

**STATEMENT BY PROF. DR. SUNARYATI HARTONO, ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, BEFORE THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ON AGENDA ITEM 3(A):  
ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN, IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION AND THE ROLE OF OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN PROMOTING, IN PARTICULAR, CAPACITY-BUILDING AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION FOR ENHANCING THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT**

**New York, 9 July 1998**

Mr. President,

I have the honour to address this session of the Economic and Social Council on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. I should like to begin by noting our appreciation that gender mainstreaming and the advancement of women is now being considered within the context of operational activities. This is a positive step towards achieving progress both within the UN system and at national levels and should secure, within the activities of the various Funds and Programmes, a central role for the Beijing Platform for Action.

We in the Group of 77 and China continue to view the operational activities of the United Nations system as an important source of assistance to the national policies and programmes of the developing countries, and as a means to facilitate them in taking the lead in follow-up activities of the various international conferences. We find it somewhat regrettable however that the firm expression of commitment from the international community to register advances in economic and social development is often accompanied by a less than enthusiastic availability of resources for genuine action. One outcome of this session of the ECOSOC should therefore be a firm expression of commitment to render support to the developing countries in their efforts to realize conference goals, and also a clear indication of the ways and means this will be achieved.

Within operational activities, vigorous efforts should be made to ensure that gender mainstreaming is achieved and that this effort be guided by the Agreed Conclusions 1997/2, which were adopted last year by the Council. We look to those agreements as a good framework for achieving policy coherence within the system and for promoting a more coordinated programming approach to the concept of gender mainstreaming. In that regard, I would recall that through the Agreed Conclusions the Council did urge all entities of the UN system to apply a gender perspective to the follow-up activities of the various international conferences. As coordination and an integrated approach is still very much on the agenda of the ECOSOC, it is therefore a most timely opportunity for gender mainstreaming.

In this connection, the Group of 77 and China would like to acknowledge the efforts and support that have been extended by the Secretary-General to the advancement of women and to gender mainstreaming in the work of the UN system, as is evident from his report before the Council. Adopting such a common framework, with guidelines and directives for mainstreaming the gender perspective in policies and programmes, should, however, also be accompanied by a more systematic assessment of field level activities.

While the Group does recognize the possibilities that are presented by the reform process being undertaken throughout the UN system, particularly for gender mainstreaming, there remains some concern on our part that frameworks such as the UNDAF are new and still being tested. We therefore reserve further comment on this until the results of the pilot phase has been concluded and look forward to the report which will be prepared by the UNDG on the assessment of the implementation of the proposed framework in 18 countries. In this connection, we would underscore the need for additional capacity-building to strengthen the system-wide support for advancement of women programmes, particularly given the fact that there has been such a consistent scarcity of resources for development.

With regard to the question of guidelines and directives, the Group would agree with the recommendation made for the Council to encourage Agencies to pursue the development of guidelines and directives for gender mainstreaming and women's equality. Furthermore, it is our position that all funds, programmes and agencies should draw specific programmes for the use of available funding sources and mechanisms in contributing to the goals of poverty eradication, targeting women and girls living in poverty.

The Group of 77 and China fully agree with the statement made in the report of the Secretary-General that a national policy environment for the advancement of women is crucial for UN system support to be possible. In fact, it is the national plans and priorities which must guide the operational activities of the UN system, thus ensuring a country-driven approach as was decided in General Assembly resolutions 50/120, 52/203.

While the Resident Coordinator system is evolving as the main entry point for the UN activities, we find it necessary to stress that in the first instance it is the national governments which have the responsibility for conference follow-up and that it is the national governments which therefore determine and initiate policy, with the assistance of the UN system, through its strategic and programming frameworks. In this regard, we note from the report that among the recommendations of the Inter-Agency Workshop on Field-level Follow-up to Global Conferences organized by the CCPOQ, listed in paragraph 48, is consulting with and providing financial support to NGOs and national machineries for women who were working on post-conference strategies. However, such financial support should be made available to national governments not to NGOs, since it is the governments who plan and implement national budgets. Therefore Additional information should be provided on these recommendations, particularly concerning financial support to NGOs.

If, in fact, the UN system is to be in a position to support the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and to provide the necessary services to the States Members, particularly the developing countries, then clearly the mobilization of resources is a priority, which is the role of the operational activities segment of ECOSOC this year. The Group of 77 welcome the fact that the UNDP has allocated a percentage of the resources of its Global Programmes to gender mainstreaming and that similar initiatives by UNICEF and other UN entities are being made.

Nevertheless, we do consider the need for accountability in the operational activities of the United Nations in the implementation of gender mainstreaming activities, and monitoring and evaluation by respective governing bodies to ensure that financial resources are optimally employed.

The Group of 77 and China could therefore agree with the recommendation contained in the document that the governing bodies of the United Nations entities should follow-up on the earmarking of funds for gender mainstreaming by assessing their use and to determine if such funds are used to support activities carried out by local women's organizations. Likewise, financial resources should be provided directly to national machineries to assist them in conference follow-up activities.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China recognize that a considerable amount of effort is being made to mainstream gender into the activities of the agencies, funds and programmes. We are still not far from the Beijing Conference and realize that additional time is needed before registering truly significant progress. It must also be recognized that any lasting changes will be made first at the national and local levels and that if this is to occur the developing countries must receive the necessary support. The operational activities of the United Nations offer such an effective means of support that should be fully utilized.

Thank you.

