

**Statement
by
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at the
Commemoration of 30 Years of United Nations Efforts to
Promote Gender Equality
New York, 4 March 2005**

Madam Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Representatives of the NGO Community,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to be part of this celebration of women and our achievements, particularly during the last thirty years.

This journey for women's empowerment, gender equality and women's human rights started in Mexico City in 1975. At that time, we set out to sensitize the world to the unwarranted and unacceptable marginalization of women which deprived them of their rights, and excluded them from participation in development and peace processes. Thus, the theme "Equality, Development and Peace".

From Mexico we proceeded to Copenhagen in Denmark in 1980, focusing on employment, health and education. Among the demands of the Programme of Action were stronger national measures to ensure women's ownership and control of property, their rights of inheritance and child custody, and the problem of loss of nationality. The Conference also recommended that future data be disaggregated by sex and age.

The Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (1981) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) were the result of these efforts.

makes it clear that the strategy of gender mainstreaming is applicable in regards to all 12 critical areas of concern.

Prior to Beijing,

We need strong leadership, enhanced political will and commitment of resources. We must be wary of a perception of “gender” as being a new word for women and the continuing marginalization of gender issues. We need male gender specialists and more strategic alliances with young women and men. And, we need to be aware of the danger of holding on too tight to our achievements rather than expanding our visions of the transformative nature of gender equal