Statement by

**Austria, Croatia and Slovenia**

at the

**47th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council**

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

***Panel 2: Gender-equal socioeconomic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic***

Geneva, 6 July 2021

Excellencies,

I deliver this statement on behalf of Austria, Croatia and my own country, Slovenia. Allow me to start by thanking the organizers of today's discussion.

More than a year after a global pandemic has shook the world and life as we knew it, it is clearer than ever that we are all sailing through the same storm, but each of us is equipped with a different boat. Women have been at the centre of the global response to the COVID-19 disease, but have at the same time been shouldering a disproportionate burden through unpaid care and domestic work.

Socioeconomic recovery is now the most important task ahead of us, and health, social protection and education must be at the centre of our efforts.

Madam President,

Our countries' are committed to a gender-equal socioeconomic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. We would like to particularly stress the following steps towards achieving this goal:

Firstly, the setbacks in women’s equal economic participation caused by the pandemic must be reverted and the recovery plans must aim at promoting women’s economic empowerment and addressing gender inequalities in employment and social protection systems.

Secondly, we are committed to fight any pushback against women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights. Socio-economic recovery may never be an excuse to cut back on universal access to quality and affordable comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services information, education and health-care services.

Thirdly, we must do our utmost to combat sexual and gender-based violence, including intimate partner violence, and integrate the elimination of discrimination and GBV against women in all life cycles in the COVID-19 recovery phase and beyond.

And finally, women and girl’s full, equal and meaningful participation in the decision-making, including on the measures aimed at the socioeconomic recovery, must be ensured. Representation and leadership of women and girls in all their diversity strengthens trust and is a way of leveraging innovation and talent for a gender equal world. In our efforts to build back better, we cannot afford to leave half of the population out of local, national and global response teams, policy spaces and decision-making.

Gender sensitive intersectional responses based on disaggregated data must lead states in their recovery plans. Else we fear that systemic discrimination already faced by women and girls will be exacerbated.

I thank you.