

**UN Commission on the Status of Women, 63nd Session
11 – 22 March 2019**

Statement by Ireland

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Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union.

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates,

I am honoured to address the Commission today. We meet at a critical time for the rights of women and girls as we prepare to celebrate 25 years since Beijing and the tenth anniversary of UN Women.

Ireland is a small island on the edge of Europe but, as a nation committed to a rules based multi-lateral order, we have put ourselves at the heart of the global community. This year we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Irish parliament, of which I am a proud member. One of the first acts of my predecessors in 1919

was to issue a message to the free nations of the world in which Ireland stated her belief *“in freedom and justice as the fundamental principles of international law; because she believes in a frank co-operation between the peoples for equal rights.”*

One hundred years later, Ireland is still a country which puts human rights at the core of its foreign policy and aims for freedom and justice for all. Just last week, the Irish Government launched *“A Better World”* our new Policy for International Development, a plan for Ireland to play its part in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, starting with a commitment to deliver the target of 0.7 % of Gross National Income (GNI) to official development assistance by 2030.

A Better World sets out our vision of the world we want to live in in 2030, a world that is more equal, peaceful and sustainable. It identifies four policy priorities and the first of these is gender equality, which, we realise, is fundamental if we are to reach the furthest behind first. All too often, it is women and girls who are the hardest hit by the effects of extreme poverty, climate change and conflict. We know that empowering women and girls leads to better socio-economic outcomes, not only for them but for all members of society. That is why we will support women’s participation in political decision making and in international peacebuilding. This reality

underpins our intent to prioritise education and to fund a new initiative for women's economic empowerment. And it explains why we will work with partners to expand women and girls' choices and capabilities, give women, in all their diversity, an equal voice and end violence against women and girls.

Ireland marked International Women's day last Friday by ratifying the *Istanbul Convention*, the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combatting violence against women and domestic violence. Having prioritised enacting the necessary legislation, the Irish Government met specially on that day to take this decision.

Our priority theme at CSW this year – social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure – was well chosen. These three issues are essential enablers of gender equality. Their absence makes the struggle for the rights of women and girls that much harder. Through our National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017-2020, the Irish Government is working to address them. In the last week, we published legislation on gender pay reporting and we have just implemented an Act to address precarious working conditions. We have introduced provision for termination of pregnancy following a referendum to remove the constitutional ban. On foot of a successful pilot project, we are now rolling out equality budgeting. Gender equality is now a 'must have'

not just a 'nice to have'. Together with other inclusive policy goals it is being mainstreamed within decisions on how public moneys are allocated in Ireland.

Madam Chair,

Advancing gender equality at home and overseas is and will continue to be a priority for the Irish Government. We will also remain steadfast in our support for multilateralism. We are proud that an Irish Ambassador has chaired the Commission on the Status of Women for the past two years and we are ready to add a new chapter to the history of Ireland's active participation in the United Nations by putting forward our candidature for a seat on the Security Council for 2021-22. In partnership with all, we are ready to play our part in building that equal, peaceful and sustainable world we all desire.