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AS WRITTEN

To: Mrs. Pintasilgo + Drago Kojin

STATEMENT BY DR RUTH CARDOSO
HEAD OF THE BRAZILIAN DELEGATION TO THE IV CONFERENCE ON WOMEN

BEIJING, 05 SEPTEMBER 1995

From: Hans d'On
FYI

MADAM CHAIRPERSON,

ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT OF BRAZIL, I CONGRATULATE YOU ON YOUR ELECTION AS CHAIRPERSON OF THE IV UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON WOMEN. YOUR LEADERSHIP GUARANTEES THE SUCCESS OF OUR WORK.

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK DR. BOUTROS BOUTROS-GHALI, THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL, FOR THE SUPPORT HE HAS GIVEN TO THIS IMPORTANT EVENT.

I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS, ON BEHALF OF THE BRAZILIAN DELEGATION, OUR GRATITUDE TO MS GERTRUDE MONGELLA AND HER SECRETARIAT FOR THEIR UNTIRING WORK IN PREPARING THIS HISTORICAL OCCURRENCE. THE PROGRESS MADE DURING THIS LONG AND AT TIMES ARDUOUS PROCESS WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR YOUR DEDICATION AND THE HARD WORK OF YOUR TEAM.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK THE PEOPLE AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF THIS VERY SIGNIFICANT CONFERENCE AND THE PEOPLE OF BEIJING, IN PARTICULAR, FOR THEIR HOSPITALITY AND FRIENDLY WELCOME.

MADAM CHAIRPERSON,

FOR THE FOURTH TIME IN TWENTY YEARS REPRESENTATIVES FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD MEET TO EVALUATE THE PROGRESS MADE DURING THIS PERIOD OF TIME, TO DISCUSS THE PERSISTING OBSTACLES IN THE WAY TO THE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN INTO DEVELOPMENT AND TO PROPOSE THE NECESSARY STEPS TO ENSURE THE MAJORITY OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION THE RIGHT TO FULL CITIZENSHIP.

SINCE THE NAIROBI CONFERENCE, THANKS TO THE MOBILIZATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND TO THE CONTINUOUS AND CONSISTENT ACTION BY WOMEN'S GROUPS AND BY NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN EVERY COUNTRY, THE SITUATION OF WOMEN HAS ADVANCED IN MANY ASPECTS. NEVERTHELESS, THE RESULTS ACHIEVED ARE NOT ENOUGH TO ATTAIN THE DESIRED EQUALITY.

THE GAINS OBTAINED SO FAR, THANKS TO THOSE EFFORTS AND WHICH WERE CONSOLIDATED AT THE RIO DE JANEIRO, VIENNA, CAIRO AND COPENHAGEN CONFERENCES - MUST BE REITERATED WITHOUT RETREATS OR HESITATIONS - AS THEY PROVIDE THE BASIS FOR SETTING A NEW AGENDA IN THE STRUGGLE FOR WOMEN'S EMANCIPATION.

ON THIS AGENDA, WOMEN WILL NOT ONLY BE THE BENEFICIARIES BUT, ABOVE ALL, THE PROMOTERS OF SUSTAINED AND EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT. WE SHALL BE THE AGENTS OF A NEW MODEL OF CIVILISATION WHICH DOES NOT ACCEPT POVERTY AS A FATALITY, BUT, ON THE CONTRARY, UNDERTAKES DEVELOPMENT AS A GLOBAL COMMITMENT. OUR HORIZON IS A DEMOCRACY THAT RECOGNIZES THE DIFFERENCES



BETWEEN THE SEXES, AND YET IS ABLE TO GUARANTEE THEM EQUAL RIGHTS. THUS UNDERSTOOD, WOMEN'S STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY IS NOT A STRUGGLE FOR THEIR OWN BENEFIT ONLY. IT IS FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL AND, FOR THIS VERY REASON, IT BLENDS WITH THE STRENGTHENING OF DEMOCRACY ITSELF.

