**Vilnius Declaration of the 1st ASEM Conference**

**on Women’s Economic Empowerment**

Following the Ulaanbaatar Declaration on Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Into The Third Decade adopted at Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on 15-16 July 2016 during the 11th ASEM Summit in which the Leaders of ASEM members have agreed to forge closer ASEM partnership in the area of women empowerment, the Representatives of the ASEM members, international organizations and institutions, gathered in Vilnius, Lithuania, on May 25-26, 2017, at the initiative of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania for the 1st ASEM conference “**Women’s Economic Empowerment: Creating Equal Opportunities in the World of Work”.**

**Welcoming** the initiative of Lithuania to host the 1st ASEM conference on women’s economic empowerment as well as the efforts of the countries cosponsoring the initiative: China, Croatia, India; Japan, Mongolia, the Philippines, Romania, Sweden, Vietnam;

**Reaffirming** their commitment to gender equality and the economic empowerment of women and girls as expressed in relevant UN human rights treaties, summits and conferences;

Reaffirming their commitments to implement the agreed conclusions of the 61st session of the Commission on the Status of Women which took place in New York from 13 to 24 March 2017 that emphasized the mutually reinforcing relationship between women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work and the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

**Welcoming** the significant contribution to women’s economic empowerment undertaken by international bodies such as UN Women, UNECE, UNESCAP, ILO, and regional organizations in Asia and Europe.

**Recognizing** the strong political will of the ASEM governments to advance women’s economic rights and empowerment of women and the diversity of mechanisms and practices on women’s empowerment that could be shared among the ASEM partners;

The Participants of the Conference have declared the need:

1. To launch ASEM dialogue on women’s economic empowerment. They welcomed India’s offer to host the 2nd ASEM conference on women’s empowerment in 2018. They invited ASEM Senior officials to discuss the progress of this dialogue.
2. To continue exchange of views on institutional mechanisms, strategies, guidelines, implementation measures pertaining to women’s economic empowerment, violence-free environment, gender equality and the reconciliation of work life balance for both women and men, crucial role of men and boys in deepening the integration and the promotion of equal opportunities for women and girls;, to share good practices and lessons learned within ASEM, so that the informal dialogue started in Vilnius is taken forward with the view of achieving tangible outcomes for the benefit of the peoples of Asia and Europe.
3. To reflect on the effectiveness and strengths of the mechanisms and methods discussed in the light of economic cost and benefit analysis done by international organizations and fora.
4. To raise awareness of the ASEM members’ stakeholders, media and public on the persistent challenges women face in the labour market, on the social and economic importance of gender equality and the economic and human costs of gender based violence and gender inequalities, **and to consolidate the efforts of countries to reduce the wage gap between men and women.**
5. To initiate, as follow up of the Conference, preparation of the set of non-binding recommendations, “ASEM toolbox” of legal and non-legal measures that member countries could choose from to create a more enabling environment for women economic empowerment.

Vilnius, Lithuania

May 26, 2017