



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Statement by the delegation of the Republic of Cuba, on agenda item 28 Advancement of women: a) Advancement of women b) Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. New York 11 October 2010.

Mr. Chairman,

First and foremost, allow me to greet you and the rest of the Bureau, and express the support of the delegation of my country to the statements by Yemen, on behalf of the G-77 and China, and Chile on behalf of the Rio Group.

Mr. Chairman,

In recent years, there have been many achievements on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Nonetheless, the increase in the feminization of poverty worldwide remains a matter of great concern.

There are several obstacles faced by developing countries to implement the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals. As an example, we could mention unequal exchange, the reduction of Official Development Assistance, the large increase in foreign debt, the negative impact of climate change, and the combination of current global economic, financial, food and energy crises threatening millions of lives around the globe, including women and girls.

Mr. Chairman,

No progress will be made in the full gender equality and empowerment of women, without sustainable development and a just and equitable international order that eradicates poverty.

To eliminate gender inequality, we must also eliminate unequal exchange, inflation, imbalance in the exploitation of natural resources and irrational military expenditures. The international monetary system must be replaced, and foreign debt of the countries of the South must be canceled.

Mr. Chairman,

The elimination of violence against women also requires the elimination of all unilateral coercive measures. Once more, Cuba reaffirms the economic, commercial, and financial blockade unilaterally imposed by the US Government against Cuba for over half a century constitutes a genocidal act, and is the major form of violence suffered by the Cuban women and girls.

Furthermore, we denounce the suffering of the mothers, wives, and children of five brave Cubans who have been in prison for 12 years in the United States, serving unjust and arbitrary sentences for denouncing the criminal actions of the terrorist groups that operated and continue to operate, with total impunity, from US territory against Cuba.

Specially, we denounce the act of injustice by the US Department of State, which has often violated the human rights of two Cuban women: Adriana Pérez and Olga Salanueva, wives of two of the five Cubans unjustly in prison, as they have been denied visa, in several occasions, to visit them in US prisons.

In this regard, Cuba calls for the US Government to immediately grant humanitarian visa to Adriana Pérez and Olga Salanueva, so that they can visit their husbands.

Mr. Chairman,

Cuba has been working for gender equality and the empowerment of women long before the adoption of the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, the Millennium Development Goals and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Cuba was the first country to sign and second to ratify said Convention.

Among some statistics showing the progress of Cuba on the matter, we can mention that Cuban women have a life expectancy rate of almost 79 years; they represent the 67% of university graduates, 65.7 % of professionals and technicians, more than 70 % of health care and education workers, and 56% of all judges of our country.

Also, Cuban women are **43.32%** of the members of the Parliament; so we are one of the countries with highest female parliamentary representation. However, we continue working to achieve gender equality and empowerment of women.

Cuba welcomes the creation of UN-Women, which is a historic step forward to gender equality and the empowerment of all women worldwide.

We hope the new gender entity develops mechanisms, in accordance with its mandate, to follow up on all the commitments agreed on in the Beijing Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

Developed countries, responsible for the dismal international panorama, must understand the effects of current crises go beyond the underdeveloped South, and require urgent solutions and collaboration formulae. Today, more than ever, the realization of the right to development of our peoples is essential for the advancement and empowerment of women in the countries of the South.

Cuba, for its part, will continue to modestly share its human resources through international cooperation, where women are a large number of the specialists involved in helping those countries in need, and through which thousands of women benefit from health and education projects.

Thank you