

## ***Summary of Side Event: COVID-19 and Gender Violence: Extra challenges need extra solidarity***

2 February 2022, 8am EST.

### **Background on the event**

Progress towards achieving SDG 5 has been hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the challenges already faced by women. This situation has had a profound impact on the efforts made by the NGOs working in the field of gender equality. Accordingly, this entails identifying the most prominent challenges and sharing experiences among women's organizations to promote solidarity and advance the situation of women in different regions. The side event focused on a number of topics as: strengthening the role of non-governmental organizations in achieving target (5.1), which aims to eliminate discrimination against women and girls, the participation of non-governmental organizations in achieving target (5.2) to combat violence against women and girls, sharing the experiences of NGOs in achieving target (5.3) to eliminate all harmful practices and sharing challenges facing NGOs in achieving target (5.5) to increase women's participation in decision-making in political, economic and public life.

### **Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)**

- The importance of solidarity and partnership and the need to work on exchanging partnerships with many experts from different regions across the world in order to promote gender equality and protect the rights of women and girls
- Conflicts are among the root causes behind domestic violence against women and the high rates of early marriage
- The need to involve women in developing economic strategies in countries including those related to poverty eradication
- It has been underlined that harmful practices are deeply rooted in societal attitudes, norms, stereotypes, perceptions and customs that regard women and girls as inferior to men and boys.
- Poverty and lack of education are also among the drivers of gender inequality, and that it remains common in rural areas and among the poorest communities

### **Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)**

- collaborating with grassroots NGOs, human rights and women's rights organizations and local groups in developing long-term economic recovery plans to eliminate forms of gender inequality
- calling on NGOs and stakeholders to cooperate and take collective action, as well as to launch their own complementary advocacy agenda that should be more realistic
- African governments should reconsider laws and policies related to women and girls, and amend them to be consistent with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights

- expanding the scope for women's participation in public life, especially in decision-making positions
- States must provide for the means of prevention, protection, recovery, reintegration and redress for victims and combat impunity