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Chairperson: Mrs. Ploder (Vice-Chairperson) (Austria)

Later: Mr. Monthe (Cameroon)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.08 a.m.

Agenda item 27: Social Development (*continued*)
(A/C.3/65/L.8, L.9, L.10, L.11 and L.12)

- (a) **Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly** (*continued*) (A/C.3/65/L.11)
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Draft resolution A/C.3/65/L.11: Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly

1. **Mr. Al-Shami** (Yemen) presented draft resolution A./C.3/65/L.11 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China

Draft resolution A./C.3/65/L.10. Co-operatives in social development

2. **Mrs. Sodov** (Mongolia) presented draft resolution A./C.3/65/L.10 on behalf of its sponsors. She noted that co-operatives offered a particularly useful business model in cases of economic difficulty and market dysfunction. In preparation for the International Year of Co-operatives, the purpose of which was to create an environment conducive to co-operatives, to promote the formation and growth of co-operatives, and to raise awareness of their contribution to economic and social development, 16 countries had already appointed co-ordinators, and the United Nations system was working in partnership with the media, the academic world and the International Co-operative Alliance to ensure the success of that event. Adoption of the draft resolution would allow planned activities to get underway and would give greater impact to the International Year.

Draft resolution A./C.3/65/L.12. Realizing the Millennium Development Goals for persons with disabilities towards 2015 and beyond.

3. **Mrs. Hernando** (Philippines) presented draft resolution A./C.3/65/L.12 on behalf of its sponsors. Recalling that the draft contained a request to the Secretary-General to organize a high-level meeting on strengthening efforts to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of development activities, she said that the sponsors were ready to engage in unofficial consultations with delegations that doubted the relevance of the initiative.

4. **The Chairperson** announced that Chile was cosponsoring the draft resolution.

Draft resolution A./C.3/65/L.8. Follow-Up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing

5. **Mr. Al-Shami** (Yemen) presented draft resolution A./C.3/65/L.8 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China

Draft resolution A./C.3/65/L.9. United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all

6. **Mrs. Sodov** (Mongolia) presented draft resolution A./C.3/65/L.9, for which Bangladesh and Chile were the cosponsors. She noted that the text sought to draw attention to the fact that much remained to be done in light of the target dates set for achieving the objectives of the United Nations Literacy Decade and the second of the Millennium Development Goals – guaranteeing primary education for all – and that a renewed political commitment and greater investments were required on the part of member States.

7. **The Chairperson** announced that Cameroon was cosponsoring the draft resolution.

Agenda item 28: Advancement of women (*continued*)
(A/65/336)

- (a) **Advancement of women** (*continued*) (A/65/38, A/65/208, A/65/209, A/65/268, A/65/218, A/65/334 and A/65/354-S/2010/466)

- (b) **Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly** (*continued*) (A/65/204 and A/C.3/65/L.7)

8. **Mrs. Hoang Thi Thanh Nga** (Vietnam) hailed the creation of UN Women and the appointment of Mrs. Michelle Bachelet as its head. She also welcomed

the steps taken by States to improve their legislation for protecting women against violence and discrimination, to adopt national action plans focused on women's empowerment and their participation in decision-making, and to strengthen prevention and awareness raising efforts. Despite the progress made, there were a number of questions that deserved attention.

9. First, it was important to achieve a smooth transition to the new entity and to ensure close and comprehensive co-ordination between UN Women and other development assistance agencies. In conflict or post-conflict situations, there would have to be greater co-ordination between UN Women and peacekeeping missions in order to assert the role of women in all strategies and at all stages of the peace process.

10. Second, the UN and member States would have to strive to institute laws and policies to promote women's active participation in economic activities and decision-making. Such participation would be facilitated if women had readier access to education and training.

11. Third, women must be seen as agents of change and not merely as victims. Vietnam had experienced a post-conflict situation and was convinced that women could play an active role in building peace and reconstructing their country, provided measures were taken to encourage them to do so, and that their needs in such areas as health and education were taken into account.

12. Vietnam had always made women's participation a priority of its development policies. Aware of the importance of education for women's empowerment, the Vietnamese government had drawn up a national action plan for the advancement of women and a national action plan on education for all, and women now represented nearly half of enrolment across all levels of education.

13. Much remained to be done to improve gender equality in rural areas and in the labour market, and to ensure equality of opportunities, salaries and access to decision-making positions. Vietnam was ready to co-operate with all its partners, and in particular within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, to achieve that common objective.

14. **Mrs. Abdolmaleki** (Islamic Republic of Iran) declared that the Islamic Republic of Iran had an

environment that was favourable to the advancement of women, one that drew its inspiration from religious teachings, the principle of moderation, and the precept of strengthening the family.

