



Permanent Mission of Eritrea
to the United Nations

Statement by Mr. Amanuel Giorgio
First Secretary
Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations
On Agenda item 28: Advancement of Women
At the Third Committee of the Sixty-Fifth Session of the General Assembly
13 October 2010, New York

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation welcomes the reports submitted by the Secretary-General on agenda item 28: Advancement of Women.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

As 2010 is the year that marks the 15th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Eritrea also marked last year the 30th Anniversary of the foundation of the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW) in 1979 during Eritrea's armed struggle for independence with the objective of achieving equality between women and men by promoting the creation of better political, economic, social and cultural opportunities for women.

The National Union of Eritrean Women, mandated by the government of Eritrea to empower women, during the 30th anniversary held several open discussions in several parts of the country to assess the status of women in politics, social and economic situations and to identify the extra measures and tools required to help realize the advancement of women in the country. What emerged from the assessment and discussions were that there was indeed greater awareness about women's rights and the need to empower them. It was noted that women in Eritrea are certainly better off many folds than their parents' generation in enjoying better access to economic and social opportunities as well as improved role and participation in the political decision making process. Yet, it was stressed that women and girls continue to shoulder heavy responsibilities in the family and the community and that this acts as an impediment to their full and effective participation at whatever opportunities are available to them. Therefore, more emphasis was placed that it is not enough to enact laws that protect women's rights in the family or outside the family, but that it requires concerted efforts directed at addressing and correcting the root causes that give rise to gender

imbalances. Better coordination and determination were recognized as key elements in the implementation of commitments made in the benefit of women. Scaling up and replicating of successful projects were also highlighted to enhance the pace and spread of advancement of women. It was recognized that sometimes how pro-poor small projects like micro-credit programs were practical and useful by changing the lives of women and girls in a very important way. In rural Eritrea, “The Donkey and Canvas Project” for instance was noted as helpful for fetching water, transportation, generation of income, and encouraging boys to participate in an activity that was traditionally assigned to girls; but more importantly the project was viewed as meaningful in giving girls the needed time to go to school, thereby allowing them to enjoy the same rights as boys in their right to education.

Another important observation that emerged from the stalk taking exercise was that better results were attained in situations where Eritrean women were actively involved from planning to implementation, such as in environmental restoration and building the social and physical infrastructure of the country and other activities. This is consistent with the general view that no country can achieve sustainable development without recognizing the role and the rights of women that indeed form half of its population.

Mr. Chairman,

Eritrea remains committed to the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in particular by addressing the underlying conditions that put girls and women at a disadvantage for various reasons. In this regard, more support for capacity building would be required at all levels of the country to effectively implement the National Gender Policy which is fully aligned with the MDGs and the Platform for Action.

Mr. Chairman,

Before I conclude, my delegation wishes to point out that the government of Eritrea has committed itself to eliminate obstetric fistula by 2011, by widening the free health services to all, including by establishing maternity waiting homes for communities that live in remote areas. My delegation is also pleased to report that the government has intensified its efforts in the elimination of female genital mutilation (FGM), a harmful traditional practice which affects the health and life of women and girls.

Let me conclude by welcoming the establishment of the “UN Women” and the appointment of Ms. Michelle Bachelet as Under Secretary-General of the new UN gender architecture.

Thank you!