



MAURITIUS

STATEMENT

by

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Republic of Mauritius**

at the

**49th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women
(CSW)**

7 March 2005

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Madam Chairperson,
Ministers,
Distinguished delegates,

My delegation associates itself with the Statements made by the Chairman of the G-77 and the Statement made by Madagascar in its capacity as Chairman of the African Group for the month.

Let me first congratulate you and other members of the Bureau of the 49th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women on your election and for your important contribution towards the effective preparation of this Session. We are confident that under your wise leadership and with your diplomatic skills, we would be able to steer the work of this important Session of the Commission, which is taking place in a crucial review year for the United Nations, towards a successful outcome.

Madam Chairperson,

The Beijing +10 review process is coinciding with the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in 1994 and the MDG+5 review process, offering us a unique opportunity for greater coherence, coordination and focus on the commitments taken by the international community on issues of gender equality, equity and women's empowerment as reaffirmed in the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome of the General Assembly Special session " Women 2000:gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" . World leaders agreed to take these commitments forward in the Millennium Declaration and set a target for achievement of related Goals for the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women.

A decade of achievements in favour of women is indeed a milestone for all of us present here to reflect on effective actions initiated since we left Beijing in 1995

Madam Chairperson,

In the implementation of the priority areas of the Beijing Platform for Action, the Government of Mauritius, fully committed to the ideals of equality, respect of human rights and justice and enshrined in the Declaration of Human Rights, has spared no effort to sustain gender equality.

Let me highlight some of the pertinent actions taken by my Government and results achieved since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action:

In Mauritius where education is free from primary to tertiary level since 1976, a number of important developments have taken place over the last four years. The Education Act amended last year now provides for compulsory education up to the age of 16. The other major development in the recent years is the massive investment by government in the construction of 34 additional secondary schools with modern facilities throughout Mauritius. This will ensure that all girls will have access to quality education up to the age of 16. The Government of Mauritius is also committed to the formulation of policies to encourage girls to take up non-traditional subjects including Science and Technology as well as choosing careers which have hitherto been considered as male domains.

The Government of Mauritius has also accorded priority to the health status of women in which we have observed considerable improvement over the past decade. Women are today more informed about their health in terms of reproductive rights through the implementation of the UNFPA related project, weight management clubs are operational in women centers, sensitization programmes on the incidence of non communicable diseases such as diabetes, early screening services to detect breast and cervical cancers are widespread. Under the National HIV/AIDS Coordinating Committee chaired by the Hon. Prime Minister of Mauritius, equal and due attention is being given to women in the support for primary prevention and health education programme, which remain the backbone of the national programme to address HIV/AIDS.

The Government's efforts to implement the Beijing Platform for Action is further translated by the enactment of appropriate legislations such as the Protection from Domestic Violence Act of 1997, the Sex Discrimination Act of 2002, the signature of the Optional Protocol to CEDAW in 2001, as well as the review of other legislations that are discriminatory to women.

To observe the Women's Empowerment Year in 2004, the Ministry for Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare had adopted the slogan " "Diferan me egal", which means "different but equal", reaffirming once again the commitment of Mauritius to the sacrosanct principles of the Declaration of Human Rights.

Following a study commissioned by the Government on the extent and causes of women in poverty conditions, the Government of Mauritius has set up two programmes, that is, "The Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups" and the "Anon Diboute Ensam" which means "let us stand together". Through these programmes the Government has aimed to provide women in poverty conditions with access to economic resources and root them out of the quagmire of poverty.

Further, in line with the Government policy to eradicate poverty and empower women to become self-sufficient and more economically independent through income generating activities, the Micro-credit/micro enterprise scheme that has been operational since 2001 has as objective to sustain micro enterprises run by women through the provision of financial, technical and business support services to ensure sustainable

operation of these micro-enterprises. In addition the National Women Entrepreneur Council, which has been set up to empower women and serve as a driving force in the promotion of women entrepreneurs, has been actively involved in the field of capacity building to promote the growth of women entrepreneurs.

With regards to the participation of women in the national decision-making process, my delegation is pleased to state that in anticipation of the general elections which will take place this year, all political parties have pledged to increase the representation of women in Parliament.

Madam Chairperson,

To conclude, my delegation is hopeful that this review process in which we are all seriously engaged will generate the deserved and necessary impetus for an accelerated implementation of the commitments we collectively took ten years ago.

On its part, Mauritius wishes to reaffirm its full commitment to the full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Outcome of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly.

Whilst my delegation expresses its appreciation to the International Cooperation Partners and donor countries and the relevant United Nations Funds and Programme for their financial, technical and material support for the implementation of the commitments in the Beijing Platform for Action, we wish to underline the necessity for continued, if not enhanced and sustained support for an effective realization of the goals and targets set at national , regional and international levels.

I Thank You.