15. The most recent statistics showed that female employment had risen by 14.53%, that the literacy rate had reached 80.34%, and that in higher education 68% of students and 30% of the faculty were women. In the health sector, women represented 40% of specialized physicians and 98% of gynaecologists. In the context of the national system for treating HIV, the country now had 150 HIV screening centres. In the political sphere, the number of women on municipal and village councils had increased by 80%, and 2,334 women were currently playing an active role in the village decision-making process.

16. At the same time, the Islamic Republic of Iran had prepared a charter of women's rights and duties, based on three pillars – spirituality, justice and security – within the framework of religion and national principles. Legislation also reflected the many areas of progress with respect to women's rights and family matters, for example the right to child custody, the right to file for divorce, and equality in obtaining “blood money” from insurance companies.

17. In keeping with Islamic values and precepts, it was important to adopt a fair position on the rights and freedoms of women and to take into account their particular biological and emotional characteristics. In fact, equality failed to recognize the natural differences between men and women. The basic and most important unit in Iranian society was the family, and in its development programmes the Islamic Republic of Iran was seeking to strengthen that unit by promoting women's empowerment within the family.

18. Finally, the Islamic Republic of Iran saw the recent economic crisis as the direct result of worldwide political injustice and to remedy that situation it was calling for a change of economic system, justice for all, and morality instead of mere profit-seeking.

19. **Mrs. Sapag** (Chile) welcomed creation of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. She was also pleased with the progress that States had made in implementing the recommendations from the in-depth study on all forms of violence against women, dealing with the promotion of gender equality, the protection of women's rights, and the elimination of physical and psychological

violence against women. Mrs. Sapag hoped that States would report on their actions in this regard, as a way of helping to disseminate best practices.

20. Chile was concerned by the problem of violence against women and children, particularly sexual violence, in conflict situations, and it recognized women's role as agents of peace and of change. In a move to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, Chile had instituted a national action plan to protect women in cases of conflict and to involve them in the peace process.

21. Chile was pleased to note that 28 countries had taken steps within their national health policies to end obstetric fistula, which continued to pose a danger for millions of women, and it underlined the need to train and maintain health personnel, especially in the primary health field.

22. Chile had taken measures to promote the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

23. For the period 2010-2014, the new government would be working through the National Women's Service to promote the economic emancipation of women by facilitating their access to the labour market, increasing their employment possibilities, giving both women and men the possibility of reconciling working and family life, and strengthening the role of the family as the foundation of society. As part of the emergency reconstruction programme, it had already launched a campaign to involve women in rebuilding the country, which was ravaged by the earthquake of February 2010, and it had created an advisory commission on women, work and motherhood, comprising experts of both sexes in the areas of work, family, motherhood and the economy, as well as representatives of labour and management.

24. **Mrs. Carol Fulp** (United States of America) said that the creation of UN Women represented more than a simple reform of the United Nations system, and she welcomed the appointment of its head, Michelle Bachelet, who had the leadership experience needed for that job. For 2010 the United States had contributed \$5.985 billion to the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), currently folded into UN Women. The United States would seek to ensure that

UN Women had sufficient resources to carry out its mission and would participate actively in the work of its Executive Board.

25. The United States envisioned that UN Women would have a comprehensive mandate to mainstream gender equality throughout the UN system. Aware that the empowerment of women and girls and the full achievement of their potential, especially in health and education, would serve to improve living conditions and institute an environment of peace and prosperity, the United States government hoped that UN Women would inform policies and implement programmes to ensure women's full and equal participation in political, economic and social life, including in conflict prevention and peace building, and to combat violence against women.

26. UN Women would be conducting the bulk of its work in the field, and it would need to have the required number of staff to work with other UN agencies and government ministries to align programmes with women's strengths and needs in order to effect real change in their lives.

27. Although UN Women had a key role to play in addressing women's empowerment, its creation did not relieve other UN organizations of their responsibility to consider how their work impacted women. Rather, UN Women should serve as a catalyst to ensure that all parts of the UN system were mainstreaming gender considerations throughout their activities.

28. **Mrs. Azusa Shinohara** (Japan) was pleased that the 54th session of the Committee on the Status of Women had commemorated the 15th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women. She also welcomed the creation of UN Women, recognizing the need to mainstream the issue of gender equality in all areas of the United Nations' work, and she declared that her country would contribute actively to the activities of the new entity.

29. At the high-level General Assembly meeting held in September 2010 on the Millennium Development Goals, Japan had announced the adoption of new health and education policies, with a particular focus on maternal, newborn and child health. The Japanese government was committed to provide \$5 billion over five years beginning 2011 for financing these policies. With its partners in the international community, Japan had set the objective of saving the lives of 680,000 mothers by ensuring a continuum of health services,

including prenatal and antenatal care. In this way Japan would be contributing to achievement of millennium development goal (MDG) 5 (improving maternal health) and also MDG 3 (promoting gender equality and women's empowerment), which was related to the achievement of all the other MDGs.

