Statement to UN Human Rights Council 43rd session (24 February - 20 March 2020)
Item 6: Universal Periodic Review

Statement on Bosnia and Herzegovina

Countering the impact of austerity measures
The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom welcomes that Bosnia and Herzegovina accepted many recommendations regarding the respect, protection and promotion of economic, social and cultural rights.

However, entity-level governments continue to push forth economic reforms conditioning economic growth to structural reforms and fiscal consolidation, ultimately leading to cuts in public spending. Despite the foreseeable impacts of the reforms on inequalities (including on gender inequality), the reforms are not planned with a human rights-based and gender-sensitive approach. Civil society at large, including women’s human rights groups, remains excluded throughout the planning and implementation phase of economic reforms. In a country that is still recovering from war, this can have particularly detrimental consequences.

Instead, the entity-level governments should further invest into the realization of economic, social and cultural rights, including by working towards full employment, universal social protection and healthcare, socially-responsible and environmentally-sound investments, and in human rights and sustainable development for all. In addition, we urge them to introduce mandatory ex-ante and ex-post gender and human rights impact assessments into the planning and implementation of economic reforms and to create mechanisms to ensure systematic, meaningful and effective consultations with a broad spectrum of civil society organisations, in particular with women’s groups, in line with recommendation 120.164,1 also accepted by Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees
WILPF welcomes that Bosnia and Herzegovina supported recommendation 120.201 regarding effective access to international protection and humane and lawful conditions of detention and accommodation of refugees and migrants.2 The government further stated that recommendation 120.202, which addresses similar issues,3 is in the process of implementation.

Considering the upcoming spring and the expectation that the number of arriving asylum seekers and migrants to the country will increase due to more favourable weather conditions, the establishment of sufficient and decent accommodation centres and services is of utmost importance. We urge the newly appointed Minister of Security to move away from a securitized approach to migration, which he has announced shortly after his appointment4 and to instead focus on the meaningful and effective

1 120.164 Implement the national action plan for gender equality and take action to improve women’s rights and empowerment by ensuring their meaningful participation in all political and economic processes (Germany).
2 120.201 Take appropriate measures to provide refugees and migrants with effective access to international protection in line with international standards (Afghanistan).
3 120.202 Ensure humane and lawful conditions of detention and accommodation of migrants, including by implementing appropriate procedures, oversight mechanisms and effective coordination within government, especially to prevent the trafficking and abuse of women and girls (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland).

Consultative Status with UN ECOSOC, UNCTAD and UNESCO.
Special Consultative Relations with FAO, ILO and UNICEF.
implementation of recommendations 120.111, 120.201 – 120.205, and 120.77, all accepted by Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In particular, we urge the government to ensure that conditions of detention and accommodation of asylum-seekers and migrants be in line with its human rights obligations, and that gender-sensitive and child-sensitive measures be put in place at reception centres to respond to the specific needs of women, girls, and unaccompanied children, not least with respect to access to healthcare and education. Appropriate human rights-based procedures and mechanisms must also be put in place to protect and assist women, girls, and unaccompanied children from the risk of trafficking, gender-based violence, and violence generated from the precarious conditions in which they find themselves.

5 120.111 Strengthen measures to facilitate birth registration of girls and boys born abroad or whose parents are migrants or asylum seekers (Mexico).
6 120.201 Take appropriate measures to provide refugees and migrants with effective access to international protection in line with the international standards (Afghanistan); 120.202 Ensure humane and lawful conditions of detention and accommodation of migrants, including by implementing appropriate procedures, oversight mechanisms and effective coordination within government, especially to prevent the trafficking and abuse of women and girls (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland); 120.203 Make the greatest efforts in relation to the situation of migrants and asylum seekers, improving reception conditions and, in particular, prohibiting the deprivation of liberty of unaccompanied minors, and ensuring that they have access to education and health services (Uruguay); 120.204 Promote a stable social and economic development that takes into account the cultural, social and spiritual needs of the population, so as to limit the phenomenon of migration while also encouraging the return of refugees and exiles (Holy See); 120.205 Improve reception conditions for asylum seekers and migrants increasing housing capacities, including protection-sensitive housing for vulnerable categories (Honduras).
7 120.77 Continue national efforts to combat trafficking in human beings, particularly of women and children and provide necessary care for the victims (Egypt).
8 In particular those that are not accommodated in official refugee and migrant centres, but instead find shelters in abandoned houses, parks, railway stations, etc.