



BRASIL

LXIV UNGA III Committee

Agenda item 61: “Advancement of women” (New York, 12 October 2009)

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Mr. Chairman,

Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his reports on the advancement of women. They certainly constitute a valuable contribution to our debate.

My Delegation also wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his leadership on this important issue, in particular for his campaign “Unite to End Violence Against Women” 2008-2015. We welcome such initiative, which provides a platform for mobilization and concerted efforts by Member-states and the United Nations agencies towards the elimination of all forms of violence against women.

Mr. Chairman,

Brazil is making steady progress towards the advancement of women. A turning point in the past few years was the establishment of the Special Secretariat on Policies for Women, directly linked to the Office of the President. With the active participation of other Ministries and civil society, the Special Secretariat has launched policies, plans and programs aimed at reducing gender inequalities, promoting social inclusion and social development and combating violence against women.

Last year, the Brazilian Government launched the Second National Plan of Policies for Women, which reviewed results achieved by the First National Plan, initiated in 2004. The National Plans have provided an adequate framework for mainstreaming a gender perspective in governmental actions.

One example is the recent launching of the “National Pact to Curb Violence Against Women”, which addresses, among others, sexual exploitation of women and the trafficking in young women and girls; human rights of women in prison, including access to the judicial system; the protection of sexual, reproductive and maternity rights and the reform of women's correctional facilities. The Plan also encompasses a number of actions aimed at more vulnerable groups, such as rural workers, indigenous women and women of African descent. The Pact is a result of a broad and democratic process, in which all relevant stakeholders had the opportunity to actively participate.

A major breakthrough in curbing violence against women was the enactment of the so called “Maria da Penha Law”. Such legislation was named after a Brazilian woman who suffered domestic violence and who eventually managed to bring her offender to justice. Inspired by her example, and thank to the provisions of this new legislation, many victims of domestic violence are now having the chance to seek help and support and to bring perpetrators to trial. Since 2006, over 125.000 women have received support through the provisions of the Law.

Trafficking in persons is another matter of serious concern. In order to respond to this grave problem, President Lula initiated last year the “National Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons”, with a focus on prevention of human trafficking; punishment of perpetrators; and human-rights based protection and assistance to the victims. It is widely recognized that the main victims of traffickers are young women and girls from the poorest regions, who fall prey to false promises of a better life abroad. In this sense, developed countries – that are the main destination of women victims to traffickers – also have an important role to play in ending this problem, which constitutes a serious human rights violation.

Regarding health, the Brazilian Government is deeply concerned by the feminization of HIV/AIDS. Measures and specific programs to reduce the vulnerability of women and teenagers to the virus have been put in place, in the context of a long standing program that provides treatment to all those who require them, including free and universal access to drugs.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite the progress achieved so far, many challenges still remain. One of them is the need to increase the participation of women in leading positions, including in the high ranks of Government. Evidence shows that the proportion of women that occupy cabinet positions at the federal, state and municipal levels is still small, and that the majority of these women officials are responsible for social issues, which is in itself an indication of the entrenched stereotypes about the role of women in society.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me conclude by welcoming the recent adoption of the General Assembly Resolution which established a new composite entity under the direct responsibility of the Secretary-General. We are confident that the new gender entity will bridge the existing gaps and allow for a more coordinated, coherent and result-oriented work towards the advancement of women. Yet, for the new entity to be effective on the ground, it needs to count with adequate and stable financial resources, including those presently allocated through UNIFEM to its regional offices. It is also important that the new entity be provided with adequate mechanisms to ensure that Member States have the necessary oversight over its activities. Brazil is ready to engage constructively with the United Nations and other Member States in the discussions on this issue.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.