Mr. Chairman,

We appreciate the continuing attention given by the UN system to advancement of women and thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports.

My delegation also expresses its appreciation and support for the work being done by UN-Women to mainstream gender equality and the empowerment of women and conveys its confidence that under the leadership and guidance of its new Executive Director, Mme. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, advancement of women will continue to remain a high priority on the international agenda.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by Fiji on behalf of the G77 and China and by Malaysia on behalf of ASEAN.

Mr. Chairman,

We only have two years left before the 2015 deadline to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. As we take stock of the gains made in achieving the MDGs, attention must be given to specific sectors and areas where progress on gender equality and empowerment of women are much needed:

- Rural women continue to be socially and economically disadvantaged, owing mainly to their limited access to economic resources and opportunities, their exclusion from decision-making and political participation, and their disproportionate burden of unpaid work. In his report, the Secretary-General
tells us that rural women score lowest on all the Millennium Development Goals compared with women in urban areas and with rural and urban men.

- Many women migrant workers face discrimination, violence, and exploitation at all stages of migration and the Secretary-General reports that there continues to be a lack of targeted measures to specifically tackle discrimination and violence against women migrant workers, taking their specific situation into account.

- Women continue to face barriers in the areas of political participation and decision-making processes with gender-based discrimination, stereotypes and traditionally prescribed roles, unfavourable legal frameworks, lack of financial resources, lack of support by political parties, and male incumbency as persistent challenges.

These are but a few of the areas where much work on gender equality and empowerment has to be done. They all indicate that structural barriers go into the root of inequality between women and men and that these barriers need to be addressed if we are to truly advance the rights of women.

**Mr. Chairman,**

As we identify priorities for a post-2015 development framework, we should build on the strength of the gains we have already achieved and work on closing the gaps that hold us back from advancing gender equality and empowerment of women. The 58th session of the Commission on Status of Women in March 2014, with the priority theme “Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls,” presents a critical opportunity for us to assess the current MDG framework from a gender perspective and to contribute to the ongoing discussions on the post-2015 development framework and the 20-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

In this connection, my delegation supports mainstreaming a gender perspective in discussions on the post-2015 development framework and sustainable development goals and the calls for gender equality and women’s empowerment to be reflected as a stand-alone goal. We laud the efforts of UN-Women in developing a vision for a new gender equality goal that would address the structural barriers that prevent the achievement of equality between women and men articulated around three target areas, namely: women’s freedom from violence; gender equality in capabilities and resources; and gender equality in decision-making power and voice. We support the human rights approach underlying the three areas as we strongly believe that women’s enjoyment of those rights is the prerequisite for women to fulfill their potential and for societies to develop democratically and peacefully.
In the pursuit of this vision of advancing gender equality and empowerment of women, however, my delegation hopes that UN-Women and other UN agencies such as the UNFPA, UNDP, and UNICEF will continue to take due consideration and account of the specific needs and priorities of Member States as they support them in setting norms and programs that will ensure achievement of national and international commitments to women.

Mr. Chairman,

The Philippines is committed to advancing gender equality and empowerment of women. It was ranked 8th in the Global Gender Gap Index of the World Economic Forum, where it closed its male-female gender gaps in four inter-linking areas: economic participation and opportunity; education and employment; empowerment and decision-making; and health and life-expectancy.

Our Constitution makes it a state policy to recognize the role of women in nation-building and to ensure the fundamental equality before the law of women and men. Republic Act No. 9710, otherwise known as the Magna Carta of Women, serves as our legal framework to eliminate discrimination through the recognition, protection, fulfillment and promotion of the rights of Filipino women, especially those belonging in the marginalized sectors of the society.

To complement our domestic policies and legislation, the Philippines continues to promote and support initiatives for the advancement of women at the bilateral, regional, and international levels. We believe that a sustained, committed, and strong collaboration with partners in the international community is essential to improve policies and programs geared to promote gender equality and empowerment of women.

Finally Mr. Chairman, following the practice of previous sessions, my delegation together with Indonesia, will submit under agenda item 28(a) the draft resolution on Violence against Women Migrant Workers. We look forward to the valuable contributions and support of all Member States for this important resolution on the advancement of women.

I thank you for your kind attention.