48e session du Conseil des droits de l’homme

Annual Discussion ‘Integration of a Gender Perspective’

**Statement by Austria, Liechtenstein, Slovenia, Switzerland**

Genève, le 27 septembre 2021

Déclaration de la Suisse

Madame President,

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

As we all have been observing, the ongoing COVID-19 crisis has accelerated the digitalization of our societies. While it is clear that new information and communication technologies can offer opportunities for everyone, it is also a fact that digitalisation has affected women and men differently. Currently, women and girls are less likely to have full access to new information and communication technologies and are underrepresented in almost all areas of ICT education, employment, entrepreneurship and leadership. This lack of access and representation has implications for their education and their participation in political, economic and social life. Women and girls are disproportionally exposed to online harassment and hate speech, sexual and gender-based violence intersectional discrimination as well as to gender-specific violations and abuses of their right to privacy. Digital tools and spaces have increased threats faced by women human rights defenders and have simultaneously broadened the kind of surveillance and harassment to which they are being subjected to.

It is crucial that we acknowledge all these risks and take action to overcome these obstacles. Gender equality must be achieved offline and online. Enhanced, safer and more affordable access to digital tools; gender sensitive strategies in awareness raising, education and training; gender-equality in the design, development, use and deployment of ICTs; and policy interventions addressing long-term gender-based stereotypes are of critical importance.

Madame President,

We would like to address the following question to the panel: In our ever more digitalized societies, what concrete policy measures would you recommend to ensure an equitable participation of women in the digital economy?