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STATEMENT

BY

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ON

**AGENDA ITEM 28:  
"ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN"**

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My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77 & China and Cameroon on behalf of the African Group.

Almost 20 years after Beijing, there is greater determination by all to advance women's empowerment, to end violence against women and girls and struggle for gender equality. The various stakeholders have similar but differentiated roles. We also have a greater understanding of what we have to do. The state has the primary duty to provide leadership and ensure that women and girls are secure and have the right tools to succeed. The United Nations and NGOs support countries to advance this protection and provide opportunities.

Turning to the seemingly intractable problem of trafficking in women and girls, the work is cut out for us. The social, economic and emotional consequences of trafficking are unacceptably high. As the report of the Secretary General indicates, we have not done much to curb the numbers of women and girls going through this modern-day slavery. The actions so far taken are important but do not measure up to what we are up against. The Plan of Action adopted by this Committee two years ago was a major step forward but its implementation is still a challenge. It's high time for a policy rethink. There is need to look at how best a coherent inter-agency collaboration bringing together all other stakeholders can work to reduce incidences of trafficking particularly in source and destination countries. This provides a moment for a policy leadership by the United Nations.

On its part, Kenya recently passed a comprehensive Anti-trafficking legislation to improve measures for trafficking prevention and victim protection. The legislation also includes a stringent minimum 30 year sentence for perpetrators of human trafficking. This will serve as a serious deterrent to individuals or groups seeking to exploit the vulnerable. This legislation, not only recognizes some of the underlying pressures that encourage trafficking but also provides for comprehensive measures to deal with victims of trafficking and re-integrate them back into their communities. We have to make trafficking a less attractive undertaking by making the consequences unbearable. This is because traffickers have had a long habit of denigrating the lax punishments meted out.

Violence against women is one of the most pervasive crimes in the world today. Complications are brought about by the relations between the perpetrator and the victim. Most of the time, this factor is a major contributor to inaction by the victim. A seminal study on this subject was undertaken a few years ago. We now understand how insidious this crime is. Two things are known but not adequately captured by the report. The perpetrators are usually known to or have relations with the victim and that the perpetrator and the victims are usually around the

same age group. Now let us develop a targeted plan that will reduce violence particularly in the homesteads. Police Chiefs in Eastern Africa Region have been meeting with the support of UNODC and INTERPOL to map out strategies of combating transnational organized crimes. These efforts are bearing fruit. We need to encourage and support similar initiatives in order to defeat this scourge across borders.

Whether the aim is to reduce trafficking in women and girls or reduce incidences of violence and to deal firmly with cases in court; whether it provides a soft landing for victims of trafficking and for violence, legislations and Plans of Actions can only go so far. We need resources. We need resources to educate the targeted group; we need resources to strengthen police and prosecution work; we need resources to build shelters and provide alternative choices to victims of trafficking and violence. We also need resources and capacity to strengthen criminal justice systems and prosecution. We must explain to men and women, boys and girls, that it is not right to commit violence against anybody. Yes, our action will put a strain on finances. But it is money well spent. Whether it is to police our porous borders or man airports to spot victims of trafficking or create awareness amongst the community to identify the victims of violence, these resources will be put to good use.

I would like to weigh in on the recent processes that enhance our agenda to empower women. The failure to achieve outcome during the 56<sup>th</sup> Session of the CSW was a major setback on our overall strategy. This failure is catastrophic and untenable especially when deliberating on rural women. My delegation believes that continued engagement at the international level even on themes such as violence against women can still be achieved. Beijing + 20 is looming large and the momentum is on. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action are excellent documents that have created the necessary framework to improve the lives of women. As we galvanize the community towards the commemoration of this milestone, let us be alert not to jeopardize the gains so far made. The goal should be to further implement all of our commitments.

Finally, **Mr. Chairman**, whether it is power play within families and relationships or the desperate need to find livelihood or a cry for societal morals having broken down, the community of nations has to act much more firmly. Legislations and Action Plans serve as foundational frameworks and set standards. But implementation for optimum results lags way behind. Herein lies the problem. And the way we see it, the sooner we address the bottlenecks, at both national and international levels, the more likely we can have better coordination and results in future.