Mr. Chair,

I have the honor to thank Mrs. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women and her group for the valuable information presented to the Board, and Mr. Gonzalo Koncke Pizzorno, Chair of the Board, Permanent Representative of Uruguay.

Mr. Chair,

Despite the commitments adopted in the main conferences of the United Nations, including the IV World Conference on Women held in Beijing, we live in a world marked by an unprecedented systemic global crisis.

More than 1.000 million people live in extreme poverty, whereas half the world wealth lies in the hands of only 1% of the world population, and the most affected or main victims remain women and young girls.

Struggle for peace, a more just and equal world, the survival of our planet as well as fight against war, poverty, violence in all its forms, exclusion or discrimination for any reason are mandatory for the development and achievement of true gender equality. The fact that international instruments and national laws establish rights for women is not sufficient if there is no political will to fulfill the commitments agreed by the States.

Gender equality should be a reality and the Beijing agreements must not become dead letter, but an effective program that contributes to the fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals.

Cuba is actively engaged in the elaboration of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. In this regard, we welcome the “Special Declaration on the Promotion of Equity and Empowerment of Women in the New Post-2015 Development Agenda” adopted in the 2nd Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) held in January of this year in Havana.

We support that gender equality and empowerment of women be kept as a specific goal in the new development agenda and that gender mainstreaming be incorporated into the objectives and goals to be agreed. Such objective should be addressed with a universal approach and comprehend all spheres of main concern, strategic objectives and actions of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Mr. Chair,
Cuba was the first country that signed and the second country that ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women. Several Cuban women have individually served as experts in the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

We have recorded major advances in the fulfillment of the commitments adopted in Beijing and have a National Action Plan to follow up the 4th Conference on Women. Our national mechanism, the Federation of Cuban Women, plays an important role in this endeavor.

The MDGs have been largely fulfilled and we continue to work strenuously to accomplish the remaining goals before 2015, notwithstanding the well-known consequences of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the Government of the United States, which remains the main obstacle for greater development of the country and the realization of the human rights, including those of women and young girls.

We are currently working on the improvement of our economic and social model, aimed at achieving institutionalization based on justice, equality and solidarity, pursuant to the principles of sovereignty and self-determination and in accordance with the provisions of the Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations.

Mr. Chair,

We acknowledge the efforts of UN Women in favor of gender equality and empowerment of women in the world and its contribution to national strategies for development.

The principle of universality adopted in the historic Resolution 64/289 that gave new life to the entity and its Executive Board, should be the paradigm to pursue in the work of this body, since the fight against women discrimination extends beyond the borders that divide the northern countries from the southern ones.

The role of the Board and its contribution to strengthen the cooperation with the Member States is of vital importance. Improving the living conditions of all women and young girls in the world with special emphasis on those affected by different problems is indispensable.

Likewise, it is necessary that the work of the Board satisfies the national priorities, including the elimination of the feminization of poverty. Furthermore, we should follow a balanced approach when addressing the normative and operational aspects, and abide by the mandates endorsed by the Member States of the United Nations, including the Board’s decisions.

We are confident that these matters will be properly addressed in the decisions to be considered during the current session. We reaffirm once more Cuba’s commitment to advancing gender equality and empowerment of women.

Thank you very much.