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Chair: Mr. Dempsey (Vice-Chair) (Canada)

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In the absence of Mr. Hilale (Morocco), Mr. Dempsey (Canada), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 29: Advancement of women (continued)
(A/70/38 and A/70/124)

(a) Advancement of women (continued) (A/70/204,
A/70/205, A/70/209 and A/C.3/70/3)

(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/70/180)

1. **Ms. Al-salami** (United Arab Emirates) said that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development included a call for the incorporation of both a stand-alone goal on gender equality and women's empowerment and a gender perspective in all of the Sustainable Development Goals. At the Global Leaders Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, held to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, more than 80 heads of State and Government had affirmed their commitment to closing the gender gap and empowering women. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) had organized the meeting and played a leading role in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action. Her delegation would be hosting a special event on 14 October to celebrate the release of the Global Study on the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), organized jointly with the Group of Friends of the Global Study. In recent weeks, her country's mission had held a series of symposiums on women, peace and security in cooperation with the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, which had produced recommendations for incorporation into the Global Study. Earlier in the year, the United Arab Emirates had hosted a meeting of experts in reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund. The Abu Dhabi Declaration had been issued at that meeting.

2. Recent accomplishments at the national level included the launch of the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Emirati Women in the United Arab Emirates, 2015-2021; the establishment of the Gender Balance Council; and the drafting of a resolution on

promotion of the rights of domestic workers. Her country was committed to assisting other States with implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action by providing official development assistance and special assistance for programmes and projects for women. It supported United Nations efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a tool of war and to provide assistance to women in the Syrian refugee camps in Jordan. The Sheikha Fatima Fund for Refugee Women and Children provided a decent life for women and children victims of crises and disasters.

3. **Ms. Rodríguez Pineda** (Guatemala) said that it was time to redouble efforts for the advancement of women, while ensuring that men and boys were involved in the process. Her delegation welcomed the inclusion of an independent Sustainable Development Goal on achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls. To achieve that Goal, it would be necessary to address multidimensional poverty; improve access to affordable housing, health services, safe drinking water and credit; and ensure women's active participation in decisions affecting their well-being. In the absence of opportunities, women became vulnerable to human trafficking and sexual exploitation, as well as sexual harassment in the workplace and domestic employment under conditions that violated their basic rights. Providing education and training for women could open the doors to secure employment. Furthermore, quality education empowered not only the learner but also future generations. Gender-based discrimination impeded women's access to justice, which was essential for the realization of her rights and the construction of just and peaceful societies. In that connection, her delegation welcomed general recommendation No. 33 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the subject of women's access to justice.

4. **Ms. Rubiales de Chamorro** (Nicaragua) said that her Government's commitment to gender equality was evident in the recently adopted family code. Its policies, practices and projects had done much to restore the rights of women, who benefited, inter alia, from free education and health care, maternity homes, women's counselling offices, women's police units and programmes to assist families. Women were equitably represented in elected and appointed offices. In fact, according to the Global Gender Gap Report 2014 of the World Economic Forum, Nicaragua ranked alongside the Nordic countries for gender equality,

thanks to its solid performance in health, education and political and economic participation. Strategies to protect women and girls had resulted in a decline in complaints of violence and abuse. The Government had established community counselling offices, which aimed to promote the early detection and resolution of problems through dialogue, in full compliance with due process of law. It would continue to promote the ideals of Christianity and socialism and to base its policies and programmes on a shared-responsibilities model that empowered women to be agents of change.

5. **Ms. Abdullah** (Iraq) said that her country's Constitution enshrined the principles of equality and equal participation in all areas of life, including with respect to wages and public posts, and established a 25-per-cent quota for the representation of women in the Council of Representatives. Subsequent laws had granted women gender-specific privileges such as maternity leave. The Government had adopted a national strategy for the advancement of women, as well as strategies on women's health and on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. Gender units had been established in all ministries.

6. Iraq had also adopted a national strategy to combat violence against women. It had established special domestic violence courts and family police units. Shelters for abused women were operating throughout Iraq, and pro bono legal services were available for vulnerable women. Deplorably, terrorist organizations, including Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, had seized some areas of Iraq, where they had committed horrific crimes against women and young girls, including murder, kidnapping, trafficking and rape. They had also carried out public executions of women who had been active in politics or who had worked in the media or in the legal or medical professions. In the face of such violence, many families had fled and were now living in terrible conditions. With the help of friendly countries and international organizations, the Iraqi Government had made every effort to assist those families. Meanwhile, with the support of the Popular Mobilization Forces, the army had been able to take back many of the captured areas and liberate the people. However, it would need continued support to liberate the remaining areas and provide assistance to displaced women and children.

