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Statement urges greater role for women in security sector

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BELGRADE -- Representatives of the Bosnia, Macedonia, Serbia and the UN Development Program signed a joint statement on greater engagement of women in the security sector.



The signing ceremony in Belgrade this Thursday officially launched a project dubbed "Support for Gender Mainstreaming in Security Sector Reform in the Western Balkans", Serbian Defense Minister Dragan Šutanovac said.

Šutanovac said that today women have an important role in the armed forces, providing a new quality and capacity in response to security challenges and global threats.

The Serbian minister underlined that in this respect gender

bears no significance, but the focus is on knowledge and abilities, and pointed to the importance of regional cooperation in maintenance of security and stability.

"By the adoption of the National Action Plan for the implementation of UN Security Council's Resolution 1325, Serbia has become one of 34 countries which have adopted such documents on women, peace and security," he noted.

Representative of Sweden, Norway, and the UN Development Program (UNDP) backed women's greater engagement in the security sector, and the efforts that Serbia and other regional states have made in this domain.

Swedish Ambassador to Serbia Christer Asp expressed satisfaction that his country is involved in a project which is to enable equality between women and men.

Asp underlined that the role of women is very important in resolution of conflicts and maintenance of peace and stability, while Norway's Defense Attaché to Serbia Esben Aass presented the experience of the Norwegian army in recruitment and retention of female personnel.

Aass said that in Norway's army the rights of women and men are equal, adding that women perform responsible duties such as fighter pilot or command in missions in Afghanistan.

UN Development Program Resident Representative William Infante stated that the realization of the project, which was launched on Thursday, will contribute to the stability in the west Balkan region.

Infante commended the Serbian Defense Ministry's efforts in the domain of gender equality, and announced further UN support to such activities.