30. In the run-up to commemoration of the 10th anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, Japan hoped that a comprehensive set of indicators to track implementation of the resolution would be adopted and implemented shortly. As part of its development assistance in post-conflict countries, Japan was giving priority to strengthening women's participation in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace building. Through the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, Japan was financing a project in Sri Lanka that included vocational training for widows so that they could take an active role in post-conflict society. In 2010, as chair of Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC), Japan had hosted three meetings on the subject of gender equality, to promote networking among women leaders and encourage the economic empowerment of women.

31. On the domestic front, Japan had been vigorously engaged in efforts to create a gender-equal society and to promote women's empowerment. In December 2009 it had launched a new action plan of measures to combat trafficking in persons. In 2010, the Japanese government would finalize the "third basic plan for gender equality", which would include expanding women's participation in decision-making processes and taking steps to resolve their employment problems. Japan would also be addressing the concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on Japan's sixth periodic report.

32. **Mrs. Al-Thani** (Qatar) said her country was applying the Beijing Platform for action in a manner consistent with Sharia and its social values. Qatar was convinced of the importance of strengthening women's rights in the context of consolidating the rights and duties of the family, the pillar of society. Her country had opened the way to progress in the field of gender equality and women's empowerment, and was applying a comprehensive strategy to promote women and all members of the family.

33. The Supreme Council on Family Affairs was responsible for women's empowerment. On the legislative front, the right of women to vote and to stand for election encouraged their participation in decision-making. Laws relating to women and the family were regularly reviewed to take into account the international commitments of Qatar, which was a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Measures taken to improve women's access to employment were producing a steady increase in the proportion of women in the workforce, in both the public and private sectors, providing opportunities for part-time work and teleworking, and offering training and assistance to small businesses

34. Specialized independent institutions had been established to combat violence against women, and 24-hour hotlines are available for families and children. Aware of the importance of education, Qatar had undertaken to improve the quality of public education. Qatar saw in the continuation of conflict in various parts of the world a major obstacle to ending the violence and the physical abuse that women were suffering, particularly those living under foreign occupation. Finally, Qatar welcomed the creation of UN Women

35. **Mrs. Abubakar** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) welcomed the creation of UN Women. The country attached great importance to the provision of health care for women during and after pregnancy. Thus, 98% of Libyan women had access to prenatal healthcare facilities, and as a result the maternal and infant mortality rates had dropped from 77 per 100,000 live births in 1992 to 27 in 2007. In 2005, the life expectancy of Libyan women was 75 years.

36. Aware of the importance of women's rights, as enshrined in Sharia law, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had promulgated various laws to achieve gender equality and to end sexist discrimination. Libyan law guaranteed women equal rights in all fields, including social security, retirement, property ownership and social activities, and it granted them 14 weeks of paid maternity leave. The Citizenship Law (Law 24 of 2010) allowed the children of a Libyan woman married to a foreigner to obtain Libyan citizenship. Under Law 10 of 1984 on marriage and divorce, men who wanted to take a second wife must obtain the written consent of their spouse. Law 12 of 2010 on the advancement of women guaranteed provision of day-care services.

37. The Libyan delegation was particularly concerned at the deteriorating humanitarian situation of Palestinian women, whose rights were being gravely violated by the Israeli occupying power, and it was also alarmed at the persecutions that the Palestinian people in general were suffering, in flagrant disregard of international human rights instruments. The continued occupation, the siege of Gaza, and the construction of settlements were examples of these violations.

38. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya was also very concerned at the deteriorating situation of women in Africa, due to the spread of disease, hunger and poverty. It urged the international community to pay more attention to the situation of these women and to help them overcome the crisis that was preventing them from achieving their potential in the areas of education, health and development, under conditions of safety and security. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya was calling for an end to violence against women in all its forms, especially during armed conflicts. In particular, it condemned the traffic in human beings and violence against female migrants, and it had joined the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking.

39. **Mrs. Cho Hyung-hwa** (Republic of Korea) said that significant progress had been made during the year in promoting women's rights, with the boosting of United Nations resources and the redoubling of efforts to improve maternal health. The Republic of Korea welcomed the creation of UN Women and hoped that this new entity would make the UN system more accountable and effective in responding to gender issues. Her country also approved the creation by the Human Rights Council of a working group to examine the question of discrimination against women in legislation.

40. Regretting the slow progress towards the millennium goal relating to maternal health, which could be blamed primarily on insufficient investment, Mrs. Cho said that health was not only a fundamental right but also an indispensable element for empowering women. The Republic of Korea welcomed the Secretary-General's launch of the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health. For its part, it would increase spending on maternal, newborn and child health.

41. Efforts to improve the status of women continued to face obstacles, however, including the fact that the majority of children not in school were girls and the

fact that women represented the majority of poor people in the world, with increasing numbers of them living below the poverty threshold.

