

Check against Delivery

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address the Third Committee on the agenda item advancement of women.

May I first congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and other members of the Bureau, on your election.

It is my honour to present the first ever Report of the Secretary-General on "Supporting efforts to end obstetric fistula" contained in document A/63/222. This report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution (A/RES/62/138) which requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of the resolution.

Last year the Third Committee and subsequently the General Assembly adopted a first time resolution on "Supporting efforts to end obstetric fistula".

The continued existence of obstetric fistula reflects not only health system constraints but also the broader economic and socio-cultural context. It is a signal that health systems are

failing to meet the needs of women, and is evidence of the profound social and institutional neglect of women and girls. The absence of preventive care, including emergency obstetric care violates the human rights of women and girls, especially their right to health care and in particular to reproductive health care.

As the Secretary-General's Report states, considerable progress has been achieved over the last two decades in focusing attention on maternal death and disability and more

