Mr. President,

I am honoured to address you on behalf of the International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions (ICC) from all five continents.

This Human Rights Council session is taking place at a time when the human rights of women and girls and gender equality are at the forefront of political and social debate the world over.

However, a gap still exists between the normative framework for these rights and their realisation on the ground.

As independent bodies with a broad mandate to promote and protect human rights, national human rights institutions (NHRIs) are well placed to help bridge this implementation gap.

It is against this background that NHRIs from the four regional groups of the ICC (Africa, Americas, Asia Pacific and Europe) met in Amman in November 2012 for the 11th International Conference of NHRIs; and agreed on concrete actions to promote gender equality and combat policies and practices that discriminate against and violate the rights of women and girls.

The 11th ICC Conference was hosted by the Jordan National Centre for Human Rights and organised in cooperation with the OHCHR and the ICC.

Along with 100 NHRI representatives, the Conference brought together civil society organisations, government officials, UN agencies, academics and leading international experts. It was preceded by a major NGO Forum, which contributed to the discussions at the conference, and at the same time highlighted the value of strategic partnerships between NHRIs and civil society organisations.

The Amman Declaration and Program of Action sets out a number of broad principles and areas of work for NHRIs to promote greater gender equality.
The most salient recommendations call on NHRIs to:

- Monitor the performance of the state in relation to the rights of women and girls as well as activities of business and other non-state actors;
- Respond to, and investigate allegations, of violations of the rights of women and girls and work to eliminate the stigma associated with rising human rights violations;
- Counter prejudices and stereotyping of gender roles through human rights education;
- Build strategic partnerships with key national and UN agencies committed to fulfilling the rights of women and girls.

In addition, the *Amman Declaration and Programme of Action* sets out actions that NHRIs can take to promote women’s political and public participation; advance women’s economic and social rights; respond to violence against women and girls; and address women’s health and reproductive rights.

The *Declaration* is complemented by regional action plans developed by the four regional groups of the ICC to respond to the most pressing challenges of the respective regions.

The ICC and its members hope to continue to effectively cooperate and collaborate with the United Nations, including the Human Rights Council, treaty bodies, Special Procedures, Commission on the Status of Women, OHCHR, UNDP, UN Women, and other stakeholders at national, regional and international level in implementing the *Amman Declaration and Program of Action* across all regions.

I thank you.