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|  | EUROPEAN UNION  Permanent Delegation to the United Nations Office  and other international organisations in Geneva |

**EU INTERVENTION**

**Human Rights Council**

**Fourth Intersessional Meeting for Dialogue and Cooperation on Human Rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

**Virtual Session**

***Investing in sustainable recovery, advancing gender equality and strengthening partnerships – Towards a renewed social contract anchored in human rights***

**18 January 2022**

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

Together with its Member States, the EU is committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to effectively contributing to achieving the SDGs by 2030. While the COVID-19 pandemic is a challenge for the implementation of the SDGs, the EU stresses that a holistic human rights-based and gender-responsive approach is a prerequisite for building back better in the aftermath of the pandemic and for accelerating the transition to decarbonised societies. Gender equality and strengthened partnerships are at the heart of a sustainable, human rights-based recovery.

Women and girls have been disproportionally affected by the pandemic, which has exacerbated pre-existing inequalities, multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, stigmatisation, sexual and gender-based violence, and exclusion. The EU underlines that the role of women and their full, equal, and meaningful participation are essential for the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. We call for building back in a gender-responsive way. Mainstreaming of a gender perspective is crucial to seize the opportunity to change fundamental structures in all policy domains as part of the recovery. Gender equality is the necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world. The EU remains deeply committed to promoting gender equality and the rights of all women and girls.

In addition, the pandemic has reminded us of the importance of strengthening partnerships, in a world where health and environmental challenges are closely interconnected. The EU, together with its Member States, is the world’s leading donor of Official Development Assistance, the largest provider of climate finance, and one of the first stakeholders to have raised its climate ambition in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement. The EU has also been at the forefront of international efforts to curb the global pandemic. We are one of the main contributors to COVAX, to which we allocated over 3 billion euro to date, and have exported half of our vaccine production.

Mr. Chair, the consequences of COVID-19 will stay with all of us for years to come. The EU and its Member States are committed to a gender-responsive and human rights-based recovery, which is also fully responsible towards future generations. Strengthening our partnerships is necessary if we are to be serious about “building back better” and “leaving no one behind.”

Thank you.