7. **Mr. Rattray** (Jamaica) said that his country was endeavouring to meet its obligations and goals for gender equality by, for example, revising its National Policy for Gender Equality and improving its social protection programmes. In the area of health care, it had made notable progress in preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV and reducing maternal and infant mortality. In education, it had achieved gender parity at the primary and secondary levels, while women accounted for around 70 per cent of tertiary-level students. Technical and vocational training institutions had intensified efforts to bridge the gap in women's participation in the workforce, particularly in non-traditional areas. Jamaica had long ago enacted legislation on equal pay for equal work and maternity leave with pay, and it had the highest percentage of women managers in the world. However, the proportion of women in positions of political leadership still lagged behind, prompting Parliament to establish a joint select committee to make recommendations on the subject.

8. With respect to violence against women, Jamaica was finalizing a national strategic plan of action to eliminate gender-based violence, focusing on prevention, protection, prosecution, punishment and redress. Increased collaboration between State institutions was streamlining the response to acts of violence and ensuring that perpetrators were held to account. Jamaica continued to support the work of non-governmental organizations in gender-related areas.

9. **Mr. Canay** (Turkey) said that the equality of women and men before the law was one of the basic principles of the Turkish Constitution, which had recently been amended to introduce the concept of positive discrimination for vulnerable groups such as women, children and persons with disabilities. An active contributor to international efforts for the advancement of women, Turkey had helped to fund the establishment of the UN-Women Europe and Central Asia Regional Office in Istanbul. In 2011, it had been the first State to sign and ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and had subsequently enacted a law broadening the scope of previous legislation to cover all women victims regardless of their marital status. In 2015, the draft of a new, stronger national action plan on combating violence against women, which incorporated, inter alia, an effective monitoring and assessment mechanism, had been submitted to all stakeholders for

their comments. With respect to the rights of girls, Turkey had been one of the sponsors of General Assembly resolution 66/170 establishing the International Day of the Girl Child.

10. Turkey was providing refuge to more than 2 million Syrian refugees, as well as humanitarian assistance to millions of people in the Syrian Arab Republic. To date, more than 66,000 Syrian babies had been born in medical facilities inside temporary protection centres in Turkey, and more than 200,000 Syrian children were enrolled in its schools. Women and children had an important role to play in the rebuilding of Syria and its future.

11. **Ms. Kirianoff Crimmins** (Switzerland) said that gender equality and women's empowerment, including women's equal participation in decision-making, women's sexual and reproductive health care and the combating of all forms of violence against women, were priorities for sustainable, inclusive economic growth. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should be implemented in a consistent manner, and the Commission on the Status of Women would play a central role as the body responsible for follow-up of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

12. To combat the growing trend of sexual exploitation of migrant women workers, States should take concerted administrative, legal and social action and should work to prevent the circumstances that drove migration. They should also ratify the International Labour Organization Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).

13. Switzerland welcomed the ongoing efforts to improve the situation of rural women, for whom the lack of access to maternal health care and the practice of female genital mutilation continued to pose major problems in certain regions. For effective and sustainable rural development, women must enjoy the same rights as men with respect to ownership, inheritance and natural resources and must participate fully at all levels of decision-making. It was also vital to recognize the value of women's unpaid work. Lastly, rural women were often the first to feel the effects of climate change and should be taken into consideration in the context of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which would take place in December 2015.

14. **Ms. Dagher** (Lebanon) said that, in view of the critical importance of women's empowerment and gender equality for sustainable development, her country welcomed the renewed commitment expressed by the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-ninth session and the attention given to gender issues in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As an early leader in women's rights, Lebanon decried the violations of the rights of women and girls that were occurring across the region and reiterated its support for Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. While the United Nations system had begun to integrate a gender perspective in its work, thanks in part to the efforts of UN-Women, much more remained to be done.

15. Despite many challenges, including the presence of more than 1.5 million refugees, Lebanon continued to work in close collaboration with civil society and regional and international organizations to promote the rights of women and girls and to ensure that they enjoyed equal opportunities and could participate fully in the country's development. In November 2015, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women would consider Lebanon's periodic report, which set out a series of legislative and administrative measures, the most recent of which was a law on domestic violence. Girls' education remained a national priority, as did the protection and empowerment of women and girls, particularly in rural and disadvantaged environments.

