



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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Statement by Mrs. Claudia Pérez Alvarez, representative of the Cuban delegation. Item 56 - Advancement of Women a) Advancement of Women b) Implementation of the outcomes of the Fourth world Conference on Women and the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. New York, 13 October 2008.

Mr. Chairman,

First of all, allow me to greet you and the rest of the Board. I also wish to express the support of my delegation to the statement by Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the G-77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

Many have been the achievements after the adoption of Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Nonetheless, we still have enormous challenges to face.

Seventy percent of the 1.2 billion people in the world living in extreme poverty are women as well as 60% of the 550 million poor workers. About 500 thousand future mothers in the developing countries die every year before childbirth, most of them due to preventable causes. Sixty one percent of over 22 million people living with HIV/AIDS in the world are women, most of them from Sub-Saharan African countries.

There are several factors contributing to the increase of the feminization of poverty, and therefore, of the obstacles to meet the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals.

Among these factors we could mention the ongoing reduction of Official Development Assistance that continues marginalizing the developing countries; the negative consequences of the structural adjustment programs; the foreign debt; the stagnation of the international trade negotiations of the Doha Round; the negative impact of the climate change, and even more, the current world financial, food and energy crisis threatening millions of lives around the globe.

Mr. Chairman,

The unjust international economic order, marked by the ruthless neoliberal globalization only imposing conditions to the Third World countries, is succumbing to the serious structural crisis and is reaching now the world's large economic power centers.

The unequal exchange, the inflation, the protectionism, the imbalance in the exploitation of the marine resources, the irrational expenditures in weaponry

must stop. The ruling international monetary system is in bankruptcy and must be substituted and the debts must be cancelled.

If we do not take measures and do not achieve a sustainable, just and equitable development which eradicates poverty, we will never have full gender equality and women empowerment. As long as environment preservation, peace and the effective realization of human rights for all, particularly the right to development, do not become a fact, there will be no true advancement for women and humankind will be in danger.

Mr. Chairman,

Violence against women is also an obstacle for the achievement of Beijing's goals. This includes particularly, the violence caused by wars, invasions, foreign occupation and the imposition of unilateral coercive measures.

Cuba denounces the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed unilaterally by the US Government for almost half a century now. That ancient policy constitutes a genocide act and it is the biggest form of violence the Cuban women and girls suffer.

Cuba also denounces the suffering of the mothers, wives, sons and daughters of five brave Cubans who have been for ten years now arbitrarily and illegally imprisoned in this country, for the only reason of preventing the perpetration of terrorist acts organized by anti-Cuban mercenary groups based in US territory and financed by successive US administrations against the peace and security of the Cuban people and even of the US people.

Mr. Chairman,

Much time before the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, the Millennium Development Goals and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Cuban revolutionary Government set the objective of making gender equality and Cuban women empowerment real. Cuba was the first country to sign and the second to ratify said Convention.

Cuba is the third country with the highest representation of women in the Parliament with a representation of 43.32%. Life expectancy at birth of women is 79 years old. We women represent the 71 % of the Cuban prosecutors; the 65.2% of the professionals and technicians; the 72% and 70% of the people working in the Education and Health Care sectors respectively; the 48.9% of the scientific and technological institutes' personnel; the 47% of the judges in the Supreme Court; and the 43.16% of the leaders.

Likewise, we keep on working to follow up the recommendations emanated from the presentation of the 5th and 6th Combined Report by Cuba, submitted on August 2006 to CEDAW.

Mr. Chairman,

The responsible for the dismal international panorama, that is to say, the rich countries, must understand the effects of today's crisis go beyond the underdeveloped South and demand immediate solutions and collaboration formulas. Today, the realization of the right to development of our peoples is even indispensable for the very survival of the countries of the North.

We, third world countries, cannot resign ourselves before the devastating effects of the unsustainable international economic order. Together, we must help each other by virtue of the international solidarity and fight for the future of our peoples, including women and girls.

Cuba has shared and will continue to share modestly and unselfishly its thousands of doctors, teachers and technicians with those needing them, as well as to participate in cooperation initiatives such as ALBA, which is producing excellent outcomes in our region. We, Cuban women, are part of this small but sincere support to our brothers and sisters in other regions of the South.

Thank you very much.

