

STATEMENT DELIVERED BY A. P. ETANOMARE OSIO, MINISTER, PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, ON AGENDA ITEM 96: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN: ACTIVITIES OF THE UN DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN), AT THE 14TH MEETING OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE, 55TH UNGA

New York, 9 October 2000

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the G77 and China, it is my honour to comment on Agenda Item 96: "Operational Activities for Development: Advancement of Women: Activities of the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). I wish to express our appreciation for the introductory comments made on this document and to thank the secretariat for its comprehensive report which painstakingly documented the activities of UNIFEM around the globe.

The Group is impressed with the universal scope of UNIFEM's activities and its concerted effort to match its programmes to the specific peculiarities of each region, focusing on its three thematic areas: Strengthening women's economic capacity; engendering governance and leadership; and promoting women's human rights, and eliminating all forms of violence against women.

Our Group recognizes that UNIFEM has managed to achieve a measure of success in the area of strengthening women's economic capacity by opening up credit lines to women entrepreneurs in different regions across the globe, and empowering small scale producers by helping them to organize and work in close partnership. The promotion of innovative uses of new technologies to empower women, the increased advocacy to influence policy makers and the attendant effect on gender sensitivity in policy formulation certainly go a long way in breaking old and new barriers against women. In that regard, the Group of 77 commends the detailed research and collation of data in various fields, including the impact of the financial crisis on women and even the effect of NAFTA on the employment of women. Such research will be of great value in future formulations of economic policy.

Mr. Chairman,

In the area of engendering governance and leadership, our Group supports the efforts of UNIFEM to foster women's participation in the decision-making process at all levels and to develop laws and policies that advance women's empowerment and also to expand women's participation in peace-building are particularly important in view of the fact that women are disproportionately affected by conflict and by involving them in the peace process, a more durable peace can be achieved. In this vein, the Group wants the Fund to expand its work in the area of eliminating violence against women and in enhancing women's advocacy activities. Also important is the need to expand its activities on human capacity building and training.

We appreciate the efforts of the Fund to take into account the religious and cultural sensitivities of different communities and we are hopeful that this will continue in order to achieve more durable outcomes.

While recognizing the emphasis being given to the gender-dimensions of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, we hope that more research and resources will be devoted to that area to facilitate early global action to control and eliminate this killer disease claiming millions of lives, particularly women victims in developing countries.

Mr. Chairman,

It is crucial that the work done by UNIFEM in the preparatory process of the Beijing + 5 and the innovative use of the media to promote this process should be enhanced further by involving all relevant stakeholders in the process of women empowerment. The support granted of the Fund to a large number of NGOs will sustain action in that regard. It is necessary that the NGOs should represent a wider spectrum of opinions, especially those that promote the family as being central to education, moral direction and stability in a very insecure world.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, the Group of 77 and China supports efforts of the Fund to increase its resource base and we hope that donor countries and agencies will increase their funding for this worthy global enterprise.

I thank you.

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