



**Statement of the Permanent Representative of Iceland, Minister Plenipotentiary Mr. Guðni Bragason at the Permanent Council on 7 March 2019 on the occasion of the International Women's Day.**

Mr. Chairman.

Iceland is a proud member of the OSCE “MenEngage Network”. We align with the Statement by our Chairman, but I like to add few words in my national capacity.

Promoting gender equality and mainstreaming is an integral part of a well functioning multilateral system. Gender considerations should be part of all policies and programs of our organization. The adoption of the Milano Ministerial Council Decision on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women was greatly encouraging for our future endeavors.

Our guidance is the Sustainable Development Goal number five, which is to “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”. Iceland is devoted to the implementation of the SDGs, aiming for a gender equal world by 2030.

Gender equality is one of our priorities as a member of the UN Human Rights Council. Iceland has focused on the empowerment of women, women's participation in decision-making, combating discrimination and violence against women, and respect for sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security is of utmost importance for the OSCE and its work in conflict areas, where the vulnerable, - women, children, the handicapped and the elderly -, suffer the most. The resolution continues to need full and effective implementation, still 19 years after its adoption. Iceland has recently put the third National Action Plan for the implementation of the resolution into force, and we urge participating States to adopt National Action Plans.

Another important aspect of women's rights is the necessity to improve the economic situation of women and contribute to their active participation in the economy and the labor market. This involves issues such as ownership of properties, access to education and training and inheritance laws.

Mr. Chairman.

Our commemorations for the International Women's Day tomorrow, started for us last Monday in Reykjavík where the Interim President of the World Bank Group introduced the 2019 World Bank Report on Women, Business and the Law. In brief, the Reports showed that globally women enjoy only three-quarters of the legal rights of men at the average. The percentage is probably lower in several countries.

The report demonstrates that we have a long way to go and that an active participation of women in economic and social activities is crucial to achieving the SDGs.

Thank you.