



# REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

## STATEMENT

by

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at the High Level Plenary of the  
49<sup>th</sup> Session of the  
Commission on the Status of Women

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Madam Chairperson,

The delegation of Guyana joins in reviewing the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome of the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century," fully cognizant of the importance of this process to the advancement of women. The Beijing Conference represents a watershed in the struggle for women's equality and was instrumental in focusing global attention on the inextricable linkage between women and sustainable development and more importantly provided a well articulated strategy for the empowerment of women in legal, social, economic and political terms. Consequently, as we commemorate Beijing +10, it is incumbent upon us to carefully evaluate progress, share best practices and recommit ourselves to strengthening efforts to promote the advancement of women.

The Government of Guyana reaffirms its commitment to the full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action which is integral to our national development strategy. With the equality of women enshrined in our Constitution and guided by the realization that a just and equitable society can only be achieved through the involvement of all, the Government is committed to ensuring that policies, programmes, and legislation support the full and equal participation of women in every sphere of society. This inclusive approach extends to rural, indigenous and disabled women.

Measures implemented to remove discriminatory practices include the enactment of the Domestic Violence and Prevention of Discrimination Acts in 1996 and 1997 respectively, as well as the adoption of a National Policy on Women in 1996. The latter mentioned Policy is based on the premise that women's rights are human rights and that all forms of discrimination against women ought to be eliminated with urgency. These legislative measures and the functioning of the Women's Affairs Bureau have been strengthened through the creation of an enabling environment and the establishment of institutional structures such as the Inter Ministry Committee on Gender, which evaluates programmes to ensure conformity with the policy of non-discrimination of women, the Women and Gender Equality Commission and the Regional Women's Affairs Desks in the ten administrative Regions of the country. The Guyana Women's Leadership Institute which is the first of its kind in the Region is another mechanism which plays a

role in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action through the provision of training to women, men, boys and girls. Although gender mainstreaming continues to gain prominence in programming and planning processes as evidenced by the consideration given to women in both the National Development and Poverty Eradication Strategy documents, Guyana is yet to have its first gender sensitive budget, which should be a reality by 2006.

violence and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS among females. Patriarchal norms and societal and cultural attitudes have to some extent affected further progress resulting in the necessity of involving men and boys in the dialogue on gender equality. Economic constraints and the lack of resources have also negatively affected the Government's ability to convert policy into action.

Guyana views the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Millennium Development Goals as reinforcing the common objective of the equality of women. The Secretary-General's Report as contained in document E/CN.6/2005/2 clearly underscores the mixed progress achieved is the implementation of the Platform for Action. The persistence of violence against women, high levels of poverty and HIV/AIDS, and the trafficking in women and girls are strong indications that more needs to be done. On the issue of trafficking in women and girls we reiterate the need for the international community to address the issue of poverty and the lack of opportunities for employment available to

women which are two of the root causes of this phenomenon. At the same time, we also advocate the provision of social support, rehabilitation and reintegration such women into the mainstream of society.

Madam Chairperson,

The Beijing Conference has provided the blueprint for the advancement of women, it is now our task to adopt bold measures to strengthen implementation. In this regard, the Government of Guyana calls for an intensification of international action to address the outstanding challenges, including through the honouring of obligations with regard to overseas development assistance, the demonstration of political will, the development of partnerships both internationally and locally and the involvement of men and boys in actions to promote gender equality.

I thank you.