**Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law**

 **Widening the Democratic Space: the role of youth in public decision-making”.**

 **Room XVII, Palais des Nations**

Monday, 21 November 2016

10:00 - 13:00, Statement of the Ambassador of Bulgaria, H.E. Deyana Kostadinova

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement of the European Union.

Young people represent more than a hope for a brighter future – they embody the quest and inspiration for a more peaceful present. Youth has already proven that it possesses the vision, the creativity and the capacity to play a significant role in local, national and global decision-making processes. It is important that all countries ensure meaningful participation of young people at all levels and consider them.

The role of young people has been recognized for the first time in a global document with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Having in mind that the young people have the potential and the capacity to contribute significantly to translate the Goals into concrete action, the Bulgarian President Rosen Plevneliev has started the consultations on the National Program of Bulgaria for the SDGs implementation with a Youth Forum in December 2015. As a result, the young people of our country are ready to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

We must create the adequate mechanisms for involving young people in decision-making process on local, national and global level. An example of an effective form of youth participation is the UN Youth Delegates` Program which allows young people to participate in the work of the UN and advocate for youth issues. In addition, choosing cities for youth capitals contributes to promote youth participation. We are proud that the Bulgarian city of Varna has been selected as Youth capital for 2017 and the efforts of our young people have been recognized.

Young people should be given the opportunity to be part of building the world we want and shaping our common future based on human rights and fundamental values such as equity, equality and social justice.

Thank you!