

Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

Mr. Shalgham (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spokein Arabic*): At the outset, I wish to welcome you, Mr. President, among us and express our appreciation to you for conducting our work in this important meeting. We thank the delegation of Viet Nam for organizing this important meeting. I would also like to thank the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Executive Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the representative of the non governmental organizations for their valuable statements. Almost nine years have passed since the Security Council adopted resolution 1325 (2000), during which it also adopted several resolutions and presidential statements on the protection of women during and after armed conflict, their participation in the prevention of conflict and post-conflict decision-making and their role in the economic and social spheres. However, we are still far from reaching the desired goals. Every field report and all the data indicate that women and children are increasingly the main victims of conflict, often being the main targets of combatants and armed groups who deliberately subject them to various forms of aggression, human rights violations and forced displacement. Unfortunately, those practices often continue after the end of conflict. In addressing the empowerment of women and their special needs, especially in post-conflict situations, we would be remiss if we failed to condemn the physical and psychological suffering of Palestinian women as a result of the Zionist occupying authority's continuous violations of their human rights, its violations of international law and its recent crimes in Gaza.

We strongly condemn the plethora of ongoing rampant acts of violence and aggression against women and girls during and after armed conflict, including those taking place in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and other regions. Libya would also like to underscore the importance of promoting the role of women in the political, social and economic spheres during peacetime, as women are the main guarantors in preventing the outbreak of conflict, anarchy and insecurity and the ensuing crimes and human rights violations.

Libya has therefore launched several initiatives to empower women and enhance their role in African countries. In cooperation with Nigeria and Cuba, we have established a South-South health-care programme. In 2006, we launched the Al-Qadhafi programme for African youth, women and children, which places particular emphasis on health care, education, vocational training and human rights. Based on our belief in the important role of women in civic peace and development, our laws provide for full equality between men and women. Women in Libya face no obstacle to being legally employed, and Libyan women serve in senior posts in the army, police and judicial system.

On the continental level, we would like to reaffirm the commitment of all African States to gender equality and the empowerment of women, in implementation of the African Union's Constitutive Act. In that regard, the African Union will soon launch its African Women's Decade for the period 2010 to 2020. In addition, I am pleased to inform the Council that the African Union's Department of Peace and Security has issued a framework document on postconflict development and reconstruction that includes guidelines on

needs assessment. Both documents contain strategies and procedures for the employment of women and the reinvigoration of the employment sector. The Economic Commission for Africa's department for women's development and gender equality will be the focal point responsible for women's issues and their participation in African Union activities, including the promotion of gender equality and equal access by men and women to senior positions and public office.

In 2004, the African Union adopted an action plan at Ouagadougou that gave special priority to the empowerment of women, their access to the workplace, their effective participation in the adoption of poverty reduction strategies, the mainstreaming of gender issues in all poverty-reduction programmes and policies and the promotion of employment and equal opportunities for men and women in the area of employment. That plan included the following proposals for implementation.

First, women should be encouraged to participate in free enterprise activities through the provision of primary skills training and by increasing their access to credit and capital. Secondly, a culture of free enterprise should be supported by providing assistance to women entrepreneurs. Thirdly, support should be mobilized for the implementation of legislation that provides for equal rights between men and women with respect to land ownership, including guarantees for women's rights to credit, inheritance and ownership, counseling and services.

There is no doubt that the numerous resolutions and presidential statements that have been adopted by the Security Council constitute a major step towards protecting women and promoting their rights. However, it is not enough merely to adopt resolutions and statements; they must be implemented. That requires coordination and cooperation between the relevant bodies of the United Nations, civil society institutions, task forces of specialized agencies.

Regional organizations and relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations to empower women in peacekeeping, peacebuilding, humanitarian and development processes. That will make an effective contribution to States and to their implementation of legislation and activities to prevent gender-based violence and create an environment conducive to accountability and reporting on women's status. It is a source of concern that the promotion of the rights of women and gender equality is often not considered a priority in the aftermath of conflict. It is for that reason that we have emphasized the importance of women's development and empowerment on the national level and in all areas of life.