

STATEMENT

BY

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AT THE

FORTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON
THE STATUS OF WOMEN
ON

REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR
ACTION AND THE OUTCOME OF THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND CURRENT CHALLENGES AND FORWARD
LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT
OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

Madam Chairperson,

My delegation would like to congratulate you and members of your bureau on the brilliant **organization** of the affairs of the 49th session of the Commission on the Status of women (CSW). **We are** confident that the outcome **of** the **deliberations** will **be equally** successful. My **delegation** aligns itself with the statement **made by** Jamaica on behalf of the Group of G-77 and China.

The Beijing **Declaration** and Platform for Action **adopted** at the Fourth World Conference **on** Women in China in **1995 was a demonstration of** a reaffirmed **international** commitment **to** the **goals of** equality, development and peace for **all** women of the world. It represented a concerted effort to advance the global, regional **and national agenda** for **empowerment of** women.

The review at the 49th session of the CSW presents women with an opportunity to share experiences and identify areas of progress and challenges confronting women in the struggle for their **empowerment** and equality.

The government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria continues to uphold the **implementation** of the Beijing **Declaration** and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third **Special Session of the General Assembly** that ushered in **international** efforts for the **advancement of** women. In Nigeria **the implementation** of the Platform for Action in practically all the critical areas of concern has been a remarkable experience. While incremental progress has been recorded in some areas there are monumental challenges in others. These are **attributable** to cultural, ethnic and religious diversity.

Much of the progress has been in the areas of the formulation of national policies and action plans to promote gender equality, increased access by women **and** girls **to education and** a significant **decrease** in women **and** girls **literacy** rate. There **has also been an active and enhanced participation of** women's **non-governmental organizations** and civil society in the monitoring and **evaluation** of the Beijing Platform of Action, formulation and revision of domestic laws and regulations **as** they affect women. Nigeria **has legislated against traditional** practices (HTPs), **that impact negatively on women.**

When it comes to the rights of women, African leaders have put in place an effective mechanism to enforce the rights of women, which is the African Protocol on the Rights **of** Women, a **comprehensive legal framework to guarantee the** rights **of** women on the African continent. Nigeria has signed and ratified this instrument.

While acknowledging these gains, there are gaps in the full implementation of the Beijing **Platform** for Action, which include the limitation of financial and human resources for **promoting gender equality**, the low level **of** women's **participation in decision-making at various** levels, the persistent violence **against** women, **the application** of gender sensitive indicators and sex disaggregated statistics for measuring progress.

Nigeria **is also** committed to the achievement of the Millennium **Development Goals** (MDGs) particularly with respect **to goal** No. 3, which **emphasizes the** promotion of gender equality and empowerment and has put in place numerous gender institutional mechanisms to achieve gender parity.

In the overall struggle for advancement of women, Nigeria acknowledges the contributions of and pays tribute to the numerous non-governmental organizations and civil society groups within and outside the country. They are playing a prominent role as some of the formidable driving forces behind the goal of gender equality and advancement of women. The challenge before us is to continue to expand and strengthen the cooperative links with the civil society to advance the cause of women. The time has come for women to move beyond being on the agenda to setting the agenda themselves. Nigeria is against the horrendous crime of trafficking in women and children, hence the establishment of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) and the passage of Child Rights Bill, which complements the provision of the CRC. We recognize the importance of ensuring linkages and cross-fertilization of ideas with commitments to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Millennium Declaration. In this regard, Nigeria has ratified both the Optional Protocol to CEDAW and the African Protocol on the Rights of Women which are recognized as effective mechanisms for realizing women's human rights and gender equality.

On HIV/AIDS, it is commendable that our President himself is leading the campaign on the prevention and management of this pandemic, which has led to the reduction of the prevalence of HIV/AIDS from 5.5% in 2003 to 4.9% now. We have National, State and Local Government Committees as well as NGOs working in partnership to make this feat possible.

Nigeria has made tremendous in-roads in women education, particularly the girl child education in spite of cultural and ethnic differences. Its policies and programmes on education ostensibly favour the girl child and have produced tremendous results.

Economic empowerment of women has now been put on the front burner with the introduction of different poverty alleviation measures both at the National and State levels and the National Micro Credit Scheme for Rural Women.

Madam Chairperson,

We once again renew and reaffirm Nigeria's commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. We however, draw the attention of the Commission on the status of Women to continue to promote the introduction of Gender Responsive Budgeting particularly in the African Region in order to mobilize adequate funding for the implementation of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Women empowerment and the eradication of feminized poverty both call for generous allocation of resources at the national and state levels and the effective utilization of such resources. The reform agenda of the present democratic government of Nigeria is meant to generate funds for the enhancement of the lives of the down trodden in our society, especially women. With the renewed vigour and political will of Mr. President, and the continued collaboration and partnership of all the stakeholders, both national and international, it will not be too long before Nigerian women reach the promised land.

I thank you.