

## 54<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council

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

***Theme: Revisiting gender parity and its contributions to the integration of gender into the work of international human rights bodies, including the HRC and its mechanisms***

#### Benelux statement

25 September 2023

Madame Vice-President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of Belgium, the Netherlands and my own country, Luxembourg. We fully align with the EU statement and thank the panellists for their important contributions.

Women's full, equal and meaningful participation in public and political spheres is a principle enshrined in various human rights treaties, from the Universal declaration of Human Rights, to CEDAW, and from the VDPA to the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action. Yet the underrepresentation of women remains an issue inside the United Nations system and the realm of this very Council.

In order to advance towards gender equality and to end all forms of discrimination against women and girls, the institutions created to protect human rights must reflect this principle in their composition and actions. As International Gender Champions, the Permanent representatives to the UN in Geneva of the Benelux countries took the Panel Parity Pledge and committed to no longer take part in any single-sex panels. We are pleased to see progress achieved toward gender parity among the Special procedures mandates holders, but more needs to be done in regard to the composition of the HRC Bureau, the Consultative group as well as the Treaty bodies.

To ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and girls in all their diversity at all levels of decision-making, it is crucial to address the root causes underlying the current gender disparity. These root causes include sexual and gender-based violence targeting women and girls active in the public sphere, multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination the prevalence of negative social norms and gender stereotypes, as well as gender inequality in general.

In closing, we would like to ask the panellists how member states can effectively contribute to accelerate gender parity inside the Council and to counter the current backlash against gender equality?

Thank you.