

Statement on behalf of the Republic of Rwanda, in the Chairpersonship of Gender Mainstreaming and
Head of Delegation, at the 5th session of the Commission on the Status of Women

8th March 2010

Chairperson,

1. I have the honor to deliver the following statement on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Rwanda. Allow me to begin by thanking our members of the Bureau and other members of the Bureau on your election. We assure you of our continued support as you guide us through these crucial deliberations.

2. My delegation also wishes to thank the Secretary-General for the report submitted under agenda item 2: Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

3. The Republic of Rwanda joins the statements delivered by the distinguished representatives of Yemen and Equatorial Guinea on behalf of the Arab League and the African group respectively.

Chairperson,

4. At this critical juncture as we review fifteen years of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the Twenty-third Special Session of the General Assembly, we welcome the opportunity to proudly display our achievements and collectively work on solutions to our common challenges that continue to stand in the way of a society where gender equality, development and peace are no longer privileges but a reality. In this regard we welcome the declaration adopted last week that and those that this session of the Commission on the Status of Women will be a new impetus for motivating actions to ensure the implementation of commitments.

5. Since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Rwanda has made tremendous advances in the pursuit of gender equality. Our national commitment to achieving the goals established fifteen years ago is now integrated in gender equality in our national development strategy (LDPRS) and vision 2020 as well as developing a National Gender Policy.

The representation of women in all decision-making organs has been a top priority. The leading achievement of the government of Rwanda is that by February 2005, the percentage of women in Parliament stood at 56.25% and at 25% in the Senate. In the cabinet, 50% of the members of government ministers and 46% of the rank of State Ministers. In the period, the percentage of women represented in the Justice sector stands at 50% of the position of Judges of the Supreme Court and at 33.0% in the other Courts and Tribunals.

The government has also introduced gender budgeting, which implies that all ministries structures and tender to submit their budget requests including the costing for reducing gender gaps in their respective sectors.

The government of Rwanda remains steadfast in its commitment to fight violence against women and has established various institutional mechanisms to address the needs of survivors. Examples include but not limited to a community police, Gender desks, telephone hotlines and a One Stop Centre "ISANGE" (which translates as "feel at home"). The government has also recently completed a National Action Plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which will further buttress the government's efforts at eliminating violence against women.

In the area of women and children's rights, the ratification of international and regional covenants and protocols relating to women's rights is considered a priority. Accordingly, Rwanda has recently ratified the Optional Protocol to CEDAW and a number of strategic legal processes initiated and put in place under the framework of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region.

Rwanda strongly views the empowerment of women from both a human rights based approach and an economic development approach. This is the international law that has established the Gender Monitoring Office — an autonomous public institution, dedicated to advising, monitoring and evaluating the progress of the country's gender and holding it accountable for the inclusion of gender equality in all aspects of national development.

Chairperson,

7. Despite these accomplishments, Rwanda continues to face obstacles in the implementation of the goals of the Beijing Declaration. Every year, a critical challenge and insufficient resources mean we continue to fall short particularly when the twelve critical areas are seen from the

perspective of utilizing policies, social programs and initiatives for the advancement of women and girls. The Government of Rwanda is committed to ensuring that the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, particularly women and girls, are not left behind. The economic and financial crisis and climate change present further challenges and are likely to set back the advances made in integrating Rwandan women into the global economy. Rwanda remains committed to the global agenda and programs that aim to mitigate the impact of these challenges on women.

8. In conclusion, Rwanda as a Developing Country and as a global advocate for greater coherence in the support the United Nations extends to member states, Rwanda warmly welcomes the soon to be established composite gender entity and hopes that it will be sufficiently empowered to assist member states in highlighting gaps and addressing gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Republic of Rwanda remains committed to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

I thank you.