42. Since the 1960s, the Government of the Republic of Korea had been striving to reinforce women's political and economic capacities, and had been taking account of their needs and interests in the planning of national policies. Women's empowerment had been mainstreamed at all stages of the national development plan's implementation, particularly in the fields of education, employment, culture, international co-operation and social life. Political parties were required to ensure that women accounted for at least 50% of candidates presented for general elections.

43. In the current situation, the international community must give thought to the status of disabled women, women refugees, and women living below the poverty threshold, as well as to the problem of violence against women. It was to be hoped that these problems would be effectively addressed in the context of global collaboration for making gender equality a reality.

44. Speaking on behalf of a youth delegation from the Republic of Korea, Ms. Kim Jiyeon said that her country's government had adopted various measures, including laws for promoting gender equality. She stressed the importance of education in achieving the principle of gender equality throughout life. To be effectively assimilated at an early age, that principle must be enshrined in school programmes and publicized in the media, particularly via the Internet and online social networks. Sexist stereotypes continued to hinder adolescents in achieving their potential, and boys and girls alike must be encouraged to follow courses of study traditionally reserved to one sex or the other. Educating young people in such questions as pregnancy and childbirth could help protect women and their families. There was also a need to correct the disinformation that many teenagers were receiving, especially over the Internet. Teenagers who had adopted the principle of gender equality could play a key role in society.

45. **Mr. Butt** (Pakistan), quoting from one of the reports presented by the Secretary-General on the different aspects of the advancement of women, said that violence against women had its origin in the historically unequal power relationships between men and women, and that all forms of violence against women constituted a major impediment to the ability of

women to make use of the capabilities. He hoped that progress towards achieving gender equality and women's empowerment would be significantly reinforced by creation of UN Women, and he announced that, having presented its candidacy for the Executive Board of the new entity, Pakistan was counting on the support of other member States.

46. Pakistan's constitution guaranteed equal rights for all citizens, without discrimination based on caste, colour, sex or race. It also guaranteed women's participation in all areas of public life. Successive governments had adopted measures to improve the status of women and to eliminate discrimination in both public and private sectors so as to ensure their progressive empowerment. The national strategy focused on the following actions: reducing the feminization of poverty, promoting gender equality, ending violence against women, and adopting appropriate legislation to remedy structural imbalances and empower women.

47. Pakistan had been the first Muslim country to elect a female prime minister, and the first country in South Asia to have a woman serve as speaker of the National Assembly. Women held 17 of the 100 seats in the Senate, and 76 of the 338 in the lower house. In addition, three Pakistani women had mandates under special procedures. A national commission on the status of women had been created in 2000, and a procedure to give it fully autonomous status was under way. Pakistan had adopted laws protecting the rights of women, including one protecting women from harassment in the workplace. It had also launched the Benazir Programme of income support, which provided aid to poor female heads of household.

48. The recent 15-year review of implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action had highlighted the progress made in working out policies at the global, regional and national levels, but it had also revealed persistent inequalities among regions and within countries in all 12 critical areas of the action plan. The global economic crisis has worsened the feminization of poverty. With the 2015 deadline just five years away, the international community must redouble its efforts to achieve all the millennium goals relating to the status of women. Above all, it was important to preserve international co-operation and partnerships in this regard. The international community must honour its commitments relating to official development assistance, it must extend debt

relief, and it must open markets in particular to female entrepreneurs.

49. It was important to bear in mind the situation of women who were suffering the consequences of armed conflicts and foreign occupation. While many international bodies had considered their fate in recent years, the perpetrators of crimes against humanity continued to enjoy impunity under some countries' national security laws. The competent bodies of the United Nations system must strive to remedy the situation of those women, who were in effect faced with double discrimination.

50. **Mrs. Rubiales de Chamorro** (Nicaragua) welcomed the creation of UN Women and the appointment of Michelle Bachelet as its Executive Director.

51. Eager to promote gender equality and women's rights, the revolutionary government of Nicaragua was taking account in its policies of the provisions of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcome documents from the 23rd special session of the General Assembly, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its protocols.

52. When it came to the exercise of power and decision-making, Nicaragua had launched a programme (Modelo del Poder Ciudadano) to empower women by having them participate directly in decision-making at the national and international levels. More than 69,000 women were currently participating in that programme. Mrs. Chamorro also noted that in the 2008 municipal elections 23 women had been elected as mayors, while parliament had 19 female deputies and more than 45% of management positions in the country were held by women.

53. In the education field, the reestablishment of free schooling had made it possible to enrol more than 800,000 girls and boys. Thanks to the national literacy campaign (Yo Si Puedo, "Yes I Can"), supported by the sister republic of Cuba, more than 235,000 women had learned to read and write.

