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Statement

by H.E. Gabriele Heinsch-Hosek
Federal Minister for
Women & Public Administration
of the Republic of Austria

at the 53rd Session of the United Nations
Commission on the Status of Women

New York
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Mr. Chair

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and a privilege for me to address the opening session of the 53rd Commission on the Status of Women. Austria fully aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of the Czech Republic on behalf of the European Union.

The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men in all areas of life is of the utmost importance on the way to achieving gender equality. Austria fully aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of the Czech Republic on behalf of the European Union.

These measures should also support women's participation in the labour market, to contribute towards establishing an individual and independent income that women can live on. Especially in times of crises, like the one we are facing right now, it is important to strengthen the circumstances of those who are amongst the most vulnerable –

vulnerable – namely women.

Therefore the members of the Austrian government together with the social partners have agreed to formulate a **national action plan on gender equality**. The plan is to be drafted for the duration of 5 years to supply annual reports which will serve as

evaluation and planning tools. General coordination of this plan will be the task of the minister for women. The key focus is to be placed on equal rights for working women, securing opportunities on the job market, reducing the gender pay gap, and support for women in leading job positions.

The **disproportionate burden** that women face in family and domestic

women, to take a certain period of time off work, reduce their working hours or change them, in order to take palliative care of their dying relatives or seriously ill children while still maintaining their status as employees. Losses of income are - except in cases of hardship - not reimbursed.

The **HIV/AIDS** pandemic has **aggravated the feminization of care work** and its impact on the sharing of responsibilities. At the same time, we must not lose sight of the increasing feminization of the disease itself with more women and girls becoming

guarantee women's and girls' access to sexual and reproductive health information and services.

Concerning the care of HIV/AIDS patients in Austria, the private initiative **HIVmobil**, founded in 1999, deserves a special mention. The **HIVmobil** specializes in