THE INCREASE IN POVERTY, UNEMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION ARE, UNFORTUNATELY, CHARACTERISTICS OF MODERN WORLD. AS WE KNOW, THESE PROBLEMS HAVE UNEQUAL EFFECTS ON MEN AND WOMEN. THIS CONFERENCE, THEREFORE, WHILE HIGHLIGHTING THE FEMINIZATION OF POVERTY, SHOWS THAT THE RELATION BETWEEN WOMEN'S AUTONOMY AND IMPROVEMENT IN LIFE QUALITY IS UNEQUIVOCAL. ACCORDINGLY, THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY AND THE PROMOTION OF DEVELOPMENT BECOME, INEXORABLY, AN INTRINSIC PART OF WOMEN'S FIGHT. THIS REALIZATION, THUS, FORCES US TO GO BEYOND MERE DECLARATIONS OF INTENT. IT DEMANDS FROM ALL OF US A GLOBAL COMMITMENT WITH EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS TO COMBAT INEQUALITY AND DISCRIMINATION.

THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT, THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE OF BRAZIL REAFFIRM THEIR COMMITMENT TO THIS AGENDA.

IN BRAZIL, DURING THE LAST YEARS, THANKS TO THE ACTION TAKEN BY WOMEN'S GROUPS, IMPORTANT VICTORIES HAVE BEEN WON BUT THERE IS STILL A LONG WAY TO GO.

THUS, THE BRAZILIAN CONSTITUTION OF 1988 RECOGNIZES NEW RIGHTS, AMONG WHICH, IT IS WORTH MENTIONING THE INTRODUCTION OF CLAUSES THAT BAN SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION OF ANY TYPE, PROVIDE PROTECTION TO UNMARRIED MOTHERS, INSURE MATERNITY LEAVE OF FOUR MONTHS AND PATERNITY LEAVE OF ONE WEEK AND GUARANTEE INFORMATION AND MEANS FOR FREE DECISION ON FAMILY PLANNING. THE TASK IS NOW TO FULLY INCORPORATE THESE RIGHTS INTO THE REALITY OF EVERY DAY LIFE.

THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN SIGNIFICANT INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCES WITH THE CREATION AND REVITALIZATION OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS AT NATIONAL, STATE AND MUNICIPAL LEVELS, AND WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WOMEN'S POLICE STATIONS WHICH HAVE SERVED AS A MODEL TO OTHER COUNTRIES.

WE HAVE ALSO MANAGED TO CONCEIVE INNOVATIVE GOVERNMENT POLICIES SUCH AS THE WOMEN'S COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CARE PROGRAMME, WHOSE PRINCIPLES ARE THE SAME AS THOSE WHICH INSPIRED THE DIRECTIVES ISSUED AT THE CAIRO CONFERENCE. IT AIMS AT ASSISTING WOMEN IN ALL PHASES OF THEIR LIFE CYCLE WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON RESPECT FOR THEIR PRODUCTIVE RIGHTS. FOR US, THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS POLICY IS A CHALLENGE, A PRIORITY AND A COMMITMENT.

WE HAVE MUCH WORK TO DO FOR LOWERING THE RATES OF MATERNAL MORTALITY, REDUCING PRECOCIOUS PREGNANCY AND PREVENTING SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES, BREAST AS WELL AS CERVIX CANCER, ALL MISFORTUNES AFFECTING MAINLY YOUNG WOMEN. IN THE AREA OF FAMILY PLANNING, DESIGNED AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF A HEALTH AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS POLICY, IT IS NECESSARY TO MAKE MORE INFORMATION AVAILABLE AND FACILITATE ACCESS TO SAFE AND DIVERSIFIED CONTRACEPTION METHODS.

