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STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. AHMAD ALLAM-MI
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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHAD TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICA GROUP
AT THE 57TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Under the General Discussion of Agenda Item 3, Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

NEW YORK

MONDAY: MARCH 4, 2013

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Chairperson,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group. At the outset, allow me, to commend you for the excellent manner in which you are conducting the work of this Commission.

The African Group aligns itself with the statement delivered by Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The African Group thanks the Secretary-General for his reports submitted under this agenda item and takes note of the recommendations contained therein.

Chairperson,

Legislation provides the foundation for a holistic and effective approach to addressing violence against women and girls. The international legal framework obligates and guides States in the adoption of their own laws to address violence against women and girls. Member States adhere to a range of international instruments, such as, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and members of their Families and the relevant conventions of the International Labour Organization. The Call by the United Nations Secretary General to designate 2008-2015, as the period for his campaign, “**Unite to End Violence against Women and Girls through 2015**”, is an impetus to advance the agenda to eliminate violence against women and girls.

Chairperson,

The African Group believes that several factors including poverty and lack of empowerment as well as their marginalization resulting from their exclusion from social, economic and political policies and from the benefits of education and sustainable development, can place women at risk of violence. The Group also believes that violence against women impedes the socio-economic development of communities and states, as well as the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs.

Chairperson,

While the marginalization of Africa is rooted in the historical, political, socio-economic and cultural context, their rights have been a priority in Africa. The Assembly of Heads of States and Governments of the African Union has demonstrated its commitment to Gender Equality and women's empowerment through the adoption of landmark provisions and statutes. This is reflected in relevant provisions of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, the Solemn Declaration and Gender Equality in Africa and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). These instruments provide the basis for holding governments accountable for advancing the status and rights of women in their respective countries. Indeed, the ADF VI held in Addis Ababa in 2008 had called for a three-year Africa-Wide Campaign to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls. The campaign focused on fostering a universal responsibility to protect and respect women and girls, as well as preventing and punishing all forms of violence against women and girls. It also addressed underlying factors, such as, the socio-economic causes of vulnerability including women's weak legal rights to land; housing and property; and the social code of silence surrounding Violence Against Women.

Chairperson,

The African Group recognizes that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated and we call on the international community to treat human rights globally in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing and with the same emphasize. We also believe that while the significance of national and regional peculiarities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of states regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms. As such, efforts in eliminating violence against women and girls, gender discrimination and inequality need to be addressed through a range of measures including to ensure that all children, particularly girls, without discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, disability, status on HIV, have equal access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality. States should also renew their efforts to improve and expand girls' education at all levels, including the secondary and higher levels, in all academic areas, as well as vocational education and technical training, in order to, inter alia, encourage women to enter labour market. We see this as a way of achieving gender equality, empowering women and developing their self esteem. It would also help in poverty eradication and allowing women to benefit from development and take responsibility for their own lives.

Chairperson,

The African Group notes that in order to realize the effective implementation of preventive measures to violence, there is a need to expand referral mechanisms between multi sectoral services and implement information sharing protocols that respect the confidentiality and safety of survivors and to establish protection and support services for survivors and victims'. The Group therefore calls for the implementation of the comprehensive commitments made by the international community on development including transfer of Official Development Assistance, transfer of technology, access to markets and on gender equality and women's rights. These will ensure women's equal access to economic resources, enhance their participation in decision making, advance the empowerment of women and girls by uplifting their capabilities which would enable them to enjoy access to these resources through international co-operation.

In conclusion, The African Group reaffirms its support to end violence against women and girls and recognizes the role of family in this regard. There is need to enhance the capacity of family to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. Furthermore, the Group encourages formal and informal education programmes that will modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women of all ages in order to promote the development of respectful relations and to eliminate prejudices, harmful practices, all other practices based on inferiority or superiority based on sexes. These would help to eliminate forced and child marriage practices, violence against women and girls, female genital mutilations, child prostitution, sexual abuse, rape and incest.

I thank you, Chairperson.