

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies

Distinguished Delegates,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship of the 52nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women. We are fully confident that under your able leadership the Commission will accomplish its task successfully.

statement made by the distinguished representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. In my national capacity, I would like to add some remarks to this fruitful discussion on financing for gender equality.

- In order to improve women's access to health, a Basic Package of Health Services has been developed which includes emergency obstetric care. In addition, the number of health care workers has increased to 15,001 in 2007, of whom 49.3% are women.
- In the area of education, 40 % of the 4 million of children enrolled in school are girls. About twenty percent of 50,000 students are females and are presently getting education at the universities and other institutes of higher education. In 2005, 58.8% of students enrolling in Teacher Training Institutions in Afghanistan were female.

Despite progress made, Afghan women continue to face many challenges. According to the Gender Development Index (GDI), which combines life expectancy, educational achievements and standard of living, Afghan women have one of the lowest indicators in the world.

Mr. Chairman,

- Women's difficulties to access health services are caused by complex economic and social factors including illiteracy, poverty, lack of roads and transportation, limited

implementation of the National Plan of Action and a particular focus has been accorded to monitor the gender related MDGs targets.

Nevertheless the capacity of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) needs to be significantly enhanced to be able to coordinate this effort, to provide technical assistance and gender training to the various Ministries, and to monitor the overall implementation of the National Plan of Action. The Government is also looking towards strengthening the provincial offices of MOWA and gender focal points in line Ministries.

Mr. Chairman,

To reduce gender disparities, my Government supports positive actions that focus on policies and resource allocation to specific programmes for women. In order to implement this vision, a Gender Budgeting Unit has been established in the Ministry of Finance. This Unit is geared to ensure that the budget process is just and fair, and that resources are equally distributed to all citizens. The Gender Budgeting Unit also assists the Government of Afghanistan in meeting its goals regarding women's advancement by

analyzing, reviewing and contributing to government policies, programs and budgets. It also provides advice on gender sensitive programming for line Ministries.

Mr. Chairman,

Poverty remains the biggest obstacle in Afghanistan in achieving MDG3. We would like to stress the need for full partnership and expanded cooperation with the international community in our mutual commitment to attain the MDGs and advance the status of women in the world. In that regard, we highlight the need for a considerable increase in the level of Official Development Assistance (ODA) for Least Developed Countries, particularly