**79th session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women**

**General discussion “Equality and non-discrimination with a focus on indigenous women and girls and intersecting forms of discrimination”**

**Intervention by First Deputy Foreign Minister of Ukraine Emine DZHAPAROVA**

*June 24, 2021*

*Madame Chair,*

I am grateful for the opportunity to share the experience of Ukraine's indigenous women.

Ukraine is committed to its obligation in the fields of both gender equality and the rights of indigenous people.

I personally attest to this by representing here the leadership of the Foreign Ministry and the Crimean Tatars indigenous people.

Further to the protection of indigenous people as enshrined in our Constitution, the President of Ukraine has submitted to the Parliament a draft Law "On Indigenous People". It aims to promote the rights of indigenous peoples, as prescribed by respective UN declaration.

However, Moscow has launched disinformation campaign to discredit these efforts. Such disinformation campaigns go hand in hand with the Russian armed aggression since 2014.

In particular, I represent here 1.5 million Ukrainian citizens who escaped the Russian occupation of Crimea and Donbas. 60% of those who fled are women and girls.

Since Stalin's deportation in 1944, Crimean Tatars women have once again to stand in defense of their people under the current Russian occupation of Crimea.

As many Crimean Tatar men are detained, for women it means to be both a breadwinner and champion for justice in the face of Islamophobia, sexism and intimidation.

There is a special story of a 31 years old Crimean Tatar woman – Fatma Ismailova. In 2016 her husband was detained under the pretext of terrorism and received over 13 years of prison. Further, the occupant detained her father who suffered a heart attack at that moment. Later she learned that her brother was detained as well.

Fatma decided to fight. She took part in press conferences, she staged a series of one-person pickets, she attended countless mockery trials in Russia. For me she is a symbol of bravery and devotion. Together with many others.

The voices of Crimean Tatar women deserve to be heard and I wish to call on the international community to pay close attention to the plight of Ukraine's indigenous women under Russian occupation and adequately react to violations of their rights.

Thank you.