Thank you Madame Chair.

Distinguished delegates,

• the protection and promotion of women’s rights, gender equality and women’s empowerment are key priorities for Italy, both in multilateral fora and in our bilateral relations, and lie at the heart of Italy’s current mandate on the UN Human Rights Council (2019-2021).

• Italy upholds the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the gender mainstreaming in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls are critical in achieving sustainable development, promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies, and enhancing sustained and sustainable economic growth.

• Italy is party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and actively participates in the work of the Commission on the Status of Women.

• The Italian Government is strongly committed for the eradication of harmful practices, such as female genital mutilations.

• My country also attaches great importance to ensuring the full and meaningful participation of women in the prevention, management and
resolution of conflicts and in post-conflict peacebuilding efforts, in line with UNSCR 1325. In order to enhance women’s participation in peace processes, in October 2017 Italy launched the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, during its mandate on the Security Council. A Global Alliance of regional networks of women mediators was successfully launched in New York last September.

- As a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, in 2017 we promoted the inclusion of specific provisions to prevent and counter gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse in the mandates of peacekeeping missions.

- Italy is a member of the UN Secretary-General’s Circle of Leadership on the prevention of and response to sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations operations, signed the relevant Voluntary Compact, and is the main contributor to the UN Trust Fund in support of victims of this scourge.

- Italy has put a great effort in the implementation of SDG5 - although a lot of work still needs to be done. For example, we are updating the Guidelines for the Italian Development Cooperation where a new gender focus has been mainstreamed throughout the whole document. At the same time, we have developed Specific Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (GEWE) Guidelines.

- Consistent with our view of “women as agents of change” the Italian Development Cooperation is focusing on women and girls’ education and vocational training, on improving women’s economic conditions by enhancing their role within rural development initiatives and private sector
support projects, on protecting their sexual and reproductive health, and on combating discriminations and violent practices against them.

- Since over a decade, Italy’s cooperation initiatives with **Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS)** focus also on women empowerment and capacity building of women. Our cooperation initiatives in **Afghanistan** also include the same dimension.

- In conclusion, Italy as a member of the EU welcomes this discussion and the progress made in the Asia-Pacific region and commends the efforts and the commitment by UNESCAP, jointly with UN Women, while acknowledging the need to increase our cooperation to reach the ultimate goal of the eradication of violence against women.

Thank you Madame Chair for the opportunity to address this distinguished audience.