54. Nicaragua insisted on the right to free health care. Its family and community-based programme of health promotion and protection had reduced maternal and infant mortality since 2006. Since 2007, a number of infectious diseases had been eradicated and, in 2008,

734 sero-positive persons, including 54 pregnant women, had received antiretroviral treatment.

55. When it came to combating violence against women, Nicaragua had created special police stations to assist women, and shelters for victims of family violence.

56. The Nicaraguan government was convinced that gender equality and women's empowerment were key factors in social and economic development. It was striving to reduce extreme poverty and hunger through its national human rights programme, which asserted the right to food security and sovereignty. The goal was to encourage sustainable development in the context of the global crisis, through programmes designed to give 80,000 rural families access to the means of production over a period of five years. These programmes had benefited from the solidarity and co-operation of the Bolivarian People's Alliance (ALBA). According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Nicaragua was one of 16 countries that had reduced their poverty index.

57. No matter how hard a country might strive to achieve the millennium development goals, it would be condemned to poverty and under-development if it were denied its right to development. Consequently, as long as co-operation from developed countries remained limited and saddled with political considerations, women would be unable to exercise their basic rights fully.

58. Mrs. Chamorro welcomed adoption of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. Putting an end to that scourge, of which women and children were the principal victims, would require more co-ordinated action at the global level, in accordance with the principle of shared but differentiated responsibility.

59. Finally, Nicaragua was concerned that countries were adopting laws to criminalize migrations, thereby exposing women to violence and discrimination. It found unacceptable the capitalist principle that granted freedom of circulation to goods and capital but prohibited the movement of workers. The best way to forestall migrations was to invest in human beings in developing countries, instead of building repressive walls, at a time when countries claimed to be fighting for the essential freedoms of human beings.

60. **Mrs. Bouhamidi** (Morocco) welcomed the creation of UN Women and noted with satisfaction the measures proposed in the Secretary-General's report on the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women, intended to reduce the frequency and repercussions of acts of violence against women. In 2008, as part of its efforts towards the millennium development goals, Morocco had launched a "multisectoral programme to combat gender-based violence by empowering women and girls", which involved an analysis of the phenomenon of violence, the offer of services to the victims, legislative reforms, and public awareness campaigns.

61. Mrs. Bouhamidi stressed the importance both of protecting women and girls in conflict situations and of promoting the role of women in peace-building and national reconstruction, as well as in the economic and social development of society.

62. Promoting the role and the rights of women was the centrepiece of the Moroccan government's efforts, as was evident in the many legal and institutional reforms enshrining the principle of gender equality (notably in the Family Code, the Moroccan Nationality Code, and the electoral law), the presence of ever more women in representative, executive and judicial institutions, implementation of a national strategy and action plan, public awareness campaigns, and annual publication of a report on gender equality.

63. **Mrs. Murphy** (Holy See) said that, while much remained to be done, there had been considerable progress in many countries in promoting the dignity of women. Increasing numbers of States are adopting comprehensive legislation imposing penalties for violence against women while providing assistance and protection for victims. It was essential to meet the short-term needs of victims, by protecting them against renewed acts of violence, by giving them full access to the justice system, and by attending to their psychological and spiritual health, while at the same time addressing their long-term needs, for example by providing them with housing and work.

64. Mrs. Murphy welcomed the creation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons and stressed the need for States to attack the conditions that made women and children vulnerable to trafficking, such as poverty and lack of employment and education opportunities. She considered that legislation on prostitution, child

pornography and sexual exploitation should be reinforced. The safety of trafficked persons and of their families must be guaranteed at all times. Lastly, legislation relating to human trafficking must be strengthened and enforced.

65. The recent report of the Secretary-General on obstetric fistula (A./65/268) recalled the importance of protecting the health of women, and especially of pregnant women and new mothers. Predicating aid to developing countries on the basis of acceptance of family planning methods not respectful of the human person did nothing to advance the health and well-being of women. What was needed was a human-centred approach that was fully respectful of the intrinsic dignity and worth of every person, from conception to natural death.

66. **Mrs. Andamo** (Thailand) said that gender equality and women's empowerment had been priorities for Thailand since the 1980s. In 2005 her country had achieved MDG 4 on eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education, and had reversed the girl/boy ratio in secondary and higher education. It was currently striving to achieve the so-called "MDG-plus" targets, which called in particular for doubling female representation in politics, at both the local and national levels.

67. At the domestic level, Thailand had made crucial amendments to existing laws and had implemented new ones to promote the rights of women, and in particular married or divorced women. A draft law on gender equality would prohibit any gender-based discrimination. At the regional level, Thailand had worked within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to create a commission for the promotion and protection of women's rights, with a view in particular to enforcing the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

68. The measures taken to promote gender equality and women's empowerment were aimed at all women, including women in detention, as evidenced by the exhibit organized by a princess of the royal family to publicize United Nations rules for the treatment of female prisoners and non-custodial measures for women offenders, known as the Bangkok Rules. The delegation of Thailand hoped that those rules would be adopted during the 65th session of the General Assembly.

