

Statement on behalf of the Republic of Rwanda by Oda Gasinzigwa Chief Gender Monitor and Head of Delegation, at the 54th session of the Commission on the Status of Women New York, 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 extending our warmest congratulations to you and other members of the Bureau on your election. Let me 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 reports submitted under agenda item 3: Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

3. The Republic of Rwanda aligns itself with the statements delivered by the distinguished representatives of Yemen and Equatorial Guinea on behalf of the G77&China 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 share our accomplishments and collectively work on solutions to the remaining challenges that continue to stand in the way of a society where gender equality, development and peace are no longer privileges but realities. In this regard we welcome the declaration adopted last week that and hope that this session of the Commission on the Status of Women will be a renewed opportunity for actions geared at implementation of commitments.

5. Since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, Rwanda has made tremendous advances in the pursuit of gender equity; Rwanda has shown unrelenting commitment to achieving the goals established fifteen years ago through integrating gender equality in our national development strategy (EDPRS) and vision 2020 as well as developing a National Gender Policy.

The representation of women in all decision-making organs has been and still remains the leading achievement of the government of Rwanda. As of February 2009, the percentage of women in Parliament stood at 56.25% and at 35% in the Senate. In the Cabinet it stood at 38% at the rank of government Ministers and 40% at the rank of State Ministers. During the same period, the percentage of women represented in the Justice sector stood at 50% at the position of Judges of the Supreme Court and at 33.9 % in the other Courts and Tribunals.

The government of Rwanda, through the Ministry Of Finance and Economic Planning, has initiated gender budgeting, which implies that with effect from 2010, key ministries are required to submit their budget requests including the costing for reducing gender gaps in their respective sectors.

6. The government of Rwanda remains steadfast in its commitment to fighting violence against women and has established various institutional mechanisms to address GBV and cater for GBV survivors. Examples include, but are not limited to, community policing, Gender desks, free 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 governments' efforts at eliminating violence against women.

In the area of Women and fundamental rights, the ratification of both regional and international 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 protocols 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 pivotal rationale for the establishment of the Gender Monitoring Office — an autonomous public institution, dedicated to advocating, monitoring and evaluating the goals set out fifteen years ago and holding actors 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. Poverty remains a critical challenge and insufficient resources mean we continue to fall short particularly when the twelve critical areas are seen from the

perspective of putting in place special programmes for the advancement of women — women as a target beneficiary group not as beneficiaries of general pro-people project and programmes. 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 and programs that aim to mitigate the impact of climate change on women.

8. In conclusion, Rwanda as a Delivering as One pilot country and as a strong 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 bridging existing gaps and furthering gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Republic of Rwanda reiterates its firm commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

I thank you.