THERE HAS ALSO BEEN INCREASED PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE WORK FORCE. HOWEVER, IN SPITE OF A SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN THE EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF WOMEN AT ALL LEVELS, WIDE DIFFERENCES PERSIST IN THE SALARIES AWARDED TO MEN AND WOMEN PERFORMING THE SAME TASKS. THIS INDICATES HOW DEEPLY ROOTED GENDER DISCRIMINATION IS AND UNDERLINES HOW IMPORTANT THE MOBILIZATION OF SHE BRAZILIAN SOCIETY IS IN ORDER TO CHANGE THIS SCENARIO.

THE PRESENCE OF WOMEN IN CIVIL SOCIETY HAS GROWN AND HAS BECOME MORE

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SIGNIFICANT, OPENING UP NEW WAYS FOR SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION. NOTWITHSTANDING THAT, ONLY A SMALL NUMBER OF WOMEN HAVE LEADING ROLES IN POLITICAL PARTIES, IN PARLIAMENT, OR OCCUPY HIGH POSTS IN GOVERNMENT.

MADAM CHAIRPERSON,

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST POVERTY IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE FIGHT OF BRAZILIAN WOMEN FOR EQUALITY, FOR DEVELOPMENT AND FOR PEACE. AMONG OTHER MEANS TO FIGHT THIS BATTLE, THE BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT, TOGETHER WITH THE CIVIL SOCIETY, SET UP THE "COMUNIDADE SOLIDARIA" PROGRAMME, WHICH PRESIDES. ITS SCOPE OF ACTION INVOLVES WORKING IN CLOSE COLLABORATION WITH THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS, A STRATEGY WHICH DEFINES AND GUARANTEES THAT GENDER BE CONSIDERED WHEN FACING THE PROBLEMS OF POVERTY AND INEQUALITY.

IN BRAZIL, THE STRUGGLE AGAINST INEQUALITY IMPLIES OFFERING BASIC PUBLIC SERVICES OF A UNIVERSAL KIND. AS AN EXAMPLE, I REFER TO OUR PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM, WHICH HAS ENABLED WOMEN TO RAISE THEIR EDUCATIONAL LEVELS. IT IS, THEREFORE, FUNDAMENTAL THAT THESE SERVICES BE INCREASED AND THEIR QUALITY IMPROVED, ESPECIALLY IN THE AREAS OF HEALTH, BASIC SANITATION AND WORK TRAINING.

THE VIOLENCE OF WHICH WOMEN ARE VICTIMS HAS COME OUT OF THE SHADOWS THANKS TO THE ACTION OF WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS. ON THE ONE HAND, THIS KIND OF VIOLENCE IS RECOGNIZED TODAY AS A CRIME, AND AS SUCH REQUIRES PUNISHMENT WHICH THE BRAZILIAN JUSTICE WILL HAVE TO METE OUT EARNESTLY. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE ARE CONVINCED OF THE IMPORTANCE OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION, FIELD IN WHICH THE MEDIA HAS AN IRREPLACEABLE ROLE TO PLAY. PUBLIC OPINION CAMPAIGNS DEPICTING VIOLENCE AS UNACCEPTABLE ARE ALREADY BEING UNDERTAKEN AND SHOULD CONTINUE UNTIL WE OVERCOME THE EASE WITH WHICH VIOLENCE HAS BEEN ACCEPTED BY OUR CULTURE.

SPEAKING TO BRAZILIAN WOMEN IMPLIES ADDRESSING MORE THAN 70 MILLION PEOPLE, SPREAD OVER A TERRITORY OF CONTINENTAL DIMENSIONS. IN RECENT TIMES WE HAVE WITNESSED THE GREAT CAPACITY OF THE MEDIA TO PROMOTE INTEGRATION AND ITS POWER TO INFLUENCE CUSTOMS AS WELL AS TO CHANGE WAYS OF THINKING. THE RESOURCES OF MODERN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OFFER POSSIBILITIES, AS YET HARDLY EXPLOITED, FOR THE RAPID DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION AND