



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY HER EXCELLENCY MS. SUSAN SHABANGU, MINISTER OF WOMEN IN THE PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, AT THE 59TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (New York, 9 March 2015)

Distinguished Delegates,
Excellences,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Madame Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 27: Advancement of women. The Group would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on the measures taken and progress achieved in follow-up to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

Allow me to extend our warm congratulations and welcome, to you as Chair of the 59th session of the Commission on the Status of Women and to the members of your Bureau. The Group wishes to assure you of its full cooperation during the deliberations of this very important session.

The Group of 77 welcomes this session on 'implementing the Beijing Platform for Action as well as the Political Declaration adopted here today. We commend the two co-facilitators for their tireless efforts leading to the finalization of the action-orientated document.

Madame Chair,

The Group of 77 and China remains steadfast in its commitment to gender equality and empowerment of women as well as to the respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms of women. The Group reaffirms its support for the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly as the guiding policy framework for the achievement of women's development and gender equality, the full realization of their rights and the socio-economic empowerment of women and girls.

Twenty years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the outcome of the twenty third special session, the Group of 77 and China continues to underscore the need to intensify and accelerate our efforts in achieving full and effective implementation, as the implementation is an essential contribution to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration.

The Group of 77 and China welcomes progress made for women and girls in several areas of the MDGs, and recognizes the importance of MDG 3 in signaling gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment as a global priority. However, the Group remains deeply concerned that overall progress for women and girls across all the MDGs remains slow and uneven. We are especially concerned about the lack of progress for women and girls in our countries and those who experience multiple forms of discrimination based on their various statuses in their communities, such as ethnicity, disability as well as women and girls living with HIV and AIDS. We are also concerned that the MDGs are least likely to be achieved for women and girls in countries affected

by conflict and living under foreign occupation or unilateral and coercive measures contrary to the International Law.

The 59th Session of the CSW offers a great opportunity to assess the achievements and identify the challenges since the adoption of the MDGs to attain substantive equality between women and men, and to contribute to the debates that are taking place at the national, regional, and global levels regarding the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Whilst we recognize that significant progress has been achieved in the advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of women. We are however, cognizant of the many challenges affecting women and girls, such as violence, extremism and discrimination as well as those that are socioeconomic in nature. We should accelerate our actions at all levels to address these challenges, involving both men and boys in the process.

Madame Chair,

Women remain the most vulnerable in terms of health. It is thus pertinent that we intensify our efforts in addressing the effects of both communicable and non-communicable diseases which negatively affect the ability of women to realize their rights and achieve their fullest potential.

Madame Chair,

Human trafficking remains a huge concern, the numbers of women and girls falling victim of trafficking to date is truly alarming. The international community should take appropriate measures to address the factors that increase the vulnerability for women and girls to trafficking. Consequently, there is a need to establish and strengthen national to provide a better protection for women and girls and to punish perpetrators of such crimes. We should also have a more holistic approach which also address scourges of poverty, unemployment, lack of socioeconomic opportunities, gender based violence, discrimination and marginalization as they are some of the contributing factors leading to trafficking of women and girls.

Madame Chair,

The eradication of poverty remains the greatest global challenge facing developing countries today. We need to address it through inclusive and equitable economic growth at all levels. This therefore includes the challenges in the context of women and girls, is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development and reaching the MDGs.

In this regard, the Group of 77 wishes to stress that whilst sustained and inclusive economic growth is essential for eradicating poverty and hunger in developing countries, an integrated and inclusive national efforts in this regard should be complemented by an enabling international environment and genuine international cooperation aimed at expanding the development opportunities of developing countries toward the realization of their established goals and targets.

The Group stresses the importance of promoting empowerment of women and their ability to generate income, ensuring equal access for all women, including those in rural areas, as vital development agents to productive resources, opportunities and public service. We are of the firm view that achieving women's empowerment, and their full and effective participation in all spheres of society, is fundamental to the achievement of equality, development and peace.

Violence against women continues to be a major obstacle to the achievement of gender equality

and development. In this regard, the G-77 countries + China reiterate their firm commitment to join efforts and to continue combating all forms of violence against women, including its most extreme manifestations such as female genital mutilation and femicide.

The Group stresses that right to education is a human right, and that eliminating illiteracy, ensuring equal access to education, in particular in rural and remote areas, and closing the gender gap at all levels of education empowers women and girls and thereby contributes to the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls.

The Group 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. The Group is concerned that some women are still paid less compared to men although they do the same job. The gender pay gap can be addressed by providing equal pay for equal work.

The Group stresses the importance of demonstrating political will and dedicate resources to allow for women's leadership to take up. This will contribute 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.

It is also important to enhance international cooperation and global partnership for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women, including the fulfillment of commitments on official development assistance, debt relief, market access, financial and technical support and capacity building, in particular in areas such as women's education, health and job creation in order to contribute to the elimination of gender disparities.

The Group also emphasizes 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 from vulnerable groups as well as for effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism to advance the goals of sustainable development through equality, peace and security for all women everywhere, in the interest of all humanity.

Madame Chair,

In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China reaffirms its commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly, and looks forward to a productive and successful session.