



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. FARUKH AMIL, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF PAKISTAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM "ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN", AT THE THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE 62ND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 15 October 2007)

Chairperson
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We thank the Secretary General for his various reports under this important agenda item of the Third Committee.

Chairperson

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 on gender mainstreaming in the United Nations system. We would also like to commend the role of Division for the Advancement of Women as well as UNIFEM and UNFPA in serving as the focal points of the Task Force established by the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality.

The Group of 77 and China also note 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.

Chairperson

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly remain the guiding policy frameworks for gender equality and the empowerment of women. Since the 61st UNGA, the General Assembly has paid specific attention to gender equality including in areas of violence against women, trafficking in women and girls, improvement of the status of women in the United Nations system and follow-up to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

All three instruments namely, the Beijing Platform for Action, the Millennium Declaration and the twenty third Special Session of the General Assembly - acknowledged that elimination of discrimination and violence against women and girls and equal rights and equal participation of women in the social, cultural, economic and political life of societies were prerequisites for successful and sustainable development.

The Secretary General's in-depth study on violence against Women, released last year, also drew attention of the international community to the various forms of violence committed against women in every society. It noted that violence against women and girls takes different forms and manifested in a continuum of multiple, interrelated and sometimes recurring patterns.

Chairperson

The Secretary General's 'In-depth Study on violence against women' rightly concluded, "Violence

against women persists in every country in the world as a pervasive violation of human rights and a major impediment to achieving gender equality". We agree with the observation of the Secretary General that as long as violence against women continues, we cannot claim to be making real progress towards equality, development and peace. The challenge, therefore, before us is how to surmount the highly complex and historically entrenched phenomena of violence against women.

The Group of 77 and China believe that poverty and social and economic upheavals exacerbate the risk of abuse and exploitation of women. The plight of women in rural areas, in conflict situations, in territories under foreign occupation and migrant and trafficked women as well as women and girls affected by unilateral coercive measures are areas that need immediate attention.

We are pleased to note that the Secretary General is committed to a stronger and more visible role for the United Nations in efforts to eliminate violence against women and will launch a global campaign later this year to focus on global advocacy, UN's leadership and strengthened efforts at the regional and national levels to combat this challenge.

Chairperson

The G-77 and China hope that efforts of the Secretary General will take into consideration the following underlying factors, redressal of which would remain crucial in the efforts to eliminate violence against women and promote their economic, social and political advancement.

One: Women continue to suffer discrimination and exclusion in all societies. 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.

Two: There is a clear linkage between underdevelopment and violence against women. The goals of development and poverty reduction cannot be realized without the empowerment of women who constitute half of the mankind.

Three: The plight of women in rural areas, in conflict situations, in territories under foreign occupation and migrant and trafficked women need to be addressed as a matter of top priority.

Four: Advancement of women 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.

Chairperson

The G77 and China believe 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.

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.

The persistence of conflicts in various parts of the world is another major impediment to the elimination of violence and sexual abuse of women. 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 advancement of women.

In conclusion, the G77 and China are 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 ensuring 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 women. 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 women.

I thank you.