



The Permanent Mission of Iceland to the United Nations

**Statement by
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**Agenda item 56: Advancement of women
Third Committee**

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Iceland

First time candidate to the
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Mr. Chairman,

As this is the first time Iceland takes the floor in the third committee during the 63rd Session of the General Assembly, allow me at the outset to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election. I assure you of the full cooperation and support of my delegation. Let me also express our gratitude for the reports submitted under this agenda item. They contain valuable information and form a good basis for our discussions.

Although some progress has been made towards gender equality and the empowerment of women since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform of Action, a large gap still remains between existing commitments and their implementation. Much more remains to be done to realize women's rights. We must therefore continue our efforts for further fulfilment of these commitments and translate them into action.

Iceland is firmly committed to the full and effective implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, and its optional protocol. We urge all Member States that have not done so to ratify the Convention and the Protocol as soon as possible. We highly value the work of the CEDAW Committee which has made significant contributions to advancing women's equality around the world.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - still women and girls are subject to persistent and grave violence all over the globe. Women and girls are the principal victims of domestic and sexual violence, including in armed conflicts. Trafficking in human beings, its victims being mainly women and girls, is sadly on the rise. In this context, we warmly welcome the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General, contained in document (A/63/214) on intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women.

Iceland shares the reports emphasis on the need to tackle this issue in a comprehensive and concerted manner, underlining the importance of full and effective implementation of international standards on violence against women. The recommendations of the report constitute a clear strategy for Member States and the UN system to make measurable progress in preventing and eliminating violence against women.

Mr. Chairman

Many UN Member States have already stated their conviction that the conclusion of a global Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is a feasible goal for the international community. Iceland strongly supports the adoption of a legally binding Arms Trade Treaty that establishes international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms.

An effective Arms Trade Treaty would enhance the protection of all human beings, including women. It has the potential of preventing or lessening humanitarian disasters and other consequences of armed conflict, including violations of human rights, displacement of people, crime and terrorism. We feel that such a Treaty would contribute to more responsible arms trade and promote peace, security and stability. An Arms Trade Treaty should include "a Golden Rule" - requiring Governments to prevent arms transfers where there is a substantial risk that they be used to commit violations of international human rights or humanitarian law.

Mr. Chairman

Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, continues to need full implementation. Iceland strongly supports resolution 1325 and is fully committed to its implementation. This includes promoting the rights of women and girls and mainstreaming gender concerns in the UN system and our foreign policy. In our view, equal participation of women in peace processes are fundamental for achieving, maintaining and promoting sustainable peace and security. We look forward to the open debate in the Security Council on resolution 1325 later this month.

Mr. Chairman

Iceland attaches great importance to the Commission on the Status of Women. We welcome the agreed conclusions adopted at the fifty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW52) on „financing for gender equality and empowerment of women”. I share the view expressed by my colleague from France, on behalf of the European Union, that the agreed conclusions should be taken into account during the Follow-up Doha Conference on Financing for Development.

As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland, Ms. Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, underlined at the 52nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women, Iceland regards UNIFEM as a key partner in our development cooperation. Iceland has supported the Fund's work, both by increasing its core contributions, as well as supporting its regional role in the Caribbean, Afghanistan, the Balkans and in Africa.

Mr. Chairman,

The United Nations have a central role in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. The importance of strengthening the United Nations system's work on gender equality and women's empowerment, including at country level, is indisputable.

Iceland firmly supports the creation of a new gender entity, directed by an Under-Secretary General that would improve delivery and bring together the normative and analytical functions of the existing structure with a technical, policy setting and programmatic role. We have made considerable progress, and it is our strong conviction that we need to build upon the current momentum, with the aim of taking an informed decision on this important issue during the 63rd session of the General Assembly.

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

