

**59<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly  
Second Committee**

**Agenda item 89b  
Women in development**

**Statement by**

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**15 November 2004**

Mr. Chairperson,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Colleagues.

I would like to extend my congratulations to you, Mr. Chairperson, on your election and also to the other members of the Bureau. I pledge my full support, and that of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women, for your work during this session.

I am happy to inform you, that the newly appointed Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, Ms. Rachel Mayanja, takes up her position this week.

It is my privilege to open the discussion of agenda item 89b, Women in Development, and to present the Secretary-General's report, prepared under this item: *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development (A/59/287)*. The present report is prepared in response to General Assembly resolutions 54/210 (1999) and 58/206 (2003) requesting the Secretary-General to update the *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development*, for consideration by the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. The report provides a summary of key elements in the full *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development*. It focuses on women and international migration and presents key issues on labour migration, family formation and reunification, rights of migrant women, refugees and displaced persons as well as trafficking of women and girls. The full report will be issued in December 2004 and will be available for broader distribution as a publication of the Division for the Advancement of Women at the forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women early next year.

Consideration of women in development within the framework of the General Assembly's work on economic and financial matters, on a biannual basis, provides an important opportunity to highlight gender perspectives in current and emerging economic issues, and to contribute to the formulation and implementation of gender-sensitive development policies and programmes. Earlier reports have focused on macro-economic policy-making and development planning (A/50/399 and A/52/345), access to financial resources (A/56/148/287d to co290.2tg Tj 3 0 tio Tc 0.2



urged governments to strengthen measures at the international and domestic levels to protect and empower women migrant workers.

Mr. Chairperson,

The migration of women has always been an important component of international migration. As of 2000, 49 percent of all international migrants were women or girls, and the proportion of women among international migrants had reached 51 percent in more developed regions. Women often migrate officially as dependent family members of other migrants or to marry someone in another country. Female migrants are, however, increasingly part of worker flows, moving on their own to become the principal wage earners for their families. Most women move voluntarily, but women and girls are also forced migrants who have fled conflict, persecution, environmental degradation, natural disasters and other situations that affect their habitat, livelihood and security.

A gender perspective is essential for understanding both the causes and consequences of international migration. The migration experiences of women vary considerably depending on whether movement is voluntary or involuntary and whether entry into the host society occurs legally or not. Gender inequality can be a powerful factor in precipitating migration when women have economic, political and social expectations that opportunities at home do not meet. Migration can empower women to exercise greater autonomy over their lives, both those women who migrate and are exposed to new ideas and values and increased access to resources, as well as those women who remain behind when their husbands or children migrate and assume new roles and responsibility for decisions affecting the social and economic well-being of their families.

Migrant women contribute to the economic development of both their country of destination through their competencies and skills, as well as to their countries of origin through financial contributions from remittances and the improvement of their own education and skills. In countries of origin, women underwrite the migration of others, in particular through their income-generation activities. As migrants, women are sources of remittances that may be used to improve the well-

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HIV/AIDs and other diseases, environmental sustainability and partnerships for development.