69. With respect to violence against women, Thailand had amended its penal code to criminalize wider categories of sexual violence, and had adopted two new laws, on marital violence and on the prevention and suppression of human trafficking. The Thai government was currently mounting an awareness campaign under the slogan "Gender Equality Starts at Home".

70. When it came to combating human trafficking, Thailand was aware of the multinational dimension of the problem. It had signed memorandums of understanding with its neighbours and had participated in a series of regional meetings, in particular the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime. As the Secretary-General had recommended, Thailand considered it essential to enforce existing bilateral and multilateral agreements in order to combat trafficking in women and girls, but it also intended to conclude new agreements and, in this regard, it welcomed the recent adoption of the United Nations Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

71. Thailand was determined to achieve MDG 5 and had moved vigorously to ensure health care for poor rural mothers, with the result that maternal mortality had declined considerably. It had also taken steps in the area of child nutrition and breast-feeding, and had improved family planning, thereby reducing the risks of mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS. Thailand was currently considering a bill on reproductive health and, in this regard, it supported the Secretary-General's Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health, convinced that women's health was an essential factor for stability, peace and productivity.

72. Mrs. Andamo welcomed the creation of UN Women, and was fully supportive of its mission and of the appointment of Michelle Bachelet to the position of Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director.

73. **Mr. Zhumabayev** (Kazakhstan) congratulated Michelle Bachelet for her appointment as Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women. Kazakhstan saw the creation of this new entity as the "crowning achievement" of four years of negotiation and debate, and was convinced that it would give new impetus to promoting women's interests and their empowerment. It was also confident that the establishment of an Executive Board for UN Women would facilitate speedy adoption of measures

to remedy the urgent problems in the area of gender equality. Given the importance of that agency's role, Kazakhstan had decided to seek membership on the Board for the Asian Group.

74. In pursuit of MDG 3 (promoting gender equality and women's empowerment), Kazakhstan, following the example of other countries, had adopted laws to guarantee real equality between all citizens and to protect their rights and freedoms. Its strategy with respect to gender equality was based on two laws concerning guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for men and women, on one hand, and prevention of marital violence, on the other. A national commission had been appointed to co-ordinate the work of public agencies, civil society and international organizations. Kazakhstan was determined to promote gender equality and women's participation in national policymaking, and had placed these matters on the agenda of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, when it had held the chair.

75. Kazakhstan had made progress in empowering women. For example, women currently had a 52% presence in the business world, compared to 38% in 2000, and women's representation in the lower house of parliament had risen from 13% to 18%. Women also constituted 58% of employees of public agencies, and held 10.3% of management positions, a figure that was expected to rise to 30% by 2016.

76. Determined to become an advanced industrial country, prosperous and responsible, Kazakhstan had adopted a programme of accelerated industrial development. Women, who represented the better educated half of society, had a particular role to play in that process.

77. Lastly, Kazakhstan was committed to pursuing its efforts for gender equality by adhering to international standards, developing its legislation, and making its society more democratic.

78. **Mrs. Birabwa Haveland** (Norway) hailed the creation of UN Women and congratulated Michelle Bachelet on her appointment to the post of Under-Secretary-General. She hoped that UN Women would take the lead in ensuring that the various declarations and resolutions commemorated in 2010 were put to use and that, above all, it would improve their connection with the normative and regulatory framework and their implementation and application on the ground at the country level. Norway hoped that the new entity would

take a leading role in building the capacities of United Nations country teams, assisting the resident co-ordinators, and supporting national gender equality mechanisms and civil society to bring about change. Norway stood ready to contribute its political, technical and financial support.

79. Gender equality was a moral issue. In order to attack the underlying causes of inequality, the relations between men and women would have to be transformed, and men and boys must be engaged as agents of change to that end. Gender equality was also a question of rights, including women's fundamental rights. UN Women should therefore strengthen the links between the Commission on the Status of Women, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the special procedures. Gender equality was also a question of economic growth and social development. There was a clear and well demonstrated correlation between women's health, their education level and their participation in the workforce, on one hand, and a nation's economic performance. The experience of Norway and other countries had proven that a country did not have to be rich to have policies that promoted social justice and equal opportunities. The crucial factor for success was political will.

80. There were a number of reports to show that the disadvantaged in most parts of the world were women, children, in particular girls, and persons with disabilities. Progress had been made but it was uneven. It was time, therefore, to mainstream gender equality and disability considerations in all social development policies. It was difficult, however, to talk about women's rights if women continued to be exposed to violence. Norway strongly supported the Secretary-General's global campaign to end violence against women and it had taken measures to fight the menace at home and abroad.

