[Check against delivery]

**Joint Statement delivered by Saint Lucia**

**On behalf of Ten (10) LDCs/SIDS Beneficiaries of the United Nations Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund to support Participants during the 42nd Session of the Human Rights Council namely:**

**Angola, Benin, Grenada, Malawi, Marshall Islands, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, and Zambia**

**Annual discussion on integration of gender perspective throughout the work of the Human Rights Council and that of its mechanisms**

**Theme: Gender-responsive initiatives to accelerate gender equality**

**September 23, 2019**

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

Thank you Mr. Vice President

I have the honor to take the floor on behalf of a group of countries who are beneficiaries of the UN LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund Program, the full list of which will be available on the Extranet.

We thank the esteemed panelist for their comprehensive presentations on progress achieved and challenges remaining in the context of gender parity within the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms. We note the achievements of the OHCHR in mainstreaming gender issues and its continued positive advancements in reducing gender disparity in all areas of its work.

By applying a gender perspective through various mechanisms of the Council, women and men’s different needs, experiences, aspirations, and perspectives from various cultural, religious, historical backgrounds, in our view, strengthens the Council’s overall promotion and protection of human rights.

Looking forward, we observe that gender issues remain more relevant than ever. As we are nearing 2020, which is a pivotal year for achievements and progress made on gender equality, it is therefore timely to remind ourselves that the rights of women are inseparable to the UN system as a whole, and in particular this Council.

Despite some progress of gender equality in some countries around the world, we recognize that achieving gender balance remains a domain requiring improvement in our respective countries and we remain committed to ensuring that these are fleshed out in reality.

Therefore we appreciate this important annual discussion in the Council and would like to ask the panelists: *What are concrete examples of gender integration initiatives in the work of the Human Rights Council?*

I thank you Mr. Vice President.