



22 March 2019, New York – Closing statement delivered on behalf of the European Union at the 63rd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

Thank you Madame Chair.

I take the floor on behalf of the EU and its Member States. May we first extend our warm thanks to the Chair, the facilitator, all members of the bureau and UN Women for their commitment, patience and tenacity - especially in the face of hostile external pressure - in reaching today's positive outcome. We would like to take this opportunity to condemn in the strongest terms the pressure and harassment that have targeted our facilitator in the past few days. We would also like to pay tribute to the spirit that has prevailed during these negotiations, in spite of the challenges and different stances on sensitive topics.

The EU extends its appreciation to all other stakeholders involved in this process, including civil society representatives. Civil society will have an important contribution to make in translating the commitments we have agreed today into action on the ground.

For the first time ever, this year's session of the Commission on the Status of Women has focused on the role of social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. The Agreed Conclusions send a clear signal of the critical importance attached by the international community to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, in all their diversity. They recognise that - in a world beset by long-standing and new challenges - social protection, public services and access to sustainable infrastructure are indispensable to realising those goals and that in their absence, significant hurdles, including violence, unequal sharing of care and domestic responsibilities between women and men as well as persistent gender stereotypes prevent the achievement of gender equality and women and girls' full enjoyment of their human rights. We are particularly glad that we have tackled some key issues reflected in the text, such as the right to social security, universal access to social protection, eliminating violence against women and girls, and the crucial role of civil society and women human rights defenders, among others.



The EU will take its full part to turn the recommendations agreed today into actions. The EU remains committed to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the ICPD and the outcomes of their review conferences and remains committed to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), in this context. Having that in mind, the EU reaffirms the its commitment to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the right of every individual to have full control over, and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, free from discrimination, coercion and violence.

The achievement today is all the more noteworthy given the wider context. As the UN Secretary General said in his address to CSW 63, the pushback against women’s rights is “deep, pervasive and relentless”. Let the Agreed Conclusions send a clear message that this pushback will not be tolerated and that we will all work together to make these commitments a living reality for all women and girls across the globe.