16. **Ms. Vadiati** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that Member States must seize the opportunity presented by the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to strive for women's advancement and empowerment through more focused development policies and programmes reflecting national values, realities and peculiarities. UN-Women would play a unique role in the implementation of the new agenda. Further efforts were needed within the United Nations system where, according to the Secretary-General's report on measures taken and progress achieved in follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (A/70/180), little progress had been made in integrating a gender perspective with respect to security questions, political issues, administrative matters, narcotic drugs and disarmament.

17. In her region, the rapid spread of violent extremism and takfirism presented an imminent threat to the rights and lives of women and girls, who were also among the displaced and homeless fleeing the horrors of war. Furthermore, such extremism threatened to spill into other regions.

18. Violence against women was rampant in all corners of the world. The disproportionate number of women belonging to racial and ethnic minorities who were imprisoned in the United States was a reminder that violence against women was a global pandemic without exception.

19. Her Government was determined to ensure a more central role for women in every sphere. Although Iranian women's achievements in education, medicine, research, science and entrepreneurship were exemplary, women were underrepresented in political and decision-making positions and in the labour market in general. To correct that situation, her Government was working to create an enabling environment and provide women and girls with even greater access to education, economic resources and employment opportunities.

20. **Mr. Diyar Khan** (Pakistan) said it was time to set a course for future action on women's empowerment and gender equality. Pakistan applauded UN-Women for highlighting the challenges ahead, and thanked the Entity and the Government of China for organizing the Global Leaders Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. In his speech at that meeting, the Prime Minister of Pakistan had affirmed his Government's commitment to building institutions that were responsive to women's needs, removing the obstacles to their economic empowerment and eliminating the threat of violence.

21. Pakistan had made significant progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action. It had established autonomous commissions on the status of women, set up women's development departments in the provincial governments and passed laws on domestic violence and workplace harassment. Women accounted for approximately 25 per cent of the National Assembly and 15 per cent of the Senate, while 30 per cent of seats had been reserved for them in all three tiers of local government. Women had equal access to government microfinance and credit schemes, and more women were pursuing higher education and professional careers than ever before.

22. **Ms. Barghouti** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that Israel's continuing military occupation and its illegal, repressive and racist practices and policies over more than 48 years had exacerbated the deteriorating political, economic and social conditions and the state of tension and violence. As noted in Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/13, the Israeli occupation remained the major obstacle to the advancement of Palestinian women. In addition to its direct impact, the occupation impeded the implementation of national strategies, plans and programmes for the advancement and empowerment of women. Nevertheless, Palestinian women would continue their march towards equality and their goals of ending the occupation and living in a sovereign State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital.

23. The aggravation of tensions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, had become extremely dangerous owing to the continuous provocations, attacks and flagrant violations of the rights of Palestinians by the occupying military forces and extremist settlers, which had catastrophic implications for the living conditions of Palestinian women and children. She appealed to the international community to provide protection for them and to compel Israel to put an immediate end to its violations of international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law.

24. **Ms. Aultman** (Observer for the Holy See) said that, despite the commendable progress made, women everywhere were far more likely than men to lack basic resources, including education, health care and social protections, and in vast areas of the world they also lacked clean water, sanitation services and sometimes even food, as well as employment opportunities and decent work. Furthermore, women and children were particularly vulnerable in situations of armed conflict, and with the multitude of conflicts raging worldwide, growing numbers faced abuse of every kind, including heinous crimes at the hands of violent terrorist groups. She reiterated the Pope's appeal for an end to social exclusion, which was at the root of many evils particularly affecting women and girls, including human trafficking, the marketing of human organs and tissues, sexual exploitation, slave labour and prostitution.

25. The Catholic Church had long worked to foster development by providing affordable, quality education and access to food, water and sanitation throughout the world, and many of its programmes and institutions

were intended for or particularly benefited women. The Holy See supported efforts that upheld the dignity of the human person from the beginning of life at conception to its natural end and was a strong proponent of the importance of women's health. Indeed, women's health should be at the forefront of all development agendas. Also, men and boys should be made more aware of their role and responsibilities in the advancement of women. Her delegation encouraged the United Nations to recruit more women for preventive diplomacy, mediation, peacekeeping missions and peacebuilding.

