

Statement by Ambassador Adriana Pulido, Deputy Permanent Representative of Venezuela to the United Nations, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, on agenda item 102: Advancement of women; and agenda item 103: Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled: "Women 2000: Gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

New York, 9 October 2002

Mr. Chairman,

First of all, we would like to thank the Secretary General for his report on the follow-up to and progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

I would also like to take the opportunity to express our gratitude to the Secretariat for their dedicated work and professionalism in the preparation of the documents that will serve as basis for our discussions.

Mr. Chairman,

For the G77 and China the advancement of women and gender equality continue to be issues of critical importance. Thus, we stress once more the unequivocal commitment of our group to the commitments and goals agreed both in 1995 and in 2000.

The adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly constituted an overall process that allowed the international community to address various challenges, trends and patterns affecting the status of women whose causes and consequences are different and vary from region to region. During the Fourth World Conference on Women and its review process the improvement of the living conditions of women all over the world was the issue at the heart of the collective efforts of the international community.

In assessing and evaluating the achievements of the international community in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document of the 23rd Special Session, the Group of 77 and China is of the view that despite the progress made thus far on these endeavors, there are still serious challenges and obstacles that remain to be addressed and surmounted.

Poverty eradication continues to be one of those challenges. Globalization, as well as the transformations in the world economy associated to it, have had a deep impact on the parameters of social development and, in many instances, have worsened the conditions in which millions of people live around the world, particularly in developing countries. One of the most disquieting trends of this process has been the increased poverty of women, into what has become to be known as the "feminization of poverty". It is essential to bear in mind the recognition made by the Beijing Platform for Action of the empowerment of women as a critical factor in the eradication of poverty. Thus, the empowerment of women should be understood as one of the central means through which the goal of poverty eradication can be achieved.

This process involves the transformation of power relations by which women move from being objects within relationships of subordination, to become subjects in control of their own lives. The insertion of women in income generating activities contributes in the improvement of the standards of living of their families and, consequently, to the creation of new opportunities that contribute to poverty eradication efforts.

In this context, for the G77 and China it is of significant importance the recognition made by the Monterrey Consensus, adopted by the Conference on Financing for Development, of the need that exists to "promote

gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and diseases and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable”.

Similarly, we are pleased by the outcome of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, where our governments reaffirmed their commitment to the promotion of gender equality and the advancement of women. The Madrid International Plan of Action of Ageing is a balanced document that covers in a comprehensive manner the particular situation of older women in society, especially in the developing world.

Mr. Chairman,

Gender mainstreaming is also an essential component of the activities initiated and undertaken by the United Nations system in the realm of advancement of women and gender equality. In this context, the Group of 77 and China would like to express its appreciation for the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/57/286 on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and on the copious initiatives undertaken at different corners of the United Nations system. The Group welcomes the cross-sector collaboration initiated in the system as part of the strategy to promote the advancement of women.

Mr. Chairman,

It results axiomatic to say that development and peace require international cooperation. Promotion of international cooperation in support of regional and national efforts of national machineries on women is of critical importance for the collective international endeavors toward the achievement of the Beijing and Beijing +5 goals and targets. The mobilization of existent and additional resources, both financial and human, at national and international levels, remains critical to the success of the follow-up activities and implementation of the Beijing platform for Action and the outcome of the review process. In this respect, mention should be made of the need to realize the internationally agreed target of 0.7 per cent in Official Development Assistance.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to refer now to the question of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW).

The Group of 77 and China attaches great importance to the work of the Institute and thus, has made efforts in order to guarantee its survival. It is in this vein that we engaged in constructive negotiations last year, in order to find a solution to the critical situation INSTRAW was facing. The decision then was to create a working group comprised of member states of all regions, in order to study in detail the situation of the Institute and to present recommendations to the General Assembly on its future.

We would like to commend the efforts and work of the working group and its President, Ambassador Inocencio Arias of Spain, in trying to find a viable solution for the Institute's survival.

The Group of 77 and China has examined carefully the report of the Working Group, and finds that the recommendations contained therein are of crucial importance for the long-term viability of the Institute. Hence, we have reflected those recommendations in a draft resolution that we hope will be adopted by consensus in this committee.

We concur with the findings of the Working Group and with the assertion made in its report that “the situation of INSTRAW should not be evaluated in a vacuum, but rather in the context of the competences of all the instances that form the UN machinery for the advancement of women” [Source: Document A/57/330, paragraph 50]. This would also be in line with the broader process of the strengthening of the Organization promoted by the Secretary General.

The Group of 77 and China calls upon its partners to look seriously into this matter, so as to find a solution viable and suitable for all of us with regards to the future of INSTRAW. It would seem rather contradictory to decide closing the only institute devoted to do research and training in the realm of the advancement of women, precisely at the same time when this issue and the issue of gender equality are among high in the scale of priorities, not only of this Organization, but that of the international community at large.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

