

Human Rights Council – 43<sup>rd</sup> session. March, 6, 2020

General Debate Agenda item 3. Finland and Mexico on behalf of 44 States

Thank you Mme President,

I have the pleasure to deliver this statement on behalf of Mexico, Finland and 44 States at the occasion of International Women's Day.

In 1995, States, civil society, feminist movements and UN agencies stood together to affirm their commitment to substantive gender equality and adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

In the last twenty-five years, tremendous progress has been made in developing standards on the rights of women and girls, including through defining sexual and reproductive health and rights, building on the legacy of Beijing.

Despite this progress, we are concerned by the resurgence of regressive trends and the adoption of harmful and discriminatory laws and policies, which threaten gender equality, undermine sexual and reproductive health and rights and contravene international human rights standards.

Economic crisis and inequality, discriminatory political views and lobbies, and the misuse of religion or culture to oppose women and girls' rights, have led to a rollback in human rights.

Women and girls in every country are still subjected to gender-based violence, threats and harassment, which impede their full participation in social, economic and political life.

We are disturbed by the continued push to undermine the advancements already made in general on women's rights and on reproductive rights, in particular.

Women human rights defenders are especially confronted to shrinking civil society space; they face gender stereotypes, discrimination and are subjected to direct attacks because of their work. This includes individuals defending sexual and reproductive health and rights, land rights and indigenous human rights defenders.

2020 marks the 25th anniversary of Beijing: let us honor and be accountable to our commitments to fully realize gender equality by ensuring women and girls' rights and by paying particular attention to those facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. No one can be left behind. The Generation Equality Forum organized this year is a great opportunity to renew our commitment to full and substantive gender equality. We urge us to do so also in this Council.

I thank you.