



**Statement of Ms. Eva Dröfn Hassell Guðmundsdóttir, Temporary Officer, at the Closing Session of the 1st Preparatory Meeting of the 30th Economic and Environmental Forum, Vienna, 15 February 2022.**

**Thank you, Mr. Chair**

While Iceland aligns with the EU statement, I would like to add a few additional remarks on behalf of my delegation. Let me begin by expressing our gratitude for this 1<sup>st</sup> Preparatory Meeting of the Economic and Environmental Forum. We are grateful for the sharing of knowledge and best practices.

The promotion of women's economic empowerment is an inseparable component of sustainable economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. As has been mentioned, times of crisis are unique opportunities for structural changes for the benefit of generations to come.

Gender budgeting has been practiced in Iceland since 2009 and has been mandatory at state level since 2016 as laid out in the Public Finance Act. Gender budgeting is a promising strategy as we all strive to build back better. It is crucial that gender is mainstreamed in economic recovery plans, including through the promotion of equal opportunities in investment, entrepreneurship, and business development.

Sustainability and gender equality are intertwined. Sustainable economic recovery from COVID-19 can be an opportunity to close existing gender gaps and ensure security and stability in our region, for all genders.

**I thank you, Mr. Chair.**