

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Jānis Mažeiks,
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Latvia to
the United Nations
at the Multi-stakeholder forum prior to the 60th session of the
UN Commission on the Status of Women
Panel discussion “Institutional arrangements for gender-responsive
implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”
New York, 21 January 2016**

Let me start by expressing my sincere gratitude to UN-Women for organizing this forum. Proper discussion on how to implement the *2030 Agenda* can take place only if stakeholders from all levels are involved. So this multi-stakeholder forum is a right step in that direction. Let me also express Latvia’s continued support for gender equality and for the work that UN-Women does to achieve this goal.

Adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development last year undoubtedly was a pivotal achievement. From the very beginning of the discussions on how this global framework would look like, Latvia supported women’s and girls’ rights at the core of the Sustainable Development Goals, both as a stand-alone goal and a cross-cutting issue. Having so prominent spot for gender equality at the *2030 Agenda* is truly an achievement. Now the most important work lies ahead of all of us. The implementation must be as inclusive and innovative as the development of the agenda.

Marking the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 15th anniversary of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security last year also gave strong impetus for accelerating national, regional and global efforts to achieve gender equality *de facto* instead of *de iure*. Likewise, the World Summit on Information Society ten year review gave strong mandate for closing the gender digital divide.

All of us in this room are fully aware that while a lot has been achieved, there are still numerous and complex challenges affecting women and girls in all countries around the world. That is why every country must align its existing national strategies and policies in the field of gender equality and women's empowerment with the *2030 Agenda*. We also should not forget our pledge from the last CSW session to fully implement the Beijing Platform for Action, which has not lost its relevance. However, it is important to close the gap between our political promises and what we deliver. Implementing the horizontal priority of *shifting the institutional culture* is key. For this to be achieved, strong leadership is demanded.

Let me share with you a few examples of the institutional arrangements for gender-responsive implementation of the *2030 Agenda* in Latvia.

Latvia is taking a comprehensive approach – we are in the process of mapping our national mid-term and long-term policy planning documents against all the SDGs and targets. All necessary changes will be made as part of the National Development Plan's mid-term review in 2017. This exercise involves all line ministries, social partners and other relevant stakeholders in order to ensure policy coherence through development lens.

Latvia's gender equality policy is implemented by an integrated approach - principles of gender equality are taken into consideration at all stages of policy-planning and decision-making. Currently, we are working on a new national policy framework for gender equality – a new action plan. As the *2030 Agenda* clearly emphasizes the strong link between the achievement of gender equality and sustainable development, the basic notion that women's rights and economic

empowerment help achieve sustainable and inclusive growth must be put to the forefront of national policies. Our new gender equality plan for the next 5 years will focus on improving women's economic empowerment and independence, as well as achieving better balance between work and family life. And again, I have to emphasize that involvement of all stakeholders in the planning phase of gender policies is very important. Latvian Government has greatly benefited from the experience and close cooperation with women's organizations and business sector.

Gender equality mechanism in Latvia has been put in place since 2005. All line ministries have a high level official whose responsibility is to ensure gender mainstreaming in the respective policy area. A valuable cooperation format is our National Gender Equality Committee which was established in 2010. It comprises representatives from ministries, NGOs, Ombudsman, social partners, local governments, business sector. The committee comes together regularly to discuss the implementation of gender mainstreaming in different areas. Sometimes those are heated discussions, given different opinions, however good proposals on the possible directions and priorities for the development of gender equality policy emerge.

Latvia is currently developing also new mid-term Guidelines for Development Cooperation Policy (for 2016-2020). Alongside a focus on the implementation of the *2030 Agenda*, we will continue to prioritize women's and girls' empowerment in our bilateral development cooperation.

The last point I would like to make is about effective monitoring of the SDGs. In order to measure the progress made, we will really need

quality, accessible, timely and reliable data. The capacities of national statistics agencies will play an important role in this regard.

I thank you for your attention and look forward to fruitful discussion.