



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF G-77 AND CHINA DELIVERED BY MR. ABDULLA EID SALMAN AL-SULAITI, FIRST SECRETARY, PERMANENT MISSION OF THE STATE OF QATAR TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, 48TH SESSION, AGENDA ITEM 3 (New York, 1 March 2004)**

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to express, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, our heartfelt congratulations on your election as Chairman of the Commission on the Status of Women at its Forty-eighth session. Allow me also to assure you of our wholehearted support. I, of course, avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

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 valuable work and important role of coordination and advocacy on gender mainstreaming into the United Nations System, in particular throughout the Inter Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, as well as in their support to the process of revitalization and strengthening of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW).

Mr. Chairman,

At this 48th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the focus is on two thematic issues which are outlined in the Commission's multi-year programme of work, namely: the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality; and women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management, conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace-building. These themes are significant because they are organically linked to the overarching goal of achieving gender equality and promoting the empowerment of women. These themes are, ostensibly, priority concerns for the Group of 77 and China.

We recognize that while there has been some movement towards equality and equity between women and men in all regions of the world, women are still the most affected in times of political crisis and economic stagnation. Concrete progress in improving the status of women and promoting gender equality has been slow and uneven. We must strive for equal rights, broader opportunities and increased access to resources as well as the sharing of responsibilities by women and men. Our objective should be to achieve de facto and de jure gender equality within families and in society at large, in accordance with particularly the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action and the Beijing+5 outcome document. That is why we support "Gender Mainstreaming" as a strategy for promoting equality between women and men. We consider that the implementation of this strategy at all levels to be pivotal. We adhere to the guidelines of the Platform for Action, which beckons us to action to ensure gender equality as well as to remove the obstacles to women's full participation in public life and decision making at all levels.

In this regard, the Group of 77 and China are supportive of the Secretary-General in his efforts to ensure a coordinated UN system wide response. A system wide response is essential if concerned UN agencies and bodies, including the regional commissions, have an important role to play in the implementation and monitoring of the Platform for Action. The right of women and men, girls and boys, to be treated equally in family and public life derives from the inherent dignity of all human persons. Equality between women and men is based on the fundamental and equal worth of each person and is essential to the well-being of the society at large.

The Group of 77 and China wholeheartedly believes that equality between women and men is a necessary and basic pre-requisite for development and peace. Indeed, the two main pillars of gender equality are jobs and meaningful work and educational opportunities. These two pillars ensure that both women and men can influence, participate in and benefit from development processes. It is in this sphere and context that there is a need for further investments in jobs and education. Current Official Development Assistance is low and inadequate to meet the needs and challenges facing the international community in the midst of poverty and hunger, the pandemic of HIV/AIDS and other diseases, massive global unemployment, illiteracy, wars and pestilence and the negative impact of globalization. There is a dire need for intrinsic international cooperation to inter alia strengthen national and subnational capacities for the achievement of effective results. Capacity building is a pivotal means of creating the appropriate environment conducive to development and social progress. Increased development assistance in such areas of education, training and jobs creation are fundamental towards facilitating the elimination of disparities between women and men. Action in adequate measure can wait no longer.

Mr. Chairman,

In closing, allow me to observe that women have a key role to play in the realization and maintenance of a peace and gender equality. It is evident that full participation of women in decision-making at all levels is vital and the integration of gender perspectives in the domain of peace-building and peace-keeping is both necessary and germane. This is predominantly because women bring a new dimension to peace. In this connexion, the Group of 77 and China believe that concerted efforts must be reinforced in two specific areas: (a) increasing the knowledge base concerning women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management, conflict resolution and peace-building; and (b) ensuring the full participation of women and the promotion of gender equality in all aspects of the peace processes.

Thank you.

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