

*UNECE Beijing + 20 review conference*

Joint Statement on behalf of the Nordic States, Geneva November 7, 2014

Mr President,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

Allow me at the outset to reaffirm the Nordic countries unwavering commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the most progressive blueprint ever for advancing women's rights.

We are now at a critical moment. On the one hand we celebrate 20 years of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and call out the gaps and slow progress in many areas requiring political will and resources. But on the other hand we need to maintain high ambitions for gender equality and human rights for women and girls in the negotiations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Twenty years ago in Cairo 179 governments committed to an ambitious Programme of Action and one year later in Beijing, 189 UN Member States affirmed that the human rights of women and girls include the right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of discrimination, violence and coercion.

Significant progress has been made in many countries in order to reach these goals but sexual and reproductive health and rights still remains an area with a critical need to strengthen the efforts. For eliminating discrimination, achieving gender equality and improving quality of life for all, we need to continue the efforts to realize sexual and reproductive health and rights for all.

Everyone is entitled to the enjoyment of the right to health. Access to sexual and reproductive health services is crucial especially to young women and men. The need for a comprehensive sexuality education for all, including adolescent girls and boys should be emphasized in this regard. We need to make sure that their needs – including their unmet need for contraception and family planning, including access to legal and safe abortion – are recognised, counted for and acted upon.

Without enjoyment of sexual and reproductive health and rights, no person can reach the full enjoyment of all her or his human rights.

Thank you, Mr President.