

Multi-Stakeholder Forum on “Challenges and Opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls”

25 January 2018

Opening remarks by H.E. Ms. Geraldine Byrne Nason, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations, and Chair of The Commission on the Status of Women

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very pleased to participate in today’s Multi-Stakeholder Forum in my capacity as Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women, and I express my appreciation to UN-Women for organizing this event.

As you all know, the sixty-second session of the Commission will take place from 12 to 23 March 2013 and will consider the priority theme of “Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls”.

In December last year, I briefed Member States on the preparations for the upcoming session, including the Bureau’s proposal for the Commission to specifically devote a number of meetings to the priority theme during the first week of the session in March. These are:

- **Four ministerial roundtables** that will be held in two parallel meetings and focusing on two different topics as outlined in the Discussion guide that is available on the CSW62 website;
- An **interactive dialogue among ministers** on “Building alliances to achieve gender equality and empower rural women and girls” with the participation of civil society; and
- An **interactive expert panel** on “The role of rural women’s land rights and land tenure security in reaching the SDGs”.

It is therefore fitting that dialogue in preparation for the priority theme starts well in advance, so that we can reflect on the issues more deeply and work together for a positive outcome.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The empowerment of rural women and girls and the realization of their human rights and gender equality are essential to the achievement of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals therein

The 20-year review in 2015 of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action brought renewed attention to the urgency of eradicating

poverty and improving the livelihoods, well-being and resilience of rural women and girls. It highlighted the need to realize the human rights of rural women and girls by eliminating geographic and gender inequalities in access to essential services and infrastructure, productive resources, land tenure security, food security and nutrition and income security and social protection.

Subsequently, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development confirmed the centrality of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls to sustainable development and poverty eradication, and for progress across all the Sustainable Development Goals and targets.

Other recent normative advances, including the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the New Urban Agenda and the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants contribute to the improvement of the situation of rural women and girls.

The realization of the human rights of rural women and girls, in all parts of the world, is necessary for their livelihoods, well-being and resilience. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and realizing the human rights of rural women and girls will require renewed commitments, increased investments and significantly greater financing from all sources, including official development assistance and national Governments as well as cooperation and partnership between all stakeholders including member states, the wider UN system, regional bodies and civil society.

The Commission will have an opportunity at its forthcoming sixty-second session to provide normative guidance on achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls in all areas of life, a theme that is of critical importance everywhere, and essential for the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. This will be one way of moving us closer to realizing the promise of leaving no one behind. We should spare no effort to realize this vision in our lifetime.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

As we prepare for the sixty-second session, I encourage strong participation from ministers and other high-level government representatives, as well as civil society. I also encourage Member States to include strong gender equality advocates from diverse civil society groups such as women's rights groups, youth and civil society organizations, indigenous, disability and other social justice groups in their delegations.

I count on your leadership and support to ensure a successful outcome of the sixty-second session of the Commission and have a direct impact on the lives of women and girls.

Thank you for your attention and I wish you all fruitful discussions that will contribute to what I hope will be another successful CSW session in March.