



# BRAZIL

**STATEMENT BY H. E. REGINA DUNLOP,  
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BRAZIL TO THE UN,**

**THIRD COMMITTEE  
AGENDA ITEM 28: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN**

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*(check against delivery)*



Mr. Chairperson,

Brazil associates itself with the statements made by Argentina, on behalf of G-77 and China, and by Chile, on behalf of the Rio Group.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his substantive reports, which provide a good basis for our discussions.

In the opening statement of this year's General Debate, the first ever made by a woman, President Dilma Rousseff highlighted that a "true human rights policy must be based on reducing inequalities between people, regions and genders". Indeed, combating these inequalities lies at the core of my Government's policies.

In Brazil, poverty still has a female face, as they still comprise more than half of the population living in extreme poverty. Women are poverty's main victims, but at the same time the best allies in the strategies designed to overcome it.

Women play a central role in Brazilian social policies. They are the main beneficiaries of cash transfer programs and housing credit. As a result, around 28 million people, including women and girls, were lifted out of extreme poverty, and 36 million more entered the middle class. The impact of this social transformation on gender equality and women's empowerment cannot be overemphasized.

Another crucial element of our strategy towards the realization of gender equality and women's empowerment is the decision to build 6.000 childcare centers in all regions until 2014. Apart from granting access to early childhood education for thousands of small children, it will also free women from most of their domestic responsibilities, enabling them to pursue other career paths outside the home, while their children are being taken care of. Women's empowerment benefits not only themselves and their families, but also society as a whole.

As President Rousseff highlighted in her address to the General Assembly, an important dimension of Brazil's commitment to gender equality through our public health system. Given the persistence of maternal mortality, we have made it a priority to guarantee mothers safe and humane care; from the moment the pregnancy is confirmed through the first two years of the baby's life.

Moreover, we have implemented policies aimed at raising awareness and reducing teen pregnancy. To that end, we have widened access to information and the free distribution of birth control methods. We have increased our efforts to prevent, diagnose and treat cervical and breast cancer and strengthened the measures already in place to halt the march of HIV/AIDS among women.

Mr. Chairperson,

2011 will always be remembered, in Brazil, as a landmark in terms of gender equality and the empowerment of women. For the first time in our history, a woman took office as President. Although symbolic in its nature, this accomplishment undoubtedly reflects the notable progress we have made in this area.

Nevertheless, women continue to be largely underrepresented in decision-making positions in all areas. Although they make up 52% of all Brazilian voters, only 10% of our lawmakers are women. President Rousseff has made it a priority to enhance the participation of women in top decision-making levels, including in core governmental positions. Currently, women head 10 of our 38 Ministries.

In spite of these efforts, we recognize that women's political participation still does not reflect the major contribution they make to our social, political, economic and cultural development.

In this regard, Brazil was honored to co-sponsor the "High-Level Event on Women's Political Participation", organized by UN-Women and other partners at the sidelines of this year's General Debate.

The Joint Statement signed by President Rousseff and other high-level women leaders on that occasion expresses the broad consensus about the need to eliminate economic, social, cultural and political obstacles that hinder women's full participation in all spheres and levels of political life, on an equal basis with men.

For women to increasingly participate in the destinies of their countries, they must be able to fully enjoy their social and economic rights. There can be no true equality and no true democracy where the most fundamental needs of all, women and men, are not met.

Mr. Chairperson,

Next December, the Government of Brazil will host the Third National Conference of Policies for Women, which will involve the participation of more than 3.000 representatives of all levels of government and civil society. It will be an opportunity to evaluate the Second National Plan of Policies of Women, adopted in the Second National Conference, held in 2007, and to discuss new policies aimed at enhancing gender equality and the political, social, economic and cultural empowerment of women. It will be a moment to take stock of our achievements and devise new strategies for the years to come. It will be another step in the path towards the democratic construction of a more egalitarian, inclusive and just society.