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Agenda Item 28
Advancement of women

H.E. Mrs. Tine Mørch Smith
Ambassador
Deputy Permanent Representative

Chair,

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women has been ratified by 187 State Parties. This implies a near universal commitment to gender equality, women’s rights and women’s empowerment. But the harsh reality for many women is that there is a long way to go before the convention is fully implemented by all Member States.

Recognising this, we welcome the work of the CEDAW Committee. For the Committee to efficiently implement its mandate, sufficient resources must be made available. This is our collective responsibility. We therefore ask you to support their request for additional resources, which is reflected in the draft resolution put forward by Norway on behalf of the Nordic countries.

Chair,

It is widely acknowledged that the Millennium Development Goals have been a success. They have mobilised global action and focused efforts by governments around the world to reduce extreme poverty. What the MDG framework does not do is to effectively address the underlying structural causes of gender inequality. Women and girls around the world still experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. To change this we need a transformative goal on gender equality in the post-2015 development framework.

(Check against delivery)
Norway strongly supports the Secretary-General’s recommendation that gender equality and women’s empowerment should be both a stand-alone goal and integrated through targets and indicators into all goals of the new development framework.

We also have to ensure that universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights is reflected.

Gender equality is a basic human right, and thus an end in itself. It is also a means to achieve sustainable and substantial economic growth and development.

Every woman and girl, irrespective of age, social class, disability, gender identity or sexual orientation, or ethnic background, should have the freedom to choose whether and when to have a child and the freedom to have a life free from violence.

According to the World Health Organization, 99% of all maternal deaths occur in developing countries. Moreover, 47 000 women die from the complications of unsafe abortions each year—in countries where abortions are restricted or illegal. For every woman who loses her life, 20 more suffer serious injury or permanent disability. The fact that 800 women die every day due to pregnancy and child-birth is unacceptable.

Violence against women and girls is a manifestation of gender discrimination that seriously inhibits their ability to enjoy their rights and freedoms. It was a significant step in the right direction when the 57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women adopted a strong set of Agreed Conclusions to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls.

Chair,

We have evidence that countries where women play an equal and active part in all spheres of life, including politics and the economy, perform better on most indicators. We welcome the UN Women’s analysis of gender perspectives in the work of the General Assembly and its Main Committees during the last two sessions. We hope that their increased support to Member States on gender equality perspectives will deliver sustainable results.

Chair,

Women human rights defenders are subjected to discrimination, harassment and violence. This is unacceptable. The resolution on human rights defenders sponsored by Norway during this General Assembly will focus on women human rights defenders. We ask for strong support from all Member States.

Let me assure you, Norway will spare no effort in advancing the agenda to protect the rights of every woman and girl.

Thank you.