

# High-level panel discussion commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women

Human Rights Council 43<sup>rd</sup> session  
25 February 2020

## **Joint statement on behalf of the Mountains Group**

I have the pleasure to deliver this statement on behalf of Canada, Iceland, Liechtenstein, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland and my own country, Australia.

We thank the speakers and panelists for their insights.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome documents of its review conferences affirm states' commitment to gender equality, women and girl's empowerment, the human rights of all women and girls, and provide an important blueprint for their realisation. We are pleased to see the progress made in this regard over the last 25 years globally, and reflected in the normative work of this Council and in the Sustainable Development Goals.

We celebrate progress, while acknowledging that challenges remain and more needs to be done. It is our collective responsibility to protect the agreed normative framework and to ensure that achievements are used to strengthen and extend the foundations of the agenda set by the Beijing Declaration and its review conferences, as we continue to amplify our work towards gender equality.

At the critical juncture of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we take this opportunity to reaffirm the importance of sexual and reproductive health and rights, as inseparable from the realisation of women's rights and the achievement of gender equality.

We know that failure to fully respect a woman or girl's right to bodily autonomy, and essential comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services, remains among the leading causes of death and injury for women and girls worldwide. Beyond health, we know that realisation of these rights are essential to gender equality – to women's education, capacity to work, and to participate equally in political and public life. Full respect for these rights is essential for progress on sustainable development and the achievement of the SDGs.

We ask the panelists for their views on progress made on sexual and reproductive health and rights since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which built on the International Conference on Population and Development Program for Action, and the key challenges to be overcome in the full realisation of these rights.

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