Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, please allow me to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the Third Committee of the General Assembly. I wish to extend my gratitude to the other Members of the Bureau. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in the business of the Committee in a constructive manner. My delegation would also like to extend its sincere tributes to the Secretary-General as well as the Special Rapporteurs, and CEDAW Committee for the excellent reports submitted under this agenda item.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Fiji on behalf of G-77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

Nepal attaches great importance to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the Twenty-third Special Session of the General Assembly and upholds the view that women are not merely the passive beneficiary of development, but an active agent of change in all the societies across the world. The deliberation of this committee is particularly critical to us all in shaping the future roadmap for addressing the issues of women at a time when the UN is embarking to accelerate MDGs, and framing of the SDGs and the Post 2015 development agenda.

Nepal welcomes the outcome document of the special event to follow up efforts towards achieving the MDGs held on 25th September 2013. The MDGs and its targets are not met without addressing the problems of women in a world where the number of people living in absolute poverty surpasses one billion, of which women constitute more than 50 percent. In many societies, women represent the poorest of the poor, most vulnerable and marginalized group of people due to deep-rooted gender bias, putting them into further social exclusion and vicious circle of economic poverty.

Similarly, violence against women is pervasive regardless of regions, ethnicities and societies, calling for collective efforts to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls and to create an egalitarian society.

Nepal echoes with the previous speakers that human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, especially those of women and children, regardless of their migration status, must be effectively promoted and protected in a comprehensive manner as they form 50 percent of all international migrants. We further emphasize the need to respect and promote international labour standard and respect the rights of migrants in their workplaces, both in the origin and destination countries.

Protecting and promoting the rights of the people without discrimination has been the core value of all our efforts to build a peaceful and prosperous Nepal. The Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007 guaranteed the fundamental
rights of women and girls, which is explicitly articulated in the state policies, obligations and directive principles, providing a foundation for women’s empowerment in all walks of life.

Nepal is a state party to around 24 human rights conventions, including the seven core International Human Rights instruments. It is a party to CEDAW, CRC and their optional protocols without any reservation. At the regional level, Nepal has also ratified the SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution, 2002.

A number of domestic legislations are in place for ensuring gender equality and prohibiting violence and discrimination against women, which includes the Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act, 2007; the Domestic Violence (Offence and Punishment) Act, 2009; and the Act to Amend Some Nepal Acts to Maintain Gender Equality. Women are entitled to parental property and are provided with a system of reservation and quota in the educational institutions and employment sector. This is to promote and ensure their access to productive resources for empowerment. Such provisions provide mandate to the Government of Nepal to work more purposefully to address the issues of women and girls.

An increased participation of women in decision-making and protection of women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence and ending impunity for alleged crimes against women are our topmost priority in the relevant National Plans of Actions. Various National Plans of Actions have been developed and implemented covering important issues of women and children such as combating Trafficking in Women and Children 2012, national implementation of CEDAW and the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820.

Nepal is fully committed to combating any form of violence against women, including sexual violence. We have adopted a zero tolerance policy on violence against women and established a special national fund for the victims. There are provisions of rehabilitation centers, one stop crisis centers, services centers, medical, psychological and other counseling services and free legal aid to address the issues of women. Initiatives have been taken for the establishment of fast track courts for addressing the issues of domestic violence. There are targeted programmes for rural women with a focus on economic, political and social empowerment and inclusion.

The National Human Rights Commission and the National Women’s Commission are deeply involved in promoting and protecting the rights of women. The independent judiciary of Nepal has been playing an important role in safeguarding and promoting women’s rights through judicial pronouncements. The sectoral Ministries are responsible for mainstreaming gender issues in their respective works. The current 13th Plan and its corresponding annual budget constitute several targeted programmes for women and girls. Alongside, there is a mechanism of gender-responsive budget.

Similarly, we have a vibrant civil society and community-based organizations working on the issues of women. The media has been playing very positive role in preventing violence and combating trafficking in women and girls. All these efforts show Nepal’s commitment for the advancement of women and girls. However, violence against women and girls are not only a law and order related problem, we need to change the way people think and act. The patriarchic value of the society, discriminatory intergenerational socio-cultural practices, unequal distribution of power, and women's financial dependence all contribute to violence against women and girls. Lack of implementation remains a critical issue as there are limited available resources for implementation of plans of actions.

The Government is doing its best for the advancement of women and is in need of strengthened cooperation and genuine partnership in a predictable and sustainable manner.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman