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CSW63 CLOSING SPEECH

STATEMENT BY GEORG SPARBER
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

Madam Chair,

As this CSW63 is coming to an end, so too is our membership in the Commission and we therefore want to make a few closing remarks. But first, let me applaud your leadership and thank you and your team for the tremendous efforts. I would also like to pay a particular and heartfelt tribute to our facilitator Ambassador Koki Muli Grignon for her truly Herculean efforts to bring us to agreed conclusions. She has personified the kind of resilience and persistence, sometimes against difficult odds, that makes the United Nations work. With all the difficulties and strain that come with these negotiations we have agreed on conclusions and have thereby also contributed to the larger aim of the United Nations to find inclusive multilateral solutions to problems that concern us all to further develop the international normative framework. At times when the UN and the rules based international order are under attack, it is agreements like ours that best show that the system can deliver.

But we must also not shy away from self-criticism. The CSW is a notorious patient when it comes to working methods. In spite of the best efforts of the facilitator, the working hours and the sheer dimensions of our agreement are unreasonable. We urgently have to find a way to have a more focused process, with at least the same quality of outcome. We firmly believe that this is possible. This is also an issue of inclusiveness that the CSW is so adamant to protect. All delegations, including smaller ones, must have a fair opportunity to attend the proceedings of the

Commission, which crucially depends on reasonable working hours and a manageable quantity of text. We encourage the Bureau of the Commission to chart a different way for the next session. CSW has enormous convening power. There is simply no other single meeting at the UN which attracts such strong attendance and generates so much positive interest. We hope that more of this energy can be used in different ways in future sessions.

On substance, we look at the negotiations with mixed feelings. We regret to see long established concepts that are central to the advancement of women's rights being called into question. Referring to agreed language should not be a mantra. But not recognizing agreements in the CSW that have been reached at the highest level and frame the UN agenda, including on the SDGs or on the rule of law, is simply unacceptable. This has again made our negotiations more difficult than necessary this year. At the same time we appreciate the specific progress that we were able to make on a number of issues, including on fighting human trafficking and modern slavery and on ensuring access to justice and quality education. All in all, we are glad that we have a result and we are well aware that its impact and significance go well beyond this room.

Finally let me add that we strongly condemn the harassment and cyber-bullying against our facilitator. This is simply unacceptable and we are heartened by the strong and united response of the membership against it. The UN must be a role model for the amicable settlement of differences and for fostering a culture of dialogue on the basis of mutual respect. We have just proved that this is possible and will do so in the future, with zero tolerance for any kind of abuses among our midst.