

Joint CND/CCPCJ & UNODC LIVE EVENT

Beijing +25 – Realizing Gender Equality and the Empowerment of all Women and Girls in light of COVID-19

**Remarks by H.E. Mr. Mher Margaryan
Chair, Commission on the Status of Women**

Friday, 12 June 2020

Greetings to the Chairs and to all participants from New York! I am honoured to take part in this important virtual meeting to commemorate Beijing+25 and to discuss how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting women and girls and further deepening pre-existing inequalities.

2020 is a landmark year for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, as the global community marks 25 years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action – the most progressive blueprint for advancing women’s rights. This anniversary provides the anchor for renewed commitment and efforts by Governments and all other stakeholders to accelerate the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, everywhere.

We all had high expectations that the sixty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which was scheduled for 9 to 20 March 2020, would provide a strong impetus to accelerate the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and ensure the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

All stakeholders – governments, civil society, the UN system and other actors – had built a solid basis for such accelerated action through extensive preparations at national and regional levels. 172 States had undertaken national reviews and prepared national reports. All five United Nations regional commissions conducted regional review processes to assess trends and chart the way forward. And the Secretary-General prepared a very comprehensive report to support the Commission’s work.

However, the session had to be scaled back with the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, which is showing its devastating impact on societies and economies throughout the world. We see how the pandemic is deepening pre-existing inequalities. It is exposing vulnerabilities in social, political and economic systems, which are in turn amplifying the impacts of the pandemic. Evidence shows that the pandemic impacts disproportionately on women and girls, putting at risk the gains made for them in the past decades.

It is therefore essential that gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls are at the core of countries’ response efforts. I would call on all stakeholders: Governments and other actors to draw from and utilize the work of the Commission on the Status of Women as they design policies and other interventions in response to, and recovery from the crisis. For example, the Political Declaration adopted on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World

Conference on Women on 9 March sets out a number of cross-cutting implementation strategies to accelerate the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the full enjoyment of their human rights. Their consistent application in COVID-19 responses will make a crucial difference, together with the Commission's policy recommendations on issues such as women's participation in decision-making and leadership; women's economic empowerment and equal opportunities for participation in the labour market; social protection including for women workers in the informal sector; the care economy and women's and girls' disproportionate responsibilities for unpaid care and domestic work; preventing and ending all forms of violence against women and girls.

The Commissions on Narcotic Drugs and on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice have for many years, paid attention to gender perspectives in your work, and provided concrete and practical policy solutions for addressing these. I welcome your commitment, in this time of unprecedented challenges, to offer this platform for an exchange of views, experiences and recommendations for advancing the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and responding to COVID-19.

The good working relationship between our Commissions, and our mutual commitment to addressing cross-cutting matters from our respective areas of focus and expertise is also an example of the importance of all types of partnerships for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

I look forward to the continued and mutually reinforcing partnership between our Commissions, and it gives me a particular pleasure, as Permanent Representative of Armenia, to recall Armenia's election as the member of the Commission of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice for the upcoming term starting next year.

As we seek to "build back better" from the current crisis, effective collaboration will help us advance coherent and impactful policy solutions, for the benefit of women and girls, and of societies everywhere.

I thank you.