



BRAZIL

55th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) General Debate

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**Statement by H. E. Minister Iriny Lopes
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(Check against delivery)

It gives me great pleasure to participate for the first time in the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

Brazil is now experiencing a historical moment, with the election of Dilma Rousseff as the first woman President and the appointment of nine female Ministers to integrate her government. We have never had so many women occupying the highest posts of our Federal Executive.

We are also proud to have, for the first time, a Brazilian woman, Ambassador Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, presiding over the United Nations Security Council.

The United Nations is also experiencing a unique moment, with the recent establishment of UN-Women. Brazil is also proud of being a member of the first composition of the new Entity's Executive Board.

In the speech given when she was declared elected, President Dilma Rousseff announced one of her priorities: "to honor Brazilian women so that this novel fact may become in the future a natural event and that it may be replicated in the private sector, in civil society, in non-governmental organizations." And she added: "The equality of opportunities for men and women is an essential principle of democracy. I would be happy if mothers and fathers would look today into their daughters' eyes and say: YES, a woman can!"

Coincidentally, the priority theme of the current session of the CSW is access to and participation of women and girls in education, training, science and technology. The theme in question constitutes one of the priorities of our Ministry and of the Brazilian Government as a whole.

The central commitment of President Dilma's Government, expressed in its slogan "A RICH COUNTRY IS A COUNTRY WITH NO POVERTY," is to eradicate extreme poverty and create opportunities for all.

We are convinced that we cannot eliminate poverty without making substantial investments in education, science, technology and innovation. As our President put it: "we must fight poverty, which is the most tragic form of backwardness, and at the same time advance by significantly investing in the most modern and sophisticated areas of technological innovation, intellectual creation and artistic and cultural production."

We are also convinced that we cannot eradicate poverty without facing the so-called structuring inequalities of gender and race. For this reason, the Secretariat of Policies for Women combines the Government's main priority with the promotion of economic, social and political autonomy of women, taking into account the differences that exist among women themselves. We welcome in this regard the General Assembly Resolution that proclaimed 2011 the International Year for People of African Descent.

In this context, we must formulate and implement policies that broaden the horizons and create new opportunities for women, including through the production of knowledge to the benefit of social equality, citizenship and the full enjoyment of women's rights.

We must work together now to build the countries we wish to have in the future, with the full participation of social and women's movements, male and female workers, entrepreneurs, indigenous people and people of African descent, the youth and all men and women who fight to overcome different forms of discrimination.

In the end of this year, we will hold the Third National Conference of Policies for Women. It will be a timely occasion to evaluate progress and define new priorities for the National Plan of Policies for Women, with a view to contributing in an effective way to address gender inequalities and eradicate extreme poverty from a gender perspective.

A broad democracy demands attitudes, responsibilities and commitments of its governing officials in relation to all its citizens, both male and female, irrespective of age, religion or race. For a democracy to be fully exercised by all, men and women must have real opportunities for personal growth. All men and women need to have their basic rights ensured – their right to food, housing, decent work, quality education, health and culture. Important steps have been and are still being taken in this regard, but we still have a long way to go in the path towards real gender equality.

Moreover, the international instruments we signed – for example, the Consensuses of Mexico, Quito and Brasilia, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention of Belém do Pará – should serve as a guide on the formulation and implementation of public policies.

At the same time, they should also inspire and stimulate the elaboration of new international parameters, such as the proposal of an Inter-American Convention on Sexual and Reproductive Rights and an International Convention on Domestic Work.

Our foreign policy will continue to be based on the classic values of the Brazilian diplomatic tradition: the promotion of peace, respect for the principle of non-intervention, promotion and protection of human rights and the strengthening of multilateralism. Brazil will continue on the side of those men and women who seek the strengthening of democracy, which demands full and effective participation of all women.

Thank you.