



BRAZIL

65th General Assembly

**Third Committee
Item 28 – Advancement of Women**

**Statement by Counsellor Alan Sellos
Permanent Mission of Brazil to the UN**

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(Please check against delivery)

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me at the outset to thank the Secretary-General for the reports before us, which will most certainly contribute to enrich our discussions in this Committee.

The year of 2010 has been an auspicious year for women and girls. We celebrated the fifteenth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the important strides we have made since then. At the 54th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), last March, we had the opportunity to evaluate the progress in the implementation of Beijing as well as to identify the areas in which we need to concentrate our actions. We also witnessed the establishment of the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), which promises to be a landmark in the efforts towards more gender-balanced societies.

This year has also been encouraging for women in our region. Last July, Brazil hosted the XI Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean - a subsidiary organ of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) - with a view to evaluate the situation of women in the Region. The participating Governments adopted a final document, the "Brasília Consensus", which outlines a valuable blueprint to address the challenges that Latin American and Caribbean women still face. The document emphasizes the need i) to promote and strengthen the economic empowerment of women, especially Afro-descendants and indigenous women; ii) to increase the participation of women in the exercise of power; iii) to address all forms of violence against women; and iv) to improve women's access to new technologies.

Mr. Chairman,

During the recent High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, State representatives renewed their commitment to the realization of the MDGs by 2015 while recognizing the need to scale up efforts in order to meet the targets on time.

Brazil is proud to have achieved almost all of the MDGs with a decade or more in advance of the deadline. To meet MDG 3 ("Promote gender equality and empower women") and MDG 5 ("Improve maternal health"), Brazil has relied on a set of integrated national policies. Foremost among these is the program "Bolsa Família" – a cash transfer program that provides monthly subsidies to more than 12 million poor families, subject to the fulfillment of some conditions, such as school attendance and post and antenatal care. The fact that the subsidy is granted to women and mothers ensures that the money will be spent on the acquisition of essential goods, such as food staples and medicine. Not only does the program empower women within the family, it also guarantees that children go to school and receive adequate medical treatment and care.

Brazil has also achieved gender equality in the educational field. Girls have, in general, more positive indicators than boys in terms of access and permanence in school. The presence of women and girls is increasing at all levels of education. They are the majority in secondary and university levels and hold the largest number of scholarships for masters and doctorates.

We are convinced that overcoming gender stereotypes is a crucial component of the efforts to achieve gender equality. With this in view, the Brazilian Government has launched the Program "Gender and Diversity in School", which aims at training teachers and principals of public schools on how to tackle negative images and gender stereotypes in the classrooms.

Mr. Chairman,

Regarding MGD 5, Brazil has observed an impressive reduction in maternal mortality, but unfortunately not enough to realize the goal set by the United Nations. The Government of Brazil is redoubling its efforts where the problem is more acute, in particular in the North and Northeast regions, in order to ensure that the target will be met on time.

We are convinced that the reduction of maternal mortality is intrinsically linked to the eradication of poverty and to the full access to sexual and reproductive health. In this regard, the role of an efficient policy of family planning cannot be overemphasized. Brazil currently offers universal access to contraceptives, available for free in clinics or at subsidized prices in pharmacies. Greater attention is also being paid to improving the access to female condoms, including as a means to tackle the feminization of the HIV and AIDS.

Despite the significant advances, women in Brazil still face formidable challenges. They are still underrepresented in the upper-levels of political and economic decision-making. They still earn less and occupy more precarious positions than men. And they still bear the most of the burden of social reproduction.

Mr. Chairman,

Many of the obstacles that we face are shared by a great number of countries. UN-Women should play a critical role in supporting national efforts towards gender equality. To accomplish its mission, the new Entity will need to have a strong presence on the ground and count on adequate financial resources. We are confident that under the leadership of Madame Bachelet, UN-Women will be able to advance our common aspirations for more just and egalitarian societies.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.