81. Norway was determined to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. In particular, it had taken special responsibility to reduce child mortality under five years and improve women's health (goals 4 and 5), and in this connection it was actively supporting the Secretary-General's Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health. Various reports showed that gender equality was the single most important catalyst for change. Norway had made this a priority and it urged all nations to follow its example by implementing the Convention on the Elimination of

All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security.

82. **Mr. Rastam** (Malaysia) said that 2010 held great significance for gender equality and women's empowerment, as it marked the 15th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action and the 10th anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, and it had seen the creation of the new United Nations Entity on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). It must be recognized, however, that obstacles to implementation of commitments taken in that context still persisted in 2010. Fortunately, women's issues were no longer isolated from the rest of government policy but were an integral part of national programmes, in recognition that gender equality was not only a goal in itself but also a means of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Recalling that Malaysia had chaired the Economic and Social Council in 2010, Mr. Rastam hailed the Ministerial Declaration on international implementation of the agreed objectives and commitments with respect to gender equality and women's empowerment, adopted by the Council, calling it a strong, action-oriented text.

83. Considerable progress had been made in Malaysia on the gender equality front. Thus, 97% of girls were enrolled in primary education, and female enrolment in higher education was 61%, while the female literacy rate in 2008 was 89.5%. In 2008, female life expectancy was 76.4 years and the maternal mortality rate was 0.3 per 1000 live births. To combat poverty, a microcredit programme for indigent women had been instituted in 1987. Women currently constituted 36% of the workforce and this proportion was expected to grow under the influence of childcare grants. When it came to combating violence against women, the government was pursuing a zero-tolerance policy combined with victim protection, and the Penal Code had been amended in 2006 to include various categories of marital violence.

84. Women's participation in the decision-making process – they held 24.8% of management positions in 2010 – was encouraged by a law dating from 2004. In 2001 the federal constitution had been amended to prohibit gender-based discrimination. There were still challenges, however, relating notably to the impact of the economic crisis and the spread of HIV/AIDS,

which must be addressed in collaboration with civil society, including NGOs.

85. **Mrs. Alsaleh** (Syrian Arab Republic) supported the declaration made by the delegate of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. She said that the question of the advancement of women was crucial, for it lay at the basis of sustainable development and of society. She also stressed the importance of specific national, regional, religious and cultural characteristics when it came to implementing activities and strategies for the advancement of women.

86. Determined to honour its international obligations, the Syrian government had established institutional mechanisms to supervise and monitor those activities, particularly as they related to the protection of women and children. The authorities had established a comprehensive national project to combat poverty and had launched a study to identify rural women's needs, as well as a national strategy for reproductive health, with objectives in line with the National Population Strategy and the Health Ministry's Strategy for 2001-2020 and consistent with goals agreed at the international level. The Syrian Arab Republic had introduced interregional, regional and national training programmes and seminars to raise public awareness of international instruments for the advancement of women.

87. In this context, it was imperative to address the issue of liberating the occupied Syrian territory of Golan and to establish a just and lasting peace, in order to put an end to the suffering of the people concerned. In this regard, attention must be paid to the situation of women, mainly Syrian women, living in the occupied territory: this was something that the Secretary-General had not mentioned in his report on intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women, although the Syrian government had sent him several letters with detailed information on the question. Women in the occupied Golan were victims of arbitrary arrest and detention and were separated from their families, as they were not authorized to cross that zone to return to their country, and even humanitarian cases needed authorization from the occupying power. Mrs. Alsaleh reiterated the need for a holistic approach to combating all forms of violence against women, including women living under foreign occupation, and she called upon Israel to respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law. She hailed the creation of the new UN

Women, and expressed the hope that it would address, as it must, the situation of Syrian, Palestinian and Lebanese women living under foreign occupation.

88. **Mrs. Ojiambo** (Kenya) supported the respective declarations of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and of Malawi on behalf of the African Group. She said that her country had made considerable progress toward gender equality and women's empowerment since adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, establishing legal and institutional frameworks and incorporating the gender perspective in its development policies, especially in its "Vision 2030" development plan. It had also established a national commission on gender equality and development, a fund for female entrepreneurs, and a social protection fund, and had implemented a national action plan on equality, which called for the appointment of equality officers within government ministries and enterprises. The new Constitution of Kenya required that at least 15% of the national budget should be devolved to the provinces, with a few in particular to helping women, who accounted for the majority of the informal SME sector, and guaranteeing citizens access to land on a footing of equality and with respect for ownership rights. Parliament had also been asked to adopt legislation recognizing and protecting matrimonial property.

89. The Kenyan government had adopted an action plan to prevent violence and to assist victims, by facilitating their access to justice, in particular through the National Commission on Human Rights and Equality, which had the power to receive complaints and order reparations. The issue of trafficking in women and girls remained a great challenge in conflict or post-conflict situations in Africa. Kenya welcomed the adoption in August 2010 of the United Nations Global Plan of Action against trafficking in persons and was committed to transposing into its domestic legislation the provisions of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Additional Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. Lastly, Mrs. Ojiambo praised the work of UNIFEM, UNDP, UNFPA and UNAIDS, which were helping developing countries to achieve gender equality and women's advancement.