26. **Mr. Emvula** (Namibia) said that women should be equal agents and beneficiaries of development. Gender equality and the advancement of women were enshrined in Namibia's Constitution and implemented in its laws, policies and institutions. His Government had recently revised the national gender policy to emphasize gender equality in the family and the role of women in peacebuilding, conflict resolution and natural disaster management. The national coordination mechanism, which implemented the policy, ensured that all stakeholders were included. The Government was also implementing gender-responsive budgeting.

27. Thanks to an effective action plan, close to half the members of the National Assembly were women. Namibia's Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister were women, as were the heads of several important ministries and over 40 per cent of local councillors. Implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) had increased the number of Namibian women participating in United Nations peacekeeping missions. To address continued violence against women, his Government was launching a revised zero tolerance media campaign with the support of its partners and key stakeholders, including civil society organizations, and had established a system for collecting data on violence against women. Women and child protection units in every region were staffed with trained police officers as well as doctors and nurses equipped to administer HIV post-exposure prophylaxis to rape victims. To improve the situation of rural women, a grant programme for income-generating activities had been introduced, and the old-age pension had been increased by two thirds.

28. **Mr. Joshi** (India) said that, in the spirit of its Constitution, India had mainstreamed a gender perspective in its national planning, budgeting and legislation and was focusing on fighting deep-rooted

social prejudices and stereotypes. At the local level, more than 1.5 million women were serving in elected political office. Numerous laws had been enacted specifically for women and girls, including laws protecting them against all forms of violence, sexual harassment in the workplace, human trafficking and, for the girl child in particular, child marriage and sexual offences and exploitation.

29. Rural women benefited from the world's largest national poverty eradication programme, as well as a national rural employment scheme which employed equal numbers of men and women, with equal pay. Thanks to the Prime Minister's national scheme to ensure access to financial services, thousands of women had been empowered economically. India's national rural health programme had contributed significantly to the decline in infant and maternal mortality, and its programme to provide universal access to quality education had achieved gender parity at the primary and upper primary levels. Another programme focused on education and improving the child sex ratio, while another encouraged parents to open a savings account for their daughters' future needs. In response to violence against women and girls, the Government had established one-stop centres to support women affected by violence as well as a 24-hour helpline. Anti Human Trafficking Units were being set up throughout the country, and a comprehensive scheme provided for prevention of trafficking and the rescue, rehabilitation and reintegration of trafficking victims.

30. **Ms. Bardaoui** (Tunisia) said that, building on Tunisia's Personal Status Code of 1956, the Constitution of 2014 enshrined the equality of men and women. Despite Tunisia's recognition of women's essential role in building a tolerant, solidary, modern society and its longstanding commitment to women's advancement, disparities remained between rural and urban women, and women continued to have limited access to decision-making positions. Her Government had taken steps to address those problems by setting up institutional mechanisms to improve the situation of women, establishing a national observatory to collect and analyse gender-disaggregated data and formulating a national action plan on gender integration. It had also set up mechanisms to improve the portrayal of women in the media and textbooks, and it was working more closely with civil society and with women's and development organizations on the design,

implementation and monitoring of programmes for women. 30. In closing, she paid tribute to the many courageous and determined Tunisian women who had left their mark on history, from Queen Dido, the founder of Carthage, to Ouided Bouchamaoui, one of the four joint recipients of the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize.

31. **Ms. Carías** (Honduras) said that, even though her country had not met all of the targets for the Millennium Development Goal of promoting gender equality and empowering women, it had made significant progress, and it was striving to implement its Second National Gender Equity and Equality Plan for 2010-2022 with the involvement of local governments, the private sector and international cooperation agencies and in accordance with the new Sustainable Development Goals. Honduras had met the gender parity targets for secondary and higher education, as well as for women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector, although there was still a gender gap in terms of remuneration. Since 2013, each political party had been required to help to fund leadership training for women, and beginning in 2016, women would have to be equally represented in party lists for leadership and elective posts. Furthermore, the social policies adopted as part of the “Better Life” programme, including those on conditional money transfers, housing, training, microcredit and technical support for starting new businesses, focused on women. Government job creation programmes enforced strict gender equality and inclusion requirements.

32. However, much of her Government’s attention had been focused on two alarming trends. The first was an unprecedented spike in domestic violence, which was being addressed by a national plan to prevent violence against women. The second was the skyrocketing numbers of feminicides, even as murder rates for the population as a whole declined. The Government was confident that the changes made in investigatory bodies, judicial institutions and the security sector would help to reduce those numbers.

