

STATEMENT BY MS. LILIAN ONOH, NIGERIAN DELEGATION, ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, AT THE FIRST REGULAR SESSION OF THE UNDP/UNFPA EXECUTIVE BOARD

New York, January 25, 2000

Mr. President,

I take the floor on behalf of the G-77 and China in response to certain comments made yesterday regarding the procedure of groups speaking before the Executive Board of the UNDP/UNFPA.

It is true that we had a particularly grueling General Assembly last year. This and the fears of the total collapse of civilization as we know it from the Y2K bug may have affected certain memories but it is the recollection of this Group that since its inception in June 1964, our Group has always addressed various UN forums on different issues and with particular reference to the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board, it has been the tradition and practice that the Chairman of the G-77, representing 133 developing countries, addresses this Board. We are not aware of any General Assembly resolution or Executive Board decision that prevents any group of countries within the UN from making a statement before the Board. Just to reference the recent past, the G-77 addressed this body in 1997, 1998 and 1999 and the Group does intend to continue addressing issues that concern us as a Group. For those who may not remember for one reason or another, all past statements by this Group are posted on the G-77 website.

Mr. President,

The Administrator of the UNDP felt it necessary to consult with the G-77 as a group and held meetings with the Group on the Transition Team's Report and on the basis of the consultations some aspects of the Business Plan were changed. The document before this board would have been quite different without these consultations and we felt it necessary to contribute as a group.

Finally, Mr. President, we would like to state that this is not really an issue of contention for the G-77. There is no corporate entity as the G-77 on the Executive Board and ultimately, all decisions lie with the Board. Our contribution or that of any other group that can come up with a common position can only enhance the Board's discussions.

We do hope that in its considerations, the Executive Board will consider the views of the 133 members of the United Nations most affected by any changes to the UNDP.

I thank you.