

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates, panelist and colleagues,

- Let me begin by **thanking UNECE and UNFPA** for organizing this meeting and enabling these rich discussions
- Today, issues related to gender equality and the empowerment of women have been repeatedly raised through several interventions of esteemed representatives from Member States, civil society, academia and the UN.
- These are issues at the **heart of the ICPD agenda** and they form a critical part of discussions on population dynamics, fertility, families, sexual and reproductive health, inequalities, social inclusion and rights.
- UN Women **welcomes the linkages and alignments** that have been highlighted between the ICPD PoA, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Agenda 2030 and we will make sure, together with UNECE and UNFPA, to take forward the relevant issues raised in this meeting into the national and regional consultations related to Beijing +25 taking place next year.
- Focusing on the topic of this particular thematic session, I would like to use this opportunity to bring into discussions the theme for the 2019 session of the CSW: **social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure**
- As we have seen and heard today, investments in these areas are intrinsically linked to population and levels of fertility.
- **In particular, I would like to highlight the importance of recognizing, reducing and redistributing unpaid care and domestic work** that is largely borne by women (across their life cycle).
- **Unpaid care and domestic work** is both a **rights issue** in terms of hindering women's labour force participation and perpetuating the gender wage gap

and also an **economic efficiency** issue in terms of limiting the potential of economic growth.

- This is just one example of a key GEWE issue where investments in social protection, public services and infrastructure can have multiple positive impact, including on population dynamics – **harmonizing social and economic development**
- **Sustainable development** is at the heart of the ICPD PoA, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Agenda 2030. To make it a reality:
- **We must recognize and take into account women’s multiple roles**, as workers, carers and citizens in different institutions, whether it is families, communities, the market or the State;
- **We must recognize and address different interests, needs and priorities that women and men have** – whether it is saving time, reducing drudgery, ensuring safety and security, generating income and career growth, safeguarding health and well-being for themselves and their families or participating in decision making processes within their family and their communities.
- **We must ensure individual and collective agency, voice, participation and safety** of all groups of women, girls, boys and men - whether they are young men thinking of migrating, elderly women in a remote rural area or HR defenders - by changing social, economic and decision-making structures.
- We must ensure **financing for gender equality**
- And, we must have reliable disaggregated data for us to put in place **monitoring and accountability mechanisms** to measure progress.
- Thank you.