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**Statement**

**by**

**Ms. Olga Algayerova**

**United Nations Under-Secretary-General**

**Executive Secretary**

**of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe**

**at the**

**Signing Ceremony of the Declaration**

**on Gender Responsive Standards and Standards Development**

**14 May 2019**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Colleagues,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the Palais des Nations and to the signing ceremony of the Declaration on Gender Responsive Standards and Standards Development. I also want to extend a welcome to the organizations who are following this ceremony around the world. During the event we will remotely connect with many of you and celebrate your commitment to gender equality. Welcome to all.

On this occasion, once more, we bring the global standardization community together, to work in partnership with our Member states, for the shared goal of furthering sustainable development by empowering women and girls and support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 5.

At the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), we are uniquely placed to host this partnership. As you know UNECE, develops standards and normative documents in fields of trade, transport, energy and many more. And as a UN organization, we support our member States in their efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

Today we celebrate the UNECE Declaration on ‘Gender Responsive Standards and Standards Development’. More than 50 organizations worldwide, not only among our UNECE member States, but much further afield, have agreed to become signatories and demonstrate their commitment to greater gender equality, and to enhancing the contribution of voluntary standards for sustainable development.

This is a success that we have been working towards since 2016, when UNECE and its Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies received a mandate to develop innovative approaches for mainstreaming gender in the development and implementation of standards. A taskforce was formed with policymakers from many UN Member States, many beyond the UNECE region, and representatives of standardization

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bodies, the civil society, UN Organizations, gender specialists and academics. It will now continue its activities to support the implementation of the Declaration, and reach out to even more organizations.

This Declaration is also part of a larger effort, which aims at leveraging the impact of standards on sustainable development. Many of the organizations represented here were also our partners at the “Standards for the Sustainable Development Goals” event held in September 2018. That event showed the importance of standards for addressing social, economic and environmental pressures, and also of developing shared solutions and mechanisms of accountability and assurance for transformative change. It focused our attention on outstanding challenges and barriers.

We are addressing one of these challenges today, by committing to promote the greater inclusion of a gendered lens in standardization; and expressing our resolve to make standards and the standards development process more gender-responsive.

This is a moment of celebration. But we should keep in mind that much remains to be done. UNECE is committed to continue supporting gender balanced participation in standards development; to institutionalizing successful and effective policies, and to creating and sustaining momentum for the development and implementation of gender responsive standards. I encourage you to continue to engage in the activities of the UNECE going forward.

With these thoughts, I would like to conclude, and wish you every success in your discussions today and in the months to come.

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