Mr. President,

Allow me to begin by welcoming UN Women’s new Executive Director, Ms., Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka. We wish her every success and join in her call to, move “the women’s agenda from the sidelines to the mainstream.”

This is a good reminder that the work we do builds on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which calls to mainstream a gender perspective into all issues within the UN system.

Israel is a strong supporter of these UN initiatives. Indeed, our own domestic Law on Gender Implications in Legislation mandates that all bills are reviewed from a gender perspective before they are passed.

Israel similarly supports UN Women’s call for "a stand-alone gender equality goal and for the integration of gender equality considerations in other goals through gender-sensitive targets and indicators" in the post-2015 development agenda.

Mr. President,

One of the most important fora for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women is the Commission on the Status of Women. Israel is proud to be an active member of the Commission as well as its Working Group on Communications. We are pleased that the Commission adopted the Agreed Conclusions on Violence against Women earlier this year.

The subjugation of women cannot be ignored. When half the population is locked out, prevented from being productive and from pursuing opportunities, the path to development is obstructed.

Women perform two thirds of the world’s work and produce half of the food. But they earn only 10% of the income and own only 1% of the property. Women make up more than half the population, but represent only 20% of political leaders in the world. Most unacceptably, around the world, one in every three girls and women will be beaten, raped or otherwise abused during her lifetime.

These statistics are shameful. Yet we must remember that these are more than numbers. Behind every statistic is a girl or a woman who suffered unspeakable horrors simply because of her gender.
Mr. President,

The use of sexual violence as a weapon in war is particularly abhorrent. Israel continues to strongly support the full implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 and its subsequent resolutions. We welcome the increased deployment of gender advisers and the routine inclusion of provisions in peacekeeping mandates that protect women and girls from sexual violence.

Israel also strongly supports the Secretary General's UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign and we are proud to be among the donor countries for the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women.

We all vividly recall the story of Malala Yousafzai, the young girl from Pakistan, who was shot for trying to go to school and speaking up about the right of every child get an education. For every Malala, there are millions who remain nameless. In many parts of the world violations, against girls and women are simply routine.

Investing in educating girls is an investment in a society free of prejudice and discrimination. MASHAV, Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation, runs a number of education programs for women. MASHAV's Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Center is one of the world's oldest development training centers dedicated to the empowerment of women.

Mr. President,

Investing in women is one of the best investments we can make. First, it makes simple economic sense. Countries with higher civic engagement and equality have significantly higher levels of per capita income.

Second, it's better for families and communities. We know that when a woman generates her own income she re-invests 90% of it in her family and community. I'm sure you are familiar with the proverb, "Give a man a fish and he'll eat for a day, but teach a man to fish and he'll eat for a lifetime"? Well, if you teach a woman to fish, she'll feed the whole village.

Study after study shows that when a woman receives even just one year of schooling, her children are less likely to die in infancy or suffer from illness and more likely to go to school themselves.

Most importantly, investing in girls and women isn't only the smart thing to do; it's the right thing to do. It is a matter of basic human rights. It is about a woman's right to have control over her body, to have a voice in her community, to live free of violence, to choose who she will marry and when, to get an education, to earn money and choose how to spend it.
Mr. President,

Israel feels strongly about the subject of gender equality. It is enshrined in our 1948 Declaration of Independence and has been implemented through law and public policy, starting with a landmark piece of legislation known as the Equal Rights for Women Law.

More than forty years ago, Golda Meir became Israel’s Prime Minister – making my country just the third in the world to elect a woman to its highest office.

In a region where women are all too often excluded from public life, Israeli women stand out as leaders in politics, law, mediation and conflict resolution. In Israel, we take pride in the fact that we have four female ministers, three female heads of political parties and that women comprise about half of our academia and our judiciary.

Mr. President,

Women and girls are critical to advancing social, economic, and political progress. They are also integral to making peace more sustainable. When they participate in peace processes, women focus on issues of human rights, justice and national reconciliation. They build coalitions that bridge ethnic and sectarian lines. They speak up for marginalized groups, serve as mediators and foster compromise.

Women must be full partners in society with equal rights and opportunities. We must empower women and ensure there is equality in every corner of the globe so that our daughters and granddaughters can fulfill their potential and create stronger, more vibrant communities.

Thank you, Mr. President.