

**ADDRESS BY H.E. MR. NIKOS CHRISTODOULIDES,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS**

**At the
High Level Meeting of the General Assembly on the twenty- fifth
anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women
“Accelerating the Realization of Gender Equality and the
Empowerment of all Women and Girls”**

1 October, 2020

Mr. President,

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

It is an honor and privilege to address this Meeting on the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

It is an anniversary that deserves to be celebrated. However, in spite of everything that has been achieved over the past 25 years, we are still faced with a worldwide backlash on women’s rights. At the same time, Covid-19 is now affecting women much harder. This means that in fact, we are far from celebrating actual equality.

Women's rights are a priority for the Government of Cyprus, and the same is true for our foreign policy. We are determined to tackle the challenges and to address the implementation gaps.

To this effect, a number of National Action Plans have been adopted, new laws have been enacted and bodies promoting and ensuring equality have been established. New policies have been formulated targeting all 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action including combating violence against women, access to employment, improved education and health.

More specifically Cyprus has:

- Ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and is drafting

a comprehensive legislation criminalising violence against women

- Implemented positive action measures in the area of employment and vocational training, and
- Is finalising the first National Action Plan for the implementation of the Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

With regard to our foreign policy, a framework of action dedicated to women's rights has been put in place. It is based on a holistic approach aimed at strengthening the collaboration with women's rights organisations. Cyprus is actively broadening and deepening its actions at the international level, attaching greater importance to cooperation in our region for the substantial advancement of women's rights.

Dear colleagues,

It's high time to move from words to concrete, collective actions that will bring transformative change in safeguarding women's rights.

It is the time for more solidarity, more cooperation and a greater commitment to justice, equality and the promotion of women's rights. Today's commemoration offers a great opportunity to reaffirm our strong support and commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration as we move decisively ahead.

I thank you Mr. President.