Mr. Chairman,

On Friday, the Third Committee has started the discussions on one of the most significant items on its agenda: An item where we will be able to take stock of important improvements achieved but also where we will be struck by how further we need to go, to ensure a better life and equal opportunities for the so far unfavoured and largely neglected half of our populations.

Let’s look on the bright side first. Two days ago, we celebrated the second international day of the Girl Child. Through various activities and conferences organized around the creative theme of “Innovating for Girls’ Education” we sought to encourage the engagement of the youth, innovating private sector and other partners to fill the gaps in girls’ education throughout the world.

Nowadays the reality that development, social justice, rule of law or democracy can never be complete without the full participation of women has finally gained global acceptance. Beijing Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action clearly recognized that women’s empowerment and gender equality are cornerstones of population and development programmes. This understanding should also be our guide as we prepare to celebrate the 20\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action and to define our post 2015 development agenda.

I am pleased to note that Turkey was among those who mostly fulfilled its own national commitments and goals established in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals even before the expiration of the set deadlines. Turkey found its place among the top ten countries which achieved the sharpest declines in maternal death rates between 1990 and 2008.

On another front, this year in March, the 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) resulted in significant conclusions adopted by almost global consensus. The women all around the world gave a clear and strong
message in favour of combatting and ending all forms of violence against women. Turkey proudly and actively contributed to the negotiations that led to the historic conclusions adopted by the CSW. I am pleased to note that Turkey has also become the first ever state party that ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Eliminating and Combatting Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, which constitutes the first international convention on combatting violence against women.

UN WOMEN, the unique UN entity created three years ago by the wise decision of the General Assembly has matured into a powerful and leading actor protecting, empowering and enabling our women and girls to achieve their aspirations. We are determined to increase our contribution to the work of UN WOMEN by hosting its Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia in Istanbul very soon.

All these amount to significant improvements in the advancement of women. Yet, in all these areas where we have achieved a lot, much still needs to be done to ensure universal adherence to the rights of women. A brief survey through the reports and opinions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women can give us an idea on the responsibility we all have in this regard. These reports clearly display the fact that women and girls continue to face discrimination in multiple phases of political, economic and social life and they become the primary victims of poverty, conflict, instability and climate change. The especially dire challenges faced by women and their children in conflict affected areas and humanitarian crisis situations necessitate our constant attention. The solution to all these lies in empowering the women and enabling them to assume leadership roles in peace, democratization and development processes. We believe that it is high time for the international community to move from words to deeds and to deliver in this respect.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to conclude by underlining Turkey’s unwavering commitment to promoting the status of the women all around the world. Turkey will continue to promote the active participation of women, on equal terms with men, in all spheres of decision-making for the achievement of equality, sustainable development, peace and democracy.

Thank you.