



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. FARUKH AMIL, ACTING PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF PAKISTAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE 51ST SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (New York, 26 February 2007)**

**Madam Chair  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen**

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I wish to congratulate you, Madam Chair, and your entire bureau for the continued stewardship of the Commission on the Status of Women at its 51st session. Looking forward to a constructive and fruitful session in the next two weeks, I assure you, on behalf of the Group, of our full support and cooperation to the bureau and other members of the Commission.

**Madam Chair**

At the outset, the Group of 77 and China would like to express its appreciation to the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women for its ongoing work in coordinating the system-wide implementation of gender mainstreaming into the United Nations. We would also like to commend the role of UNIFEM and Division for the Advancement of Women in providing guidance and support to the Commission on the Status of Women for follow up on the critical areas identified by Beijing Platform for Action.

The Group of 77 and China also notes with satisfaction that as a result of the revitalization process, the International Research and Training Institute for Women (INSTRAW) is now better positioned to contribute to women's empowerment, gender equality, engendering the MDGs and gender mainstreaming throughout the UN system. Commitments of sufficient resources from Member States are indispensable to securing the medium and long-term sustainability needed in order for the Institute to fully comply with its mandates.

**Madam Chair**

The 51st session of the Commission will focus its deliberations on the important theme of "Elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child". The protection and development of the rights of the girl child was placed on the international agenda in the 1990 World Summit for Children. The Beijing Platform for Action, the Millennium Declaration and the twenty third Special Session of the General Assembly further strengthened this commitment and acknowledged that elimination of discrimination and violence against girls and equal rights for girls and equal participation of women in the social, cultural, economic and political life of societies were prerequisites for successful and sustainable development.

The two recent studies, submitted to the 61st session of the General Assembly, namely report of the independent expert for the UN on violence against children and the Secretary General's in-depth study on violence against Women also drew attention of the international community to the various forms of violence committed against girls in every society. The Secretary General's in-depth study on violence against women states that violence against women and girls takes many different forms, manifested in a continuum of multiple, interrelated and sometimes recurring forms. It includes physical, sexual, psychological and emotional violence as well as economic abuse and

exploitation.

## **Madam Chair**

The report of the Secretary General (E/CN.6/2007/2), has rightly pointed out that despite progress in raising awareness about the rights of the girls, discrimination and violence against girl child persist in all parts of the world. A number of constraints such as ignorance about the potential of women populations, stereotypical mindsets as well as prejudices continue to hamper achieving gender equality.

Group of 77 and China agrees that poverty and social and economic upheavals further exacerbate the risk of abuse and exploitation of the girl child. The plight of girl child in rural areas, in conflict situations, in territories under foreign occupation and migrant and trafficked women is an area that needs immediate attention.

The Group of 77 and China also takes note of the finding of the SG's report that promotion and protection of the rights of the girl child is a key to breaking the cycle of discrimination and violence against girls and women. This entails the creation of an environment where women and girls could become active members of their families and communities and are able to make informed choices about issues directly affecting them. Supporting this process would also require the elimination of all barriers that prevent women from developing their full potential, including through equal access to education and training, health services, community services and girl friendly spaces for interaction with their peers.

Families and communities can play a major role in promoting and protecting the rights of the girl child. As noted by the Secretary General's report, "the social capital of girls, in the form of supportive family, friends and communities needs to be actively nurtured". The active involvement of parents, teachers and community leaders is also crucial in this context.

Eliminating discrimination and protecting the rights of the girl child also require the active engagement of men and boys. Boys need to be sensitized at an early age, within families, schools and communities, to develop respect for the rights of women and girls and to assimilate the concept of gender equality.

## **Madam Chair**

It is often acknowledged that protection of the rights of girl child is both a national and an international responsibility and could be achieved through collaboration and cooperation in the context of globalization and by enabling the developing countries to achieve the MDGs.

The conclusions of the report of the Secretary General also lead to the fact that there is a clear linkage between underdevelopment and violence against women and girls. The goals of development and poverty reduction cannot be realized without the protection of girl child and empowerment of women.

The G77 and China believes that central to the reduction of poverty among women is the importance of increasing their educational and training opportunities. Education of women decreases child mortality and improves the health of the family. It improves their chances for employment and therefore the welfare of the family in general. Women become more aware of their rights which in turn, contribute to increasing their level of political participation and representation in decision-making processes. Increasing access of girls and women to education and training in science and technology, including in ICT, is an area that needs to be improved. We should also

seek to transform education systems and curricula to instill gender sensitivity and abolish stereotypes that continue to discriminate against girls. Education could serve as a vehicle for transforming attitudes, beliefs and entrenched social norms that perpetuate discrimination and inequality.

## **Madam Chair**

The persistence of conflicts in various parts of the world is another major impediment to the elimination of violence against the girl child. The international community must pay special attention to the plight of women and their families living under foreign occupation and ensure that their basic and inalienable rights are guaranteed. The resolution of disputes including the situations of foreign occupation and the attainment of peace are pre-requisite for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the MDGs particularly in the area of the rights of the girl child.

In conclusion, the G77 and China is of the view that all countries should take concrete measures to address this challenge at the national level by bringing legislation in conformity with international human rights instruments relevant to the girl child and ensure the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of sex. At the same time, there is a need to enhance international cooperation and global partnership to assist countries in achieving this goal. For the effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, the international community should honour its commitments to Official Development Assistance. It must commit to debt relief and the opening of markets to give opportunities particularly to women entrepreneurs. Increased development assistance in such areas as education, health and job creation is vital towards eliminating gender disparities and eliminating violence against the girl child. By translating our commitment into action, it is still possible to enhance the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and meet the MDGs and also the challenge of eliminating violence against the girl child.

I thank you Madam Chairman