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**STATEMENT
BY**

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Mr. President,

Allow me to congratulate you on your election as the President of the Economic and Social Council. We wish you every success in this particular role and remain confident that the Council will benefit under your stewardship. South Africa wishes to align itself with the statement delivered by H.E. Ambassador Abdullah M. Alsaidi, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Yemen to the United Nations, on behalf of Group of 77 and China.

We recognize 2010 as the year of achieving several milestones on the journey towards the full realization of gender equality and empowerment of women. Primary amongst these are the following achievements:

- (i) 2010 holds significant importance for the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women as it marks the 15-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action;
- (ii) 10-year review period of the progress achieved in the Millennium Development Goals;
- (iii) 10-year anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security and,
- (iv) most recently (the creation of single gender body within the UN system).**

Mr. President,

While these are significant achievements in the advancement of women, we must also acknowledge that numerous challenges still remain.

Women continue to be disadvantaged; (i) in access to and control of economic and financial resources, **such as credit, loans and land**

(ii) exacerbated poverty through existing gender inequalities and imbalances,

(iii) pressing social needs in terms of health and education and for continued vulnerability to exploitation, violence and rape **such as women trafficking and forced prostitution.**

The Secretary-General's report correctly reflects on the need for women to access formal banking and credit facilities, to benefit from government programs for the provision of agricultural inputs, technologies and marketing arrangements, that women should have land titles and tenure, that they should have access to **and control** of economic resources such as labour, land, energy sources, technology and financial services, that their economic capacity should be enhanced, and should enjoy equal participation in economic and political decision-making. However, such efforts need to be complemented at the international level.

Whilst we talk about increasing women's economic empowerment, extending micro-credit and micro-finance programs for women, creating decent work and full employment, in particular in the developing world, we need to equally talk about the reduction of agricultural subsidies, removal of tariff protection in the developed world and the resuscitation of the Doha development round of trade talks in order for women to be full beneficiaries in the global context.

Mr. President,

We are encouraged by the developments around the global governance architecture on gender. The merger of several UN gender entities into a single gender body, headed at a significantly high level, is a clear indicator of the importance and priority accorded to gender issues **and the promotion of quality of life of women** by the international community.

South Africa views gender equality and the empowerment of women to be at the core of all the Millennium Development Goals; from improving health and fighting disease, to reducing poverty and mitigating hunger, and to expanding education as well as lowering child mortality. We strongly condemn violence against women and girls in all forms, and are committed to its prevention and eradication by implementing the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development.

We therefore anticipate that this new entity should champion women's **needs**, concerns and challenges, that it would further gender mainstreaming within the United Nations as well as through country-programs.

Mr. President,

Of particular concern is women's continued absence from formal peace processes. The needs and priorities of women continue to be overlooked in peace agreements, at donor conferences, in post-conflict legal reform and in policy and program development. The tenth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security on 31 October 2010 provides an important opportunity to examine ways

to further enhance implementation of, and accountability for, global commitments linked to women, peace and security.

This will include enhancing the role; involvement and **active participation** of women as key stakeholders in all stages of peace process, including as mediators and equal participants in conflict resolution, peace-building and post-conflict development. Good practices for increasing women's representation in local, national and international conflict-resolution and peace-building bodies should be more widely disseminated and consistently implemented.

Mr. President,

At the national level, South Africa's commitment to the promotion of gender equity is firstly demonstrated by the establishment of a national gender machinery and more recently by the setting up of a Ministry for Women, Children and **Persons with** Disabilities; it is affirmed by the introduction of new legislation to root out gender discrimination and to promote women's rights; and also to ensuring that women are integrally involved in the design and implementation of policy-there are dedicated offices in each government department tasked to ensure that gender mainstreaming is effected.

Furthermore, we will continually strengthen the capacity and mobilize resources that support gender equality and the empowerment of women. Of particular importance is the socio-economic empowerment of rural women, the eradication of poverty and access to social services. Within this context South Africa hosted the 4th World Conference on Rural Women in Durban in April 2007 and subscribes to its outcome Declaration recognizing rural women as being the poorest of the poor,

whose voices must be heard. **The Ministry of Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities is in the process of implementing a gender-responsive budget provided for by the National Treasury.**

Mr. President,

We note that there are concerted efforts to bridge the gap between political intention and action in different parts of the world.

In this regard, the African Union has set a goal of achieving parity between women and men in decision-making by 2020, while the Southern African Development Community (SADC) target calls for 50% women in decision-making in all sectors by 2015. In the same vein, the Assembly of the African Union declared 2010-2020 to be the African Women's Decade.

In concluding, my delegation looks forward to the adoption of the Annual Ministerial Declaration and welcomes further efforts to the implementation of the international agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

I thank you.