



**Permanent Mission of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines  
to the United Nations**

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**Statement**

by

**H.E. Sir Louis Straker,**

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Commerce

***Accelerating the Realization of Gender Equality and  
the Empowerment of all Women and Girls***  
**High-level meeting on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World  
Conference on Women**

United Nations Security Council  
01 October 2020  
New York

Excellencies,

It is my pleasure to address you, on behalf of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on the silver anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which remains a critical pillar of multilateralism and the wider global development agenda.

The pursuit of gender equality is inextricably tied to poverty eradication, democratized labour markets, people-centred economic growth, climate and environmental justice, and peace and security.

This integrated gender-responsive approach to development has taken shape in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines through: universal access to quality education and healthcare; expanded labour market participation; increased access to housing; gender-aware citizen security measures; the promulgation of the Gender Equity Policy and Action Plan; and with national oversight provided by the Gender Equality Commission. Over recent decades, my Government – in partnership with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Caribbean Development Bank, civil society organizations, UN Women, UNICEF and others, improved accountability and

community action for ending gender-based violence, with: the development and implementation of a comprehensive National Action Plan against Gender-based Violence; the introduction and revision of Domestic Violence and sexual offences legislation; the implementation of a Child Protection Bill; and the development of “Gender Relations and Gender-Based Violence” curriculum for all technical institutes.

However, to date, no country in the world has achieved gender equality. Indigenous, rural, and economically disadvantaged women, and women from racial, ethnic and religious minorities, are among those most acutely affected by enduring gender inequality. Today, the world is gripped by the devastating and uneven impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which threatens to undermine progress on gender equality. Globally, we are witnessing increasing income inequality and collapsing social safety nets. Lockdown measures have seriously compromised access to education and training; with girls and young women far less likely to return to education, and significantly more likely to experience sexual and gender-based violence. Women are

also far more likely to suffer the effects of economic precarity during the pandemic, given their greater reliance on the informal economy, greater likelihood to be unemployed or under-employed, and their disproportionate participation in unpaid care work.

We call on countries to deepen national, regional and multilateral cooperation and commitments for advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women, through policies and actions which centre gender, economic and climate justice. This requires keen attention to gender mainstreaming, gender-budgeting, gender equality funding as a COVID-19 mitigation strategy, the immediate financing of urgent actions to accelerate this agenda, adequately resourced national gender action and operational plans, and appropriate mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating progress.

I thank you.