33. **Mr. Kydyrov** (Kyrgyzstan) said that, as part of ongoing efforts to achieve gender equality and empower women, his Government had adopted a national strategy for gender equality covering the period until 2020, which gave priority to women’s economic development, education, access to justice and political equality. It had also adopted a national action plan for the implementation of Security Council

resolution 1325 (2000). As part of its gender equality campaign, it had committed to integrating a gender perspective in state and municipal human resources policies and to promoting and supporting women’s political participation and leadership by various means.

34. In 2013 a national council for gender development had been established to coordinate the development and implementation of gender policy. Women were guaranteed roughly 30 per cent of the seats in the Legislative Assembly and were increasing their representation at decision-making levels of the central government and the judiciary. To address violence against women, the administrative and criminal codes had been amended to toughen the penalties for domestic violence and bride kidnapping, and laws on reproductive rights and protection from domestic violence were being drafted. All draft laws underwent mandatory gender analysis prior to submission to the Legislative Assembly. In its concluding observations on Kyrgyzstan’s fourth periodic report (CEDAW/C/KGZ/CO/4), the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women had commended the progress made on legislative reform.

35. **Mr. Al-Douwelah** (Kuwait) said that, especially in view of the added responsibilities created by the new Sustainable Development Goals, it was important to strengthen the capacity of UN-Women so that it could fulfil its mandate of providing support and technical assistance. Under the Kuwaiti Constitution, all people were equal before the law in terms of duties and rights, and there was no discrimination on the basis of sex, origin, language or religion. Kuwaiti women were guaranteed equal pay for equal work, as well as special family and maternity leave. Actively involved in political issues, they had served as ministers, under-secretaries, ambassadors and members of diplomatic missions. They were joining community police forces in growing numbers and the Government was considering allowing their enlistment in the military, in non-combat positions.

36. Kuwait had ratified various international instruments relating to women’s rights, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

37. Kuwait supported the Secretary-General's efforts to end the suffering of women worldwide, including in particular Palestinian women, who needed access to food, education and health care. It would continue to provide material support to UN-Women, which played a vital role in empowering women and advancing their civil, political, economic and social rights.

38. **Ms. Guzmán Madera** (Dominican Republic) said that women's equality and empowerment were enshrined in her country's Constitution of 2010 and were an integral part of its national development strategy. Women received 70 per cent of the loans issued by the public microcredit bank and had significantly benefited from the President's surprise visits to communities, the new extended school day, during which children received free breakfasts and lunches, and the recently established free day care centres for preschool children, which gave mothers time to train for employment.

39. Laws had been passed to protect women against violence, require equal pay for equal work and recognize work in the home as an economic activity that created added value. A number of ministries and government offices had specific gender equality and equity lines in their budgets as part of a pilot programme for implementing a cross-cutting gender policy. The process would subsequently be implemented in other public institutions, with a view to eliminating gender inequality and discrimination against women by the year 2030.

40. **Ms. Yaguchi** (Japan) said that, in accordance with the Japanese Prime Minister's statement of intent to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session in 2013, Japan had spared no effort to empower women both at home and abroad. The target for leadership positions occupied by women in Japan was 30 per cent by 2020 and, accordingly, over 30 per cent of public servants hired since 2013 had been women. Japan had developed its own national action plan to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security and was hosting the recently opened UN-Women liaison office in Tokyo.

41. At the international level, her Government had earmarked 3 billion dollars for the advancement of women for the three-year period beginning in 2013. It had inserted language on the importance of promoting women's participation in its official development aid charter, had increased its contributions to UN-Women

tenfold and would continue to cooperate with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which was chaired by Yoko Hayashi. In 2015, Japan had once again hosted the World Assembly for Women, and the Government would push its agenda on women forward at the Group of Seven summit in Ise Shima in 2016.

42. **Ms. Grignon** (Kenya) said that women and girls' access to education, health care, decent work and representation in political and economic decision-making processes were catalysts for economic growth and essential for sustainable development. Women's equality and empowerment were enshrined in the Kenyan Constitution, which provided for at least one third of elective and appointed positions in Government to be held by women, and echoed in its progressive legal framework and public policies. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development resonated with Japan's development blueprint, Vision 2030, and would be incorporated into a revised medium-term plan.

43. Since 2013, women had been protected by the Kenya National Patients' Rights Charter and had enjoyed free maternal health care at all public health centres, leading to a 40 per cent increase in births at those facilities. Kenya had achieved universal enrolment at the primary school level and had boosted the number of girls continuing to the secondary level by eliminating tuition fees. It had established several funds aimed at empowering women economically and was also implementing affirmative action and gender-responsive budgeting to give women, young adults and persons with disabilities access to government procurement opportunities.

