



PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

BY

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OF NIGERIA**

AT THE

**53RD SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON
THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW)**

NEW YORK, 4TH MARCH 2009

Mr. Chairperson,
Members of the Bureau,
Distinguished Delegates,

It is my privilege and honour to address the plenary session of the 53rd Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

Nigeria aligns herself with the statement of the G77 and China and that of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

On behalf of the Nigerian Government, I wish to seize this opportunity to acknowledge and commend the sustained efforts of the Commission at placing Women issues on the front burner of global politics.

Mr. Chairperson,

Over the years, Nigeria has taken bold steps towards the promotion of the priority theme of the 53rd Session. These include:

- (i) increased budgetary allocation to gender issues, particularly allocation of the 5% debt relief gains since 2005 in addition to statutory allocation to the social sector.
- (ii) capacity-building and training of Women at all levels of governance, particularly on gender mainstreaming and skill acquisition programmes;
- (iii) increased schemes to assist Women in entrepreneurial development particularly:
 - (a) Business Development Fund for Women (BUDFOW) and;
 - (b) Women Fund for Economic Empowerment (WOFFEE).

Indeed, since 2007, twenty five (25) out of the thirty six (36) states of Nigeria have benefited from the Women Fund for Economic Empowerment (WOFFEE), while two hundred and thirty-one (231) Women entrepreneurs will soon collect the sum of Eighty-Nine 89 million Naira (US\$593,333) as soft loans. The national body for the eradication of poverty, namely the National Agency for Poverty Eradication (NAPEP), is also poised towards creating further opportunities for women through its schemes.

It is worthy of note that the current electoral reforms in the country include positive moves towards greater participation by women in both appointive and elective positions.

The priority theme, "Equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men including care-giving in the context of HIV/AIDS" could not have come at a more auspicious time. The current prevalence rate in Nigeria is 4.6%.

Mr. Chairperson,

Nigeria's implementation of relevant international instruments relating to the empowerment of Women and equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men has been hampered by traditional cultural practices, including gender roles and stereotypes which tend to narrowly define the division of labour between women and men and girls and boys. This stereotype results in poor financial status for women, discrimination regarding employment and increased responsibilities for women and relatively low participation of Women in the decision-making process. The patriarchal family system only makes matters worse.

In spite of these challenges, Nigeria has taken bold steps to redress the hitherto unequal sharing of responsibilities in the context of HIV/AIDS, including:

- (i) Establishment by law of the National Agency for the Control of HIV/AIDS (NACA); State Agencies for the Control of HIV/AIDS (SACA) and the Local Government Agencies for the Control of HIV/AIDS (LACA). These Agencies not only effect government's proactive response to the HIV/AIDS scourge but also coordinate the timely and effective execution of the HIV/AIDS Emergency Action Plan (HEAP);
- (ii) Key national programmes spearheaded by NACA include:
 - Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission;
 - Orphans and vulnerable children;
 - Care and Support;
 - HIV/AIDS Behavioural Change Impact Mitigation;
 - Development of Work Place Policies.
- (iii) Establishment of the Gender Technical Committee (GTC), mandated to mainstream Gender into the National Strategic Framework for the control of HIV/AIDS;
- (iv) Formulation of national guidelines on HIV/AIDS palliative care;
- (v) Designation of the country's responses to HIV/AIDS Management in the following areas:

- ❑ preventive and behavioral change;
- ❑ Holding of capacity-building workshops with a view to strengthening capacities of officials at all tiers of government in order to mainstream gender equality and equity as well as human rights into the control of HIV/AIDS;
- ❑ Government agencies and partners' support for networks established to support the activities of women and men involved in home-based HIV/AIDS Care activities in various communities;
- ❑ The National Strategic Framework (NSF) has strong gender components with NACA providing leadership and an enabling environment for the integration of gender targets and indicators in the National Strategic Framework (NSF);
- ❑ The Nigeria National Response Information Management System for HIV/AIDS (NNRIMS) is also designed to monitor and track progress on the implementation of the gender targets of the National Strategic Framework;
- ❑ There is now a national Gender Advisor in NACA to coordinate the mainstreaming of gender in the response at national and sub-national levels;
- ❑ Establishment of the National Women Coalition on HIV/AIDS (NAOCA) by the First Lady of Nigeria in collaboration with UNFPA as a unified advocacy platform for addressing women and girls' vulnerability to HIV infection in Nigeria.

Mr. Chairperson,

The challenges facing Nigeria with regard to this priority theme are, no doubt, daunting, especially having regard to its large, complex and multi-cultural population. However, with the support of the International Community through relevant Technical Assistance and capacity building, Nigeria will, in the not too distant future, succeed in changing the disproportionate burden of care on women and girls.

I thank you for your kind attention.