

## **13<sup>th</sup> Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament on 17-18 August, 2020**

### **Pre-recorded speech by Ms Anu Vehviläinen, Speaker of the Parliament of Finland on part two: “Stepping up women’s economic empowerment and financial inclusion”**

Dear Chairperson, esteemed fellow Speakers and parliamentarians,

At the beginning of this year none of us could have imagined in which kind of situation the whole world would be living in August, 2020.

The coronavirus pandemic is not only a threat to our health but it causes massive economic and social impacts. Women and girls in many parts of the world are facing economic consequences of this crisis.

We – the global community together - have the shared responsibility to pay attention to this risk and to find the ways to support women surviving this crisis without becoming carriers of the heaviest burden.

I would like to focus on one particular perspective which my country, Finland, is engaging: technology and innovation for gender equality.

The current crisis has revealed a huge gender gap in having the access to digital services. Technology can boost positive change for women and girls. To overcome the gender digital divide, we must expand access to digital infrastructure for women and girls in vulnerable situations and support their digital skills. We must also create safe digital space to enable women and girls to use their voices online without threat of online gender-based violence, including harassment and hate speech.

My country, Finland, is committed to take gender equality to the next level. Finland will be co-leading the groundbreaking Generation Equality process launched by the UN Women, France and Mexico by leading the Action Coalition on Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality. (The Equality process was launched 25 years after the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was adopted.)

Finland’s vision is to bring more women into technology as agents of change – as business women, developers and investors – to make it more gender responsive and free of structural inequality and biases. With access to digital services women will have better opportunities to be employed and to establish and run businesses.

Dear colleagues,

I have often been asked how Finland became one of the global champions in gender equality and how is it possible the current government is famously led by women. I strongly believe that women’s active participation in politics has paved the way to an equal - but not yet perfect - society. To progress women’s economic empowerment, women representing different backgrounds have to be sitting at those tables where the laws and legislations are made as well as girls must have access to equal education. This is the only credible way of bringing women’s perspective into practice.

I thank you for your attention and look forward to meeting you all in person.