**35th session of the UN Human Rights Council**

**Annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women**

**Panel 1**

**Statement on behalf of Austria, Liechtenstein, Switzerland and Slovenia**

Geneva, 13 June 2017

Mr President,

Distinguished panellists,

Ladies and gentlemen

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of Austria, Liechtenstein, Switzerland and my own country, Slovenia.

Saying that all forms of violence against women and girls are a serious human rights violation is clearly not enough. Striving towards zero tolerance is a step in the right direction and involving men and boys in efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls is vital. Establishing zero tolerance and elimination of gender-based violence and violence against women and girls in particular, remains a priority for our countries, both domestically and internationally.

We welcome the presentations made today, that underpinned the fact that men and boys are not only agents of change but also beneficiaries of empowering women. Our four countries have positive experiences in promoting active involvement of men and boys in gender equality efforts, be it through violence prevention programmes, addressing gender stereotypes or promoting active and positive parenting work-life balance, and equal sharing of childcare, household responsibilities and care duties between women and men.

Our countries have been actively promoting an active role of men and boys in gender equality also internationally. In 2015, at the margins of the 59th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, we co-organised an event on this topic that showed how important it is not only to engage men and boys in gender equality efforts but what benefits this brings to them as well as gender equality is also a major driver for development as recognized in the Agenda 2030.

To turn back to violence against women and girls, we wish to stress that challenging gender stereotypes about femininity as well as masculinity is very important. Another key aspect of prevention is also encouraging non-violent communication, also among perpetrators of violence.

We would like to hear from the distinguished panellists what have been the greatest challenges they face when promoting active involvement of men and boys in prevention of violence against women and girls?

Thank you!