BRAZIL

UN-Women Executive Board
Annual Session 2015

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Antonio de Aguiar Patriota
Permanent Representative

(Check against delivery)

30 June 2015
Mr. President, Mme. Executive Director,

Allow me to congratulate the President as well as the newly elected Vice-Presidents of the Board and thank the Secretariat for organizing this Annual Session. I would also like to congratulate the Executive Director, Madam Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, for her leadership and informative presentation of the Annual Report. Lastly, our appreciation to the UN-Women representative in Brazil, Nadine Gasman, and her team for the excellent work they are doing.

Mr. President,

This session takes place at a promising and historic juncture, as we recall the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and prepare for the final stages of an ambitious, universal and transformational Post-2015 Development Agenda, on the basis of the outcome document of the Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As we transition to a broader and more ambitious agenda, we have yet another opportunity to mainstream women’s rights across the three dimensions of sustainable development, in accordance with the Rio+20 framework.

Brazil is proud to have strongly supported the inclusion of important references to gender equality and women’s empowerment in the outcome document of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the outcome draft of the Third Conference on Financing for Development to be adopted in Addis Ababa. We are convinced that the pursuit of women’s rights should be a general and universal goal as well as the target of specific measures protecting and promoting women’s rights as a group. An adequate framework for follow-up and review of the Post-2015 development agenda and its system-wide implementation is crucial to this effect.

We thank UN Women for the comprehensive study on progress achieved and challenges remaining in the context of the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action. This assessment will provide an invaluable contribution to the 60th Session of the Commission for Status of Women, which I am honored to preside, as well as a crucial reference for the realization of women’s rights in the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Brazil is committed to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. In recent years, the Brazilian Government has made significant strides in income distribution, giving priority to women, who are now the main beneficiaries of cash transfer programs and housing credit, an approach that not only has empowered women economically but has indicated that overall women make better use of resources.
We recognize gender inequality is a persistent problem globally and our region is no exception. As the report states, 20 years after the Beijing Declaration, progress remains unacceptably slow and no country has achieved gender equality. Building on national initiatives, we have sought to address gender issues at the regional level through programs and policies under UNASUR and MERCOSUR, in order to build a regional front to combat gender-based violence and advance the rights of women and girls, including within the most vulnerable groups.

Mr. President,

These past months have been an exciting time for the joint collaboration between UN Women, and the Government and civil society of Brazil in the quest to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment in our country. We are pleased to note the strengthened cooperation between UN Women and the Brazilian Government, towards the implementation of the National Plan of Policies for Women.

On International Women’s Day in March, President Dilma Rousseff signed a new law which criminalizes femicide and sets tougher penalties for perpetrators of this crime. The new legislation amends our Penal Code to redefine femicide as any crime that involves domestic violence, discrimination or contempt against women resulting in death and imposes harder sentences - of between 12 to 30 years imprisonment. The bill also includes longer jail terms for crimes committed against pregnant women, girls under 14, women over 60 and women and girls with disabilities. This law reinforces the policy commitment to zero tolerance of gender-based violence and to prioritizing the rights of female citizens and will seek to ensure further implementation of the 2006 Maria da Penha Law on domestic violence.

Coinciding with the new law, Brazil is the first pilot country adapting the Latin American Model Protocol for the Investigation of Gender-related Violent Deaths, promoted by UN Women and OHCHR, which provides guidelines and tools to support the work of those responsible for the investigation and prosecution of gender-based violent deaths.

Despite significant campaigns, efforts to increase women’s leadership and participation in congress suffered a temporary setback in Brazil two weeks ago, when Congress rejected a bill that would establish a quota which would reserve 10% of congressional and city council mandates for women, with a gradual increase to 15% over the next 12 years. Fortunately, overall Latin America can be considered a positive example, as women’s average share of the region’s parliaments rose from 12.7% in 1995 to 26.4% in 2015.
We look forward to collaborating further with UN Women to further improve this scenario in the near future and are pleased to note, in this regard, the launch of the solidarity movement for gender equality "He for She" ("Eles por Elas" in Portuguese) just this past week in Brazil.

Mr. President,

I'd also like to share a joint initiative that is linked to a specific cultural reality in Brazil. During Carnival this past February, a partnership between UN Women, the National Secretariat for Policies for Women, the Government of Rio de Janeiro and the traditional samba school Mangueira launched a campaign to promote respect for women. Using the slogan "During this carnival lose your inhibitions but don't lose respect" and promoting a 24 hour public utility hotline service to provide assistance and guidance to women victims of violence - "Ligue 180" (Dial 180) - a series of posters frames and hand-held fans were designed to raise awareness and denounce violence against women. The campaign reached 16 of the country's major cities through a range of media. A series of workshops on gender equality and women's empowerment, aimed at female and male participants in social and sporting events, were also held.

Mr. President,

We salute UN Women's progress in terms of operational presence in 2014, having delivered an implementation rate of budgeted activities of 82%. Brazil is pleased to have contributed financially to UN-Women for the first time in 2014. Although we are unable to announce a contribution for this year at this time, we look forward to further strengthening this relationship in the future in support of gender-based policies in Brazil and the world.

Finally, Mr. President,

Allow me to highlight the critical role of UN-Women in facilitating the exchange of best practices that could help us learn from each other's successes and collectively promote the advancement of women's rights.

You can count on Brazil's constructive engagement and full support to UN-Women and its efforts in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women, including in the context of an ambitious, transformational and universal post-2015 development agenda.

Thank you

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