90. **Mrs. Chisanga-Kondolo** (Zambia) supported the respective declarations of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, of Malawi on behalf of the

African Group, and of the United Republic of Tanzania on behalf of the Southern African Development Community. She considered it appropriate in 2010 to reinforce international commitments relating to gender equality and women's empowerment, but also to assess the remaining gaps and how to fill them. Promoting gender equality was an important feature of Zambia's development strategy. She drew attention to creation of the Citizen Economic Empowerment Fund intended to promote women's access to financing. Zambian financial institutions were also striving to eliminate the bottlenecks that women still faced in the banking and financial sectors. On another front, a land reform programme called for granting 30% of property titles to women, and a positive discrimination programme that awarded 25% of scholarships to girls was still in effect in the education field.

91. Mrs. Chisanga-Kondolo said that Zambia, which had ratified the CEDAW and other pertinent regional instruments, was determined to honour its commitments under those instruments, and it supported the Secretary-General's "UNiTe to End Violence against Women" campaign. As well, Parliament was currently examining a draft law against sexist violence and a national action plan against that type of violence had been established. Lastly, Zambia had recently adopted a law against human trafficking, one that penalized traffickers and provided protection for victims. With respect to the Millennium Development Goals, violence against women and the feminization of HIV/AIDS remained important challenges for Zambia: 16% of women (versus 12% of men) were affected by the virus, and the maternal mortality rate was 449 per 100,000 live births. Mrs. Chisanga-Kondolo hoped that discussions in the context of the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health would address these challenges. Welcoming the creation of UN Women, she called on the international community to honour its development commitments.

92. **Mrs. Melón** (Argentina) supported the declarations of the Group of 77 and China and of the Rio Group. She saw the year 2010 as a milestone, marking the 15th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as well as the bicentenary of the Argentine Republic.

93. Since adoption of the 1991 law on parliamentary quotas, Argentina had made progress in terms of women's participation in political life. Mrs. Melón listed the positions of responsibility held by women in

her country, such as the defence, the industry and tourism and the social development portfolios, and the presidency of the central bank, as well as the presidency of the Republic. This stronger female presence had made it possible to adopt a series of laws in favour of women, such as the law on labour union quotas, the law against human trafficking for purposes of sexual or occupational exploitation, and the law on prevention and elimination of violence in interpersonal relations. Mrs. Melón also mentioned the Social Security programme, which allowed indigent children to go to school and guaranteed social and medical coverage both to children and to the elderly, and which was benefiting 2 million Argentines, women in particular.

94. A campaign for gender equality and against violence had been launched in 2009. The government was also planning to create an observatory on violence against women and to take steps to combat human trafficking. Mrs. Melón renewed her country's commitment to implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, and resolutions 1820 (2008) and 1888 (2009) on conflict-related sexual violence. She pointed out that it was at Argentina's initiative that the question of women, peace and security had been placed on the agenda of the special meeting of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and that of the Inter-American Commission of Women, and it was in this context that the Inter-American Year of Women had been proclaimed. Mrs. Melón congratulated Michelle Bachelet on her appointment as head of UN Women, and declared Argentina ready to back her in her new responsibilities.

95. **Mr. Hilmi** (Iraq) said the empowerment of women was an integral part of the Iraqi government's plan of action, which had been adopted in accordance with relevant international instruments and the principle of equal rights and duties. He paid tribute to Iraqi women, who in the face of terrorism and violence had shown their courage, supporting their families, carrying on their work responsibilities, and holding high-level posts in the new democratic regime.

96. The Iraqi authorities had adopted plans and strategies to create associations to protect women and make them aware of their rights. There were plans to create national women's protection centres, under the supervision of the Prime Minister, as well as centres for the re-adaptation, guidance and assistance of

victims of violence. The government had also launched awareness campaigns to combat female genital mutilation and crimes of honour. Prison sentences would be applied for forced marriages and trafficking in persons, especially women. The constitutional guarantee of fundamental human rights was the most important element of protection for women and children, who represented the demographic majority and the most vulnerable population groups in the country.

97. **Mr. Hilmi** noted that shortcomings in the health system had had harmful repercussions on women's rights, not to mention terrorism, which had produced thousands of widows and orphans. With the reinforcement of the institutional framework (including creation of the women's ministry and the parliamentary committee on women and children) and the legal framework (including adoption of the citizenship law in 2006), there was no longer any gender-based discrimination. With respect to participation in public life, 27.2% of parliamentarians were women; three women, including two female ministers of state, were part of the government; and 87 women held positions of responsibility. Progress had also been made in this area in Kurdistan.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.