



REPUBLIC OF MALTA

Statement by H.E Dr. John Paul Grech

**Permanent Representative of the Republic of Malta to the UN and other
International Organisations in Geneva**

Beijing +20 Regional Review Meeting

Co Hosted by UNECE and UN Women

6-7 November 2014

Statement delivered under Item 7: Preventing and Eliminating Violence against Women and Girls

Mr. Chair,

Malta welcomes the discussion underway in the context of the Beijing+20 Review Meeting. Malta together with the rest of the EU Member States is committed to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Promoting gender equality and combating gender-based discrimination is a long standing policy commitment of the EU. Indeed, the right to equal treatment is a general principle of EU law, which has been reinforced through various legislation and strategies since 1990.

Mr. Chair,

Though significant strides on gender equality have been made over the last decades, we are still nowhere close to achieving full gender equality in practice.

Violence against women is one of the major challenges that warrants concrete and collective action. On its part, apart from laws and policies to curb violence against women, Malta also ratified the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

Mr. Chair,

With reference to the Item under discussion and also in relation to all the other Items which will be brought up during this review meeting as well as the relevant EU Key Messages, Malta would like to clarify its national position on the matter of sexual and reproductive health and rights.

While strongly reaffirming our strong support and commitment to the full implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994, and the subsequent international instruments, including the Beijing Platform for Action, and the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women, Malta continues to hold the view that any discussion of rights and services in connection with reproductive health cannot take place outside the framework of one of the most fundamental of human rights – the right to life. Malta

strongly believes that the right to life extends to the unborn child from the moment of conception and that therefore the use of abortion as a means of resolving health or social problems is a denial of that right.

Hence, any recommendation on sexual and reproductive health and rights, commodities or services, should not in any way create an obligation on any party to consider abortion as a legitimate form of reproductive health services.

Thank you.