

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to, first of all, express the appreciation of the Nigerian delegation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports on the advancement of women. I would also like to thank Mr. Bachtin, Executive Director of UN Women, for his report. I wish to commend the Executive Board of UN Women under the presidency of Ambassador Joy Ogwu, Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations, for its efforts in guiding the Entity through its first year of operation. I wish to commend the Board for its continued cooperation.

Nigeria aligns itself with the statements of the African Group and the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

Nigeria is committed to the full and effective implementation of the various international instruments on gender equality and women's empowerment, particularly the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the Twenty-third Special Session of the General Assembly, which ushered in new perspectives for the advancement of women. Nigeria will continue to draw inspiration and guidance from these documents, to focus on the key priority areas of women's reproductive health rights, girl-child

education; situation of rural women; eradication of violence against women; women's economic empowerment and increased women's participation in decision-making. These have been integrated into our Transformation Agenda – the blueprint for transforming Nigeria into one of the world's most economically vibrant, politically stable and socially coherent countries in the near future.

On increasing women's participation in decision-making, I am glad to note that, in accordance with President Jonathan's commitment to true affirmative action on women, 33% of cabinet Ministers are women, as against 11% last year. We believe that women's voice, leadership, participation and representation are important pathways to their equality and our commitment as well as national development and stability. There is no doubt that investing in women and girls has a multiplier effect on productivity, efficiency, sustained economic growth, peace and security.

Mr. Chairman,

The issue of gender-based violence continues to be a major concern for us. Government, civil society, and other stakeholders are working assiduously toward its elimination. To this end, a number of legislations have been passed, they include Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill, (2007); Child Rights Act (2003); Violence Against Women Act (2007) and its Strategic Plan of Action/Implementation Framework (2007/2008). In addition, draft legislations on Sexual Harassment to prohibit sexual

harassment in schools and in the work place, the Protection and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking (2008), and the Abolition of all forms of Violence Against Persons in Nigeria and Other Related Matters are at various stages of completion. Meanwhile, the ratification of CEDAW remains a national priority.

Mr. Chibarama:

A Conditional Grants Scheme and a Conditional Cash Transfer were recently established at all three tiers of government to address the many girl-child issues in the country, including lack of access to schooling, malnutrition, inadequate health services, early marriage, female genital mutilation and other forms of violence against women and girls and obstetric fistula. As poverty remains the main social risk factor, Government is hopeful that the schemes targeting only women and girls with the most need would facilitate school attendance, access to medical services and help to address the abuse, discrimination and disempowerment that women and girls are subjected to. The schemes were introduced in 2008 and 2009, and which have seen a reduction in street hawking and increased school enrolment and retention among girls. In addition, over the past two years, Government has doubled resources for strengthening the Women's Centre providing credit facilities to boost income generating activities, and promote vocational skills training for women victims of violence and VWT. This has also resulted in a great

number of vulnerable groups of women in our country to live independent and meaningful lives.

To enhance Maternal and Child survival and boost the implementation of the Integrated Maternal Newborn Child Health strategy in the country, almost all the States of the Federation now offer free maternal and child care services through the adoption and implementation of "Free of Charge Maternal and Child Health Care". The Government has continued to increase its budgetary allocation to the programme on an annual basis to reduce the cost-related barriers preventing women and children from accessing adequate health care services.

Mr. Paulinus Njan.

I would like to conclude by saying that the Government continues to support UN Women, working with it to promote the advancement and empowerment of women in Nigeria and around the world. We continue to count on the support of their member states and other partners.

I thank you.