44. **Mr. Nguyen Duy Thanh** (Viet Nam) said that Viet Nam welcomed the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with a stand-alone goal on gender equality and women's empowerment. Women had played an essential role throughout Viet Nam's history and were a driving force of its economic and social development. They accounted for almost half of the labour force and a quarter of business leaders. They actively participated in policy-making and legislative processes, with many in senior leadership positions, and made up nearly a quarter of the members of the National Assembly.

45. Significant efforts were being made to give women equal access to economic and political opportunities, education and health care. In accordance

with the Constitution, which prohibited gender-based discrimination, laws had been enacted on gender equality and against domestic violence. Just 10 days previously, Viet Nam had approved the National Programme on Gender Equality for 2016-2020, which would focus on raising awareness, encouraging the participation of men and boys and capacity-building for elected women officials and parliamentarians. It reaffirmed its commitment to work closely with United Nations agencies to address the remaining challenges, which included eliminating gender-based violence, increasing women's participation in the National Assembly and leadership positions and tackling the boy preference mentality.

46. **Mr. Oña Garcés** (Ecuador) said that his Government's alternative approach to development placed people before profit; it sought to provide a decent quality of life for all in harmony with nature and without domination by peoples or by individuals. Good living (Sumak Kawsay) was not possible without gender equality and the eradication of violence and domination between men and women. As part of efforts to eradicate extreme poverty and its structural causes, the Government had increased women's access to education, food, housing, public services and employment and political opportunities. By greatly increasing health care spending, it had been able to provide better care for women and girls and strengthen their sexual and reproductive rights. In recognition of the importance of work in the home, it had recently made housewives eligible for enrolment in the social security system and was encouraging their registration.

47. Women's political participation had increased over the past eight years; they now held more than 40 per cent of the seats in the National Assembly, including major leadership positions, and served as Supreme Court justices and Cabinet ministers. They had also headed many strategic ministries.

48. Progress had been made on setting up the Inter-Institutional Committee on Women and Justice, and affirmative action was applied in the selection of judges. Special courts had been established to try cases of violence against women, domestic violence and sexual crime, and comprehensive services were available for victims. The new Penal Code recognized the crime of femicide.

49. In 2014, the Gender Equality Council had been established to develop, mainstream, enforce and

monitor public policies and laws for the advancement of women. The 2013-2017 National Agenda on Women and Gender Equality promoted equality for men and women, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation, through cross-cutting policies and affirmative action.

50. It was imperative to end discrimination against migrant women and to give special attention to the rights of women with disabilities, women of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity, women living with HIV/AIDS and indigenous and Afro-descendant women and girls. Ecuador reiterated its support for the appointment of a woman as the next Secretary-General of the United Nations.

51. **Mr. Wang Min** (China) said that the Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, co-hosted by UN-Women and China on 27 September, had been the first ever international conference on women at the level of heads of State or Government. The participants had all agreed to accelerate actions to achieve gender equality by 2030, with China taking the lead by pledging monetary support of \$10 million to UN-Women. China also pledged to implement maternal and child health projects and "happy school campus" projects and provide training for 130,000 women from developing countries. The heads of State or Government committed to further implementing the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals related to women.

52. Attainment of all of the gender equality targets by 2030 would require development strategies that took women's needs into account and ensured women's equal participation in development gains. It would also require measures to safeguard women's rights and interests, eliminate discrimination and prejudice, empower women to take part in political and economic activities and increase their involvement in decision-making and management. Moreover, those actions should be based on the principles of peaceful development, win-win cooperation and the cherishing of peace.

53. In the 20 years since the Fourth World Conference on Women, his Government had taken many economic, legal, administrative and other measures to implement gender equality and change perceptions and attitudes. It would continue to incorporate gender equality across all areas of government, improve existing mechanisms for

enhancing women's status, strengthen women's role in decision-making and management and foster a social and economic environment conducive to gender equality.

54. **Ms. Sabja** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that policies based on a technical view of sexual and reproductive health, access to justice and education would not be sufficient to achieve a strengthening of gender equality and women's empowerment. Tackling the unjust and unequal relations that were detrimental to women would require the consideration and questioning of global power structures and a deconstruction of the patriarchal world order that supported women's subordination. Only then would it be possible to build a new order without poverty, hunger and war, where priority would be given to people rather than capital and the environment would be protected.

