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**4th Intersessional Meeting on Human Rights and the 2030 Agenda**

**18 January 2022**

The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in a serious setback for gender equality. Efforts tackling the pandemic and its consequences must be inclusive, gender-transformative and ensure the full, effective, equal and meaningful participation of women and girls in all their diversity.

Even before the pandemic, we were not on the right track to reach SDG 5 by 2030. To correct our course, we need innovative practices on using our resources smarter, with intersectionality at their core. We must address the root causes of gender inequality, such as harmful social norms, gender stereotypes and discriminating structures in society. Men and boys play an integral part in this work. Cooperation and multistakeholder partnerships remain necessary, including with the private sector.

Finland is committed to gender equality through specific actions and gender mainstreaming in its foreign and security policy promoting a human rights-based approach to gender equality. Finland aims to achieve sustainable development through fulfilling the rights of women and girls, paying special attention to those in vulnerable situations, including persons with disabilities. For example, Finland supports UNFPA and civil society actors to provide sexual and reproductive health services and comprehensive sexuality education.

The challenge is severe. However, by working together, we can reach a better future for all women and girls, build back better and more gender equal, and leave no one behind.