

**Statement by Sigmundur Davíð Gunnlaugsson,
Prime Minister of Iceland
27 September 2015**

Mr./Madame Chair,

Iceland is committed to closing the gender pay gap in Iceland by 2022, ensuring that women and men receive equal pay for work of equal value.

Despite Iceland having been at the forefront in bridging the gender gap in many fields, there still happens to be a measurable gap in wages which has not been explained by other factors than gender. According to some estimates it may be as much as 8% pay gap between men and women. This is of course unacceptable.

Mr./Madame Chair,

Iceland has a proven track-record on advancing gender equality and this has been instrumental in the progressive development of our society. It therefore gives me great pleasure to tell you that our new session of parliament has the highest number of women parliamentarians yet. With about 45% of parliamentarians being women.

Iceland is a proud supporter of the Women in Parliaments Global Forum (WIP) initiative to encourage nations to make sure more women take part in politics. And Iceland and I - as Prime Minister - is a proud supporter of a WIP's special publication with statements from male world leaders committing themselves to gender equality.

I would like to thank all parties involved for their contribution. Politics need women, just as women need politics. No society or democracy can claim to be completely developed or matured without gender equality. That's pure logic.

Mr./Madame Chair,

I am proud to stand before you as one of 10 Heads of Government or State that are #HeforShe champions in the IMPACT 10x10x10 initiative of UN Women. I am joined by close to 6% of Icelandic men that have taken the pledge as a #HeforShe.

We are determined to get more of our fellow countrymen to sign and will also continue to encourage males around the world to sign up at heforshe.org

And let me be frank. We need men at the table when discussing gender equality. Men cannot sit idly by when issues such as gender based violence and the gender pay gap are being discussed.

These are not only women's issues. These are issues of general human rights. Iceland has introduced a meaningful platform to bring men to the table, overturn stereotypes and to win hearts and minds.

It's called the Barbershop initiative. Our intention is to organize the so called Barbershop talks at other international organizations that we are members of as part of our continued efforts to engage men worldwide in achieving gender equality.

Finally, Mr./Madame Chair, allow me to applaud UN Women and China for bringing us here and reminding us of what we undertook to achieve in Beijing now 20 years ago. Iceland was proud to lead with Suriname a group of countries to support the yearlong campaign for the full implementation of the Beijing platform, now coming to a close.

Mr/Madam Chair, firm commitments for implementation, is what is needed in order to achieve change and reach gender equality.

I thank you Mr./Madame Chair.