55. Her Government was working to eliminate violence and discrimination against women and girls, promote gender equality in decision-making, ensure women and girls' reproductive and sexual rights and bring about the just distribution of resources, land and opportunities for training. By nationalizing her country's natural resources, it had been able to increase the public budget tenfold and cut extreme poverty by 20 percentage points in nine years. It had done so with the active participation of women. For example, 30 per cent of Government ministers were women.

56. The financial crisis and climate change had significantly affected many people, particularly women and girls. International organizations should study the repercussions of those phenomena and determine the specific effects of the State or supra-State policies implemented to address them. For millions of women and girls, decisions taken by far-off agencies and Governments were determining their access to food, water and land.

57. **Ms. Martelli** (Italy) said that gender issues were closely intertwined with development, health, social equity and human rights. Women's full social, economic and political empowerment was not only a moral imperative but also an excellent multiplier of social well-being and development. Studies showed that when women were better protected, countries were more prosperous, efficient and peaceful. The main obstacle to achieving those goals was violence against

women, including sexual and domestic abuse, female genital mutilation and early and forced marriage.

58. Gender policies were an integral part of her Government's international cooperation programmes as well as its foreign policy and national reform agenda. Internationally, it would continue to implement the Beijing Platform for Action and to strengthen its cooperation with its United Nations partners, with particular emphasis on women, peace and security. Italy would invest 50 million euros to reach gender balance. Domestically, among other efforts, it had recently adopted a national plan to combat sexual and gender-based violence, and it had dedicated many special initiatives to the role of women as the backbone of society, particularly in rural areas.

59. **Ms. Kupradze** (Georgia) said that in September, alongside 87 other heads of State or Government, her country's Prime Minister had committed his Government to continuing to strive to fully implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Women already held a number of ministerial and other high-level positions in the executive and judicial branches of Georgia, which had declared 2015 the national Year of Women. Since 2013, it had adopted a law against discrimination, the Action Plan for Combating Domestic Violence and Implementing Measures for the Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence for 2013-2016 and the National Action Plan on Gender Equality for 2014-2016. In addition, it had recently signed the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. Lastly, in November it would be hosting an international high-level conference on achieving gender equality in the European Neighbourhood Policy region, in cooperation with the United Nations and the European Union.

60. The protection of women's rights remained a serious challenge in the Georgian regions illegally occupied by the Russian Federation, where women continued to suffer grave violations of fundamental rights and freedoms, including freedom of movement and the right to education. The humanitarian situation remained critical, as no international monitoring mission was allowed to enter the occupied regions. In closing, she thanked the agencies of the United Nations, especially UN-Women, for their invaluable assistance in empowering Georgian women.

61. **Mr. Yaremenko** (Ukraine) said that the laws of Ukraine provided for an institutional mechanism for gender equality and required the consideration of gender in the education system, statistics, civil society partnerships and State human resources policy. The objectives of its recently adopted human rights strategy included ensuring equal rights for women and combating domestic violence, gender-based violence, human trafficking and slavery. Following the 2014 legislative elections, the number of women in the Rada had increased, and for the first time in the history of independent Ukraine, a woman had been elected as Deputy Chair. Under the local elections act, at least 30 per cent of those included in each party list for multiple-mandate constituencies at local and regional level must be women. Future efforts would concentrate on lessening gender disparities in resources, wealth, opportunities and services; reducing and mitigating the effects of gender-based violence, and empowering women and girls to determine their life outcomes and influence decision-making in the home, community and society.

62. In view of the activities of Russian-backed terrorists in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, his Government was developing a national action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. The plan would focus on promoting women's participation in peace, political transition and other critical decision-making processes; protecting women and girls from violence and abuse; ensuring safe, equitable access to relief and recovery assistance for internally displaced people; engaging women in crisis and conflict prevention and investing in women's economic empowerment. His Government had chosen a woman as its envoy to the peace negotiations.

63. Nadiya Savchenko, a member of the parliament of Ukraine and of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, was being held as a political prisoner by the Russian Federation, despite the provisions of the Minsk Protocol requiring the release of all illegally detained persons. He reiterated his appeal to the international community to continue to apply pressure on the Russian Federation to cease its suppression of human rights and to free her and the more than 30 other Ukrainian political prisoners.

