

## Declaration - The Nordic Council of Ministers for Gender Equality

*The Nordic Council of Ministers for Gender Equality Declaration of Support towards the role of the UN Women in the realisation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development on the occasion of the 63rd Session of the Commission of the Status of Women and the bilateral meeting with the Executive Director of UN Women 10th of March 2019*

At the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). One of them, SDG5, focuses exclusively on improving the status and rights of women and girls worldwide and advancing gender equality. Other SDGs, however, cannot be achieved unless SDG5 is realised including SDG1 on ending poverty and SDG8 on decent work and economic growth. As such, SDG5 is a stand-alone goal as well as cross-cutting all the other SDGs.

In the Nordic countries, the longstanding public investment in policies promoting gender equality has yielded results seen in the overall level of peace and prosperity. The point of departure for the Nordic Countries has been international legal frameworks. The most important ones are the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the 2011 Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), as well as the Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention). The policies introduced to fulfil the international obligations and positive duties has generated progress towards the realisation of gender equality in the Nordic countries, the so-called *Nordic Gender Effect*, turning the Nordic countries into SDG5 frontrunners according to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index. The index measures access to education and health as well as political and labour market participation of women and men. It does, however, not measure prevention and protection from gender-based and sexual violence and – as the #MeToo movement has revealed – a huge room for improvement remains in the Nordic countries and beyond. As such, the #MeToo revolution can be seen as the “missing” gender equality indicator measuring the level of sexism and misogyny.



The Nordic countries are committed to assist in sharing their understanding of how to advance the progress towards the realisation of SDG5 and SDG8 in particular at the advent of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action.

Overall, the experience of the Nordic countries of achieving gender equality goals has been compiled into the knowledge product - *The Nordic Gender Effect at Work* - within the framework of the Nordic Prime Ministers' initiative, *Nordic Solutions to Global Challenges*. On the occasion of the 63<sup>rd</sup> session of the Commission of the Status of Women, the Nordic Council of Ministers for Gender Equality hereby reiterate their commitment and long-time support to the mandate of UN Women in facilitating the realisation of SDG5 and SDG8 as well as the other SDGs that require gender mainstreaming.

- We commit to delivering towards SDG5 with unrelenting vigour, ensuring delivery towards targets by 2030.
- Within the scope and frame of the flagship of the *Nordic Solutions to Global Challenges - The Nordic Gender Effect at Work* - and with a focus on SDG5 and SDG8, we invite other UN Member States, in collaboration with UN Women, to take joint action in bringing about transformative change reaching the targets of gender equality.
- Gender equality at home coincides with gender equality at work. Therefore, we commit to innovative collaboration, including with relevant stakeholders such as the social partners, around paid and shared parental leave; universal and affordable, high quality childcare; flexible working hours and arrangements; promotion of gender balance on company boards and gender equality in leadership, and equal pay for women and men.
- We commit to engage men and boys in achieving gender equality as important players in transforming gender stereotypes and traditional gender roles. Their commitment to gender equality is essential to accelerate progress.
- We commit to continue strengthening our common advocacy and exchange on Nordic policies and transformative actions to promote gender equality through diverse forms of bilateral, regional and organisational partnership.
- We commit to using our roles as leaders to elevate the Nordic voice for gender equality at every opportunity and platform that may bring about the required change agency and action to reach the targets of SDG5.
- We commit to continue advancing our common work on knowledge transfers through innovative and transformative partnerships on models that fuel further progress on gender equality.
- Recognising the link between men's violence against women and girls and gender inequality at large, we will continue building policies to end all forms of gender based and sexual violence and harassment, including by effectively responding to the realities exposed by the #MeToo movement. We recognise that women are rendered even more at risk of discrimination, harassment and violence when gender discrimination is combined with ethnic or racial discrimination and in case of women with disabilities, LGBT+ women and women who live in poverty. Throughout all our actions we will address this multiple discrimination and we will not rest until all women can live their lives free from violence and the fear of violence.