



Statement of Ambassador Kristín A. Árnadóttir, Permanent Representative of Iceland, at the 1346th Permanent Council Meeting, Vienna, 25 November 2021.

Thank you Madam Chair / Mr. Chair,

While my delegation aligns itself with the Joint Statement by the delegation of Canada, I would like to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

Gender-based violence is one of the most widespread human rights violations in the world. The situation has grown more serious globally in recent times and we have suffered a serious backlash during the pandemic.

The increase in violence against women is truly a shadow pandemic which affects all societies. Therefore, we welcome the opportunity to highlight these important issues today.

Iceland is a proud co-leader in the Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence in UN Women's Generation Equality Forum. And in this context, Iceland has emphasized the need for States to implement and ratify international and regional agreements on gender equality.

I take this opportunity to reiterate that.

We all must do our utmost to safeguard hard-won gains for gender equality, and I also take this opportunity to encourage those participating States who have yet to sign or ratify the Istanbul Convention, **to make it a priority to do so.**

Following Iceland's ratification of the Istanbul Convention the Icelandic government has introduced new plans and legislations aiming to end sexual and gender-based violence and sexual harassment.

Furthermore, the increase in online gender-based violence has been met by legislative changes on violations on sexual and privacy violations by reforming the General Penal Code.

The changes we have made have drastically improved procedures of investigations and led to a more open discussion about all forms of gender-based violence.

We must continue to promote and protect human rights and freedom for all, including women's right to a life free from violence and discrimination.

Thank you Madam Chair / Mr. Chair,