Thank you, Chairs, panellists, colleagues and civil society.

The Beijing Declaration was a milestone in the global work for gender equality. I am pleased that we are able to have this commemoration.

Covid-19 may lead to severe setbacks on gender equality internationally, and it deepens existing inequalities.

The pandemic itself and the measures we implement against Covid-19, impact men and women differently. Women risk being hit the hardest by the economic and social impacts of the outbreak.

The consequences for women and girls are serious, both in the short and the long term.

We were seeing push back on women’s rights before COVID-19. Many of these negative trends are now being strengthened.

We will not achieve the Sustainable Development Goals if women and girls are left out.

We must apply a gender lens to all our response and recovery efforts. And we must ensure international cooperation, through the multilateral system.

This has been our approach from the very beginning of this crisis.

Norway encouraged the establishment of a new UN multi-partner trust fund as a response to the crisis, and we supported UN Women’s inclusion in its Advisory Committee.

We know that domestic violence and harmful practices increase during times of crises. We welcome the assistance the UNODC is offering in strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice system responses to violence against women.

As resources are pooled in response to Covid-19, we need to ensure that support for women’s other health needs, especially reproductive health, is not detrimentally affected. Measures for the prevention of mother-to-child
transmission of HIV, hepatitis B and C and syphilis among women who use drugs, must be upheld.

We welcome the important work of UNODC in addressing HIV among people who use drugs and people in prison settings. They must not be forgotten in global COVID-19 prevention and control efforts.

To conclude: we need a gender-sensitive approach to overcome this pandemic. We will not succeed if women and girls are left behind.

Thank you.