Building Back Better: Integrating Human Rights in Sustainable and Resilient Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic

# Statement by Sweden

# Delivered by: Clara Molin, First Secretary

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Thank you Mr Chair,

The COVID-19 pandemic has already turned into a socio-economic crisis that **requires a response of unprecedented scale**. The challenges look different in every context and the responsibility to respond to them lies with each government concerned, to ensure a recovery where **no one is left behind.** The pandemic will have a major impact on people living in poverty, and particularly on individuals who already suffer discrimination, including **women and girls.** The negative impact that measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic have **on civil society and human rights defenders** is of great concern.

A state of emergency like this pandemic requires a rapid response and extraordinary measures, but can’t justify a weakening **respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law**. On the contrary, resolving the crisis and ensuring a sustainable and resilient recovery requires putting the respect for universal norms and principles on **human rights, democracy, rule of law and gender equality** at the core of all socio-economic crisis responses.

We welcome the **UN Secretary-General’s Call to Action on Human Rights** and his report We Are In This Together as well as the strong leadership and guidance of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and her office in this regard.

The crisis has, yet again, shown the importance of a **strong multilateral system** and the ability of multilateral organizations to come together and respond rapidly.

For the Swedish Government human rights, democracy and the rule of law are at the core of the response to the pandemic both nationally and internationally. Our Drive for Democracy and Feminist Foreign Policy guide our international response as will actively renew our commitment and support to a strengthened multilateral system capable of addressing current and future challenges. We must build back better and greener in line with **2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement**.

Thank you.