



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. MR. PETER THOMSON, AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FIJI TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 28: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN, AT THE THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE 68TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 11 October 2013)**

Mr. Chairman,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 28: Advancement of women. We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his reports submitted under this important item of the Third Committee. We would also like to thank the Executive Director of UN Women and the Chairperson of the CEDAW Committee for their enlightening presentations this morning.

Mr. Chairman,

2. The Group of 77 reaffirms the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly as the most globally comprehensive policy framework for the full realisation of gender equality, women's rights and the empowerment of women and girls.

3. There has certainly been progress in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women. However the fact remains that there are still severe problems affecting women, such as the high incidences of poverty, violence, extremism and discrimination. There is also a marked disparity in the advancement of women among the regions, and there exists an urgent need to expedite actions at all levels to address these problems, but more importantly the root causes which include disparities between men and women as well as armed conflicts and socio-economic constraints.

4. The eradication of poverty remains the greatest global challenge facing developing countries today. Achieving it through an inclusive and equitable economic growth at every level, in particular the challenges and achievements that are faced by women and girls, is a necessity for sustainable development and reaching the MDGS. Furthermore, there is a need for genuine partnerships and strengthened cooperation from developed countries aimed at expanding opportunities for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment and advancement of women.

5. The Group also reaffirms the importance of promoting the economic empowerment of women and girls and their ability to generate incomes; of ensuring that women and men enjoy equal treatment in the workplace, as well as equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, and equal access to power and decision-making, as well as sharing of paid and unpaid work; and of decent work for all.

Mr. Chairman,

6. The Group of 77 calls for intensified efforts at all levels in addressing the alarming statistics concerning the increased incidents of trafficking in women and girls, the violation of fundamental women's rights, violence against women and girls, the wide spread of HIV and AIDs,

unemployment and the lack of access to social services. Women are also the most vulnerable in terms of health. The Group wishes to highlight the importance of addressing the effects of both communicable and non-communicable diseases which affect even further the ability of women to realize their rights and achieve their fullest potential.

7. The Group of 77 is deeply concerned about the suffering of women and girls living under foreign occupation and underlines the urgency for collective actions to remove the obstacles to the full realization of their rights.

Mr. Chairman,

8. Despite the progress thus far, challenges and obstacles remain to achieve the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. As we deliberate on the post-2015 development agenda, it is even more imperative that national efforts allow for the inclusive and effective participation of women and girls, including the creation of an enabling environment to foster increasing political participation of women at all levels of decision-making.

9. We emphasize the importance of continuing to share national experiences with a view to expanding efforts to coordinate at the national and international levels to support national programs for women, including women and girls with disabilities, as well as migrants, rural and indigenous women and girls. In this respect, the role of UN Women is of utmost importance in promoting better coordination within the UN System in order to address all these multiple barriers that impede the advancement and empowerment of women.

Mr. Chairman,

10. The Group of 77 would like to stress the importance of adopting appropriate measures to identify and address the ongoing negative impacts of the global economic and financial crisis, the food crisis and continuing food insecurity, unilateral and extraterritorial sanctions, energy access, the distortions and impediments to international trade, and the challenges posed by climate change on women and girls, and the need to design stimulus packages taking into account the needs, priorities and contributions of women. The Group also underscores the importance of gender-responsive budgeting initiatives to address gender gaps in policies, plans and budgets in order to contribute to gender equality and the fulfillment of women's rights.

11. In closing, the Group of 77 and China reaffirms its commitment to the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and looks forward to working together towards the further empowerment and advancement of women.

Thank you.