



**77th Session of the General Assembly
Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Cyprus
in the 3rd Committee on Agenda Item 26-Advancement of Women**

New York, 6 October 2022

Mr. President,

Since this is the first time I am taking the floor, allow me to congratulate you and the Bureau of the third committee for your election. I wish you every success in your work and I ensure you for my delegation's full support.

Cyprus fully aligns to the statement delivered by the European Union. I would like to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. President,

While in recent years progress has been achieved in the fight for gender equality and the advancement of women, we are witnessing attempts to question such progress. Pandemic has imposed unprecedented challenges which might impede the progress made so far on human rights, social cohesion, gender equality and women's rights. Particular importance should be given to vulnerable groups, women and girls, who have experienced a grim increase in violence during the pandemic.

Women's leadership should be at the center of our recovery efforts. The advancement of women cannot be addressed as an isolated mode of action. The effects of all crises, including from climate change and disasters, continue to disproportionately affect women, unless we achieve real equality. More must be done to tackle structural inequalities and gender stereotypes in order to eliminate legal, administrative, cultural, behavioural, social, and economic obstacles to women's full, equal, effective and meaningful participation in all spheres of life. We need more women in leadership roles and more women public figures as role models, in addition to more women policy-

makers in order to develop gender transformative and balanced socio-economic policies.

Statistics has shown a worrisome trend of violence against women, especially after the lockdowns. Eradicating violence against women and girls in all its forms and manifestations, including sexual harassment and femicide, is an issue of high priority for the Republic of Cyprus. Commitments have been made at the highest level of the political leadership. In this regard, major developments have taken place during the last few years towards the elimination of gender-based violence, and the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. Just to name a few:

Cyprus ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in November 2017, an important legal instrument to prevent and combat violence against women. We call on other States to ratify the convention as soon as possible. Cyprus has also enacted a comprehensive legislation criminalising all forms of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence for full and effective implementation of the Convention. It has also enacted an innovative law criminalizing harassment and stalking, and a law on Combating Sexism and Online Sexism. Cypriot lawmakers took a highly significant step this summer and passed a law on *femicide*. The law, the first such piece of legislation in Europe, integrates femicide into the Criminal Code as a distinct crime and renders gender-related killings an aggravating factor when imposing sentences.

One of the main pillars of our strategy is to protect the girls, especially those in vulnerable situations. The National Strategy on Sexual and Reproductive Health of Youth, aims to protect but at the same time to educate the youth, in order to create a safe environment for the future generation.

Furthermore, "a Woman's House" (WH) has been established and operating in Cyprus. This house functions as a multi-agency multi-disciplinary crisis center for women victims of violence and their children. Special teams within the police force have been formed which deal exclusively with cases of gender-based and domestic violence and whose members are appropriately trained. Systematic training of

professionals of different disciplines, working in the field, is also taking place. Lastly, we must not omit the important role of the civil society towards elimination of gender-based violence: Cyprus finances NGOs that provide protection and assistance to women victims.

Mr. President,

Cyprus, considers human rights as a cornerstone of multilateral system. In this regard Cyprus decided to present its candidacy for the Human Rights Council, for the period 2025-2027, as a member of Asian-Pacific Geographic Group. Cyprus is committed to protect and promote the rights of all human beings and cooperate with other partners within the multilateral framework. We will enhance our efforts on a wide range of priorities, including gender equality. We reaffirm our unwavering support for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all women and girls, as well as the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Human rights cannot be a privilege of few.

Thank you Mr. President.