



**STATEMENT BY
THE HEAD OF THE CUBAN DELEGATION
TO THE 52 SESSION OF THE COMMISSION
ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

NEW YORK, 2008

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me at the outset to commend you and the Bureau for conducting this working session of the Commission. My delegation would also like to associate itself with the statement of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the G-77 and China.

As it has been customary, my delegation will make substantive contributions to the development and results of this Commission, which should represent a forum for debate and exchange of our countries' experiences in the advancement of women. Furthermore, we should raise our voices to denounce the numerous discriminations and forms of violence against women, who are the victims of wars, invasions, foreign occupation, and imposition of coercive unilateral measures, labor exploitation, inequalities and exclusion. Without sustainable, just and equitable development to address the current poverty situation of the world; and while the preservation of the environment, peace, and the respect for all remain unmet, there will not be an adequate advance and a real benefit for the advancement of women.

For Cuban women as well as for all the women in the world, the Beijing Platform for Action is a key tool to further our governments' commitments and to achieve equality and justice at all levels and spheres of life.

The year 2008 will be essential for the women movement in my country that prepares the celebration of the 3rd National Evaluation Seminar of the National Action Plan to Follow Up on the 4th World UN Conference on Women. All the State Governing Bodies have participated in this process, along with the Federation of Cuban Women– the national machinery for the advancement of women – reviewing, assessing and reporting on the steps taken to fulfill the 90 tasks contained therein.

My Government, further taking on the commitments to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, engaged in actions of dissemination, follow-up and evaluation of the recommendations emanated from the presentation of the 5th and 6th Combined Report by Cuba, submitted in August 2006. As a result, the ministries have given effect to the concerns emanating from its Expert Committee and three important researches have been conducted, which will bring about new actions to address them.

Despite the longest and cruelest blockade in history, unilaterally imposed by the US Government for almost 50 years, a genocidal action that is the greatest form of violence against Cuban women, my country can show substantive advances resulting from the Cuban social project of justice and equity for all, aimed at creating conditions for a sustainable development devoting the meager resources we have to healthcare, education, social security and the guarantee of employment. This is the result of the Government's political will, which has made it possible for women to benefit directly from programmes and plans allowing them for an active insertion in the country's political, economic, social and cultural life. In the recent general elections held in my country, women reached 43, 16% of the representation in Parliament. Because of this result, Cuba occupies now the third place in the world of parliamentary women.

Mr. Chairman,

The issue we are addressing today, that of financing for women's empowerment, is inextricably linked to our peoples' fates, to the levels of development, exchange and cooperation. We cannot talk about the empowerment of women without mentioning the poverty rates affecting the world

today. My country contributes, in the context of the South-South cooperation, with thousands of doctors, nurses, teachers and other specialists who have taken health and education to far-off latitudes, helping other underdeveloped peoples of the world.

The right to development and its realization are paramount to fulfill international agreements wherein our governments are required to address issues in an affirmative manner and to play a decisive role along with international organizations and agencies. The fulfillment of these purposes is very closely related to the inalienable principles and rights enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the right to sovereignty and self-determination of the peoples to choose and uphold their own paths, under respect and cooperation, without conditions and in accordance with the interests and needs of the countries.

Today, 13 years after the 4th World Conference on Women, chapter 6 of the Beijing Platform for Action devoted to the financial provisions to ensure the commitment to the advancement of women has full validity and is an undeferrable challenge aimed at addressing the call to reduce the military expenditure and devote it to development, the fight against poverty, the achievement of the undertaken 0.7% for the official development assistance and the reduction of the external debt among others, guaranteeing new and additional resources devoted to development and with direct benefit to women and their fundamental performance and contribution in our societies.

Cuba reiterates that this Commission, as a subsidiary body of the ECOSOC as well as the General Assembly, are the appropriate bodies of the UN system to follow up the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Unless we join our efforts and political will, the international community, the governments, the financial organizations and the women's movements, will not be able to meet the Beijing agreements and, the advancement of the women of the world will be compromised.

Thank you.

