

CLOSING STATEMENT BY HAJIA AISHA ISMAIL, HONOURABLE MINISTER FOR WOMEN AFFAIRS AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA, ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, ON "WOMEN 2000: GENDER EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY", AT THE 23RD SPECIAL SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

New York, 10 June 2000

Mr. President,

It is with great pleasure that I address this august gathering, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, at the closing session of this historic meeting of the United Nations General Assembly.

Mr. President,

Beijing plus five has finally come to a successful conclusion. After five days of hard work, the women of the world through the Outcome Document have once again taken another step forward, to consolidate the gains of past. Now, the march towards gender equality, development and peace in the twenty-first century is irreversible.

Mr. President,

The Group of 77 salutes all delegations that have worked so hard for the historic decisions elaborated in the Outcome Document.

Over the past few days, we have devoted time to review our achievements. We have identified the obstacles and challenges facing us. More importantly, we have taken new initiatives to combat poverty, particularly among women. Equally we have taken important initiatives on violence against women. Practical steps have also been put in place to advance women and girls education and extend the frontiers of women's rights. Overall, the Outcome Document has laid before us a wave of new initiatives, in the form of programmes and projects. We urge that they be effectively pursued and implemented in all the critical areas of concern. We expect action at the national and international level. In this regard, we expect solid support and involvement of the multilateral institutions. The partnership, which we have forged with civil society organizations in Beijing, has been further strengthened.

Mr. President,

The statements by the leaders of respective delegation of Member State of the G-77 at the plenary send out one clear and loud message. This is that, for the countries of the developing nations, the issue of political will and commitments to goal of gender equality is beyond doubt. All have demonstrated, through concrete action, the determination to march forward in the goal of empowerment of women. Practically all have undertaken policy reforms and establish mechanisms that will propel gender equality and opportunities for women. They have all shown unwavering commitment towards gender mainstreaming in their developmental goal. It is now left for the international community, the developed countries and the multilateral financial institutions to demonstrate their commitment to

genuine cooperation with the developing countries in the area of advancement of women. In this connection, I am renewing the call on developed countries to support, in concrete terms, through financial resources, the efforts of developing countries in the implementation of policies for sustained economic growth and development. This is the only way we would be able to reposition our countries and our peoples for the great tasks ahead, particularly as set out in the Outcome Document. We trust that at the dawn of a new millennium and, indeed, because of our common humanity, our partners will not fail us in these historic tasks.

In closing, let me through you, Mr. President, thank all delegations for their spirit of flexibility, which ensured that we have not gathered in vain in New York over the past five days but have significantly advance the interests of the women of the world. I must also thank the Secretary-General and the entire staff members of the UN Secretariat who have worked so hard for the success of this momentous event. We wish all delegations a very safe journey back to their destinations.

I thank you.