeting organized crime and reinforcing legal certainty.

However, one sentence from the draft study resonated with us, and there we still face an uphill battle. **Guarantees of truth, justice, memory, reparation, and institutional reform must lie at the foundation of any measure aimed at the return to peace and the rule of law.** Every day in BiH, in fact, proves how important it is. Moving from “negative peace,” or the absence of war, to “positive peace,” or the presence of justice, requires shifting from merely stopping violence to addressing structural inequality, inequity, and the root causes of conflict through coordinated, community-level peacebuilding that enables social cohesion. Ongoing initiatives, such as “Sustaining Peace and Social Cohesion in Bosnia and Herzegovina” and “Dialogue for the Future,” promote dialogue, meaningful youth

engagement, reconciliation, and inter-community cooperation, supporting long-term stability across generations.

We are particularly proud of our efforts to support and engage **women** in dialogues on reconciliation, security, and development. **Gender inclusion** is treated not only as a matter of equality, but as a core security strategy and driver of sustainable development. From increasing the number of women in the police, military, and diplomatic service to supporting survivors of wartime violence, we recognize the essential role women play in building lasting peace.

In 2010, Bosnia and Herzegovina became the first country in Southeast Europe to adopt a national action plan for UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Since then, multiple action plans have been implemented, demonstrating sustained institutional commitment in strengthening women's participation in public life and the security sector. At the same time, we recognize that true security is not measured solely by representation, but by the extent to which women can meaningfully shape their communities and influence policymaking. Continued efforts are needed to fully realize this goal.

By pioneering a human security approach, we have linked peacebuilding to the right to development, recognizing that security encompasses economic, social, and human rights. This approach shifts the focus from state-centered security to the everyday safety and well-being of individuals, addressing issues such as human trafficking, support for survivors of war, small arms control, and community-level resilience. Bosnia and Herzegovina was the first country to integrate this concept into its Women, Peace, and Security action plans, enabling a more comprehensive and gender-responsive understanding of security.

Excellencies,

Our experience reaffirms that peace, security, and development are mutually reinforcing and cannot be addressed in isolation. Progress in one depends on sustained commitment to all three.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has achieved stability and recovery, though **not yet a deep transformation**. It is best understood as a stabilized post-conflict state—where peace has endured, and development has advanced, but both remain constrained by **structural challenges**. The constitutional structure established by the Dayton Peace Agreement, while essential to ending the war, has contributed to political fragmentation and slowed reform processes. Issues such as institutional division, corruption, and youth emigration underscore the need for continued commitment to reform and institutional strengthening.

Therefore, today, **our development strategies** reflect a commitment to human rights, sustainability, and alignment with international standards. Through the implementation of the SDGs, we are moving from post-conflict recovery to long-term, rights-based development. The BiH 2030 Strategic Framework prioritizes good governance, sustainable economic growth, and a society of equal opportunities, alongside cross-cutting priorities such as investing in human capital and leaving no one behind.

Our key "good practice" lies not in a single policy, but in a holistic model that:

- integrates peace, security, and development
- prioritizes inclusion, particularly of women, youth, and civil society
- operates across local, regional, and global levels
- treats development as both a human right and a tool for peacebuilding.

We remain committed to contributing to this dialogue.

Thank you.