64. **Ms. Gebrekidan** (Eritrea) said that her country's National Charter recognized the importance of respect for the rights and equality of women. In 1994, Eritrea

had enacted a landmark law abolishing the centuries-old land tenure system that prevented women from owning land and had subsequently implemented administrative measures and programmes to ensure that women could acquire land. It had prohibited under-age marriage in 1992 and female genital mutilation in 2007. As a result of the female genital mutilation proclamation and the public awareness campaign, the number of girls under 5 years of age affected by that practice had plummeted from 95 per cent in 1995 to under 12 per cent at present. Together with various civil society organizations, the Government was working to improve access to education, training and finance and to provide an enabling environment and market access for women entrepreneurs. Eritrea was one of the few African countries to have achieved all three health-related Millennium Development Goals, thanks in part to its women's health peer groups and mother-child health programmes. Empowering women and gender mainstreaming in social services had improved not only women's health but public health in general.

65. However, women in Eritrea still faced enormous challenges, including a lack of resources, climatic factors and social attitudes. They were further challenged by the continuing occupation of their sovereign territory and the unjust sanctions imposed on the country, which impeded the full enjoyment of women's and girls' rights.

66. **Ms. Hemelaar** (Netherlands), speaking as the women's representative in her delegation, said that to "step up for gender equality", Member States also needed to work for the equality of lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual or intersex (LGTBI) people. In that connection, she welcomed the 29 September joint statement of 12 United Nations entities calling for an end to violence and discrimination against LGBTBI people. More than a third of the world's population lived in countries where traditions, religions, values, customs and culture were valued above human rights and where being LGBTBI could lead to imprisonment or corporal punishment if not death. Violence against them was widely reported throughout the world, and in many States, including her own, intersex children were subjected to unnecessary surgical and other procedures. Transgender women faced a higher risk of HIV/AIDS infection because they were often forced by discrimination to resort to sex work and had limited access to health care. It was time to step up for

everyone, regardless of gender or gender orientation. As a lesbian who had grown up and lived in the Netherlands, she felt protected, safe and happy. All women should have the opportunity to lead happy and prosperous lives; no one should be left behind.

67. **Mr. Anshor** (Indonesia) said that, despite many achievements, women still constituted the majority of the world's poor. States would need to translate the new blueprint for sustainable, inclusive development into concrete measures that would help to overcome the structural and social barriers to the empowerment of women and girls. It would be crucial to tailor development partnerships and partnerships with United Nations entities to the specific needs and circumstances of each country. Furthermore, the dialogue on the longer term positioning of the United Nations development system must produce a solid foundation for reform of that system.

68. Indonesia would continue to work to improve women's lives and gender parity. It would focus on increasing the participation and representation of women in decision-making processes; reducing maternal mortality, improving access to reproductive health services and universal health coverage; and ending violence against women and girls. Already, eight of the Government's strategic ministers were women.

69. **Ms. Nescher** (Liechtenstein) said that, despite the many milestones reached in the promotion of women's rights and countless documents declaring the commitment of Member States to the advancement of women, women continued to be paid less than men for the same work, underrepresented in business leadership and government and all too frequent victims of gender-based violence. While the Millennium Development Goals had been a powerful driver for international development, they had failed to sufficiently include women; the Sustainable Development Goals presented a great opportunity to do better. It would be vital to develop a comprehensive set of gender-mainstreamed indicators and to support the high-level political forum on sustainable development as a monitoring body. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was a comprehensive roadmap for every State, not just developing States, as no State had yet achieved Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

70. Worldwide, there had been no substantial victories in eradicating violence against women. It was up to

States to address the lack of gender sensitivity among justice personnel, the lack of victim support, long judicial processes and the low conviction rates that contributed to underreporting and the unacceptable culture of impunity. A paradigm shift was needed to move from stigmatizing the victims of domestic violence and rape to stigmatizing the perpetrators.

71. As she spoke, the review of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security was taking place, and experts were meeting in Geneva to prepare for the World Humanitarian Summit. Member States should seize those opportunities to pursue a more comprehensive and holistic approach to furthering women's empowerment and rights.

72. **Mr. Guelaye** (Mauritania) said that his Government had incorporated gender equality into all national policies and programmes and, as stated at the Global Leaders' Meeting, remained committed to promoting women's participation in decision-making in government and business. Mauritania's Constitution guaranteed women's equality and civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. It had ratified all of the relevant international instruments and had implemented the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

73. Thanks to a positive discrimination policy, Mauritanian women held one fifth of the seats in Parliament, served as Government ministers and headed diplomatic missions. Women were working in spheres that had once been exclusively male, such as the police, the army and the courts. They had been empowered economically through access to the labour market as well as loans, property insurance and other means of production.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.