

Beijing+25 Regional Review Meeting for the UNECE Region

Statement delivered by Human Rights Ambassador Bahia Tahzib-Lie of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Geneva, 30 October 2019

Madam Chair,

The Kingdom of the Netherlands aligns itself with the EU statement. We welcome this panel discussion on global goals and the Beijing +25 commitments. I am proud to issue this statement in name of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, supported by Dutch civil society.

By committing to the Sustainable Development Goals we have confirmed our endeavor for gender equality and equal rights for all women and girls. It is important to stress the crosscutting role of SDG 5 in the realization of all SDG's. Applying a human rights based approach throughout the whole Agenda 2030 is therefore pivotal. Our international commitments on gender equality are guiding the creation of our national and international policies. In these policies, ensuring fair gender portrayal in and through media, and enforcing legislation for equal rights of women and girls are central. This includes making sure sexual and reproductive health rights are respected, promoted, and fulfilled, both nationally and internationally. Ending all forms of violence against all women and girls and contributing to their empowerment continues to be a longstanding priority of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Here, I would like to emphasize the importance of economic independence of women.

However, the global shrinking civic space for civil society in general, and for women's rights defenders specifically, is worrying. Women's rights activists, organizations and women human rights defenders face individual and collective challenges. Women human rights defenders, that intersect with other marginalized groups, such as sex workers, or indigenous or LGBTI communities, especially face repressions. We need to push back against this pushback. Member States have a crucial role to ensure the representation of women human rights defenders and women's rights organizations at decision-making levels, including by allocating the necessary resources. In addition, Member States have an obligation to be transparent and accountable on the implementation of their efforts. The Netherlands therefore invited civil society organizations to contribute to the evaluation and improvement of our own Beijing +25 commitments, and to the content of this statement. I am delighted to have a representative of Dutch civil society next to me and in our delegation.

We encourage all States to invite women human rights defenders and women's rights and gender equality organizations to be involved in the process of creating, implementing and evaluating policy frameworks and the Beijing +25 commitments with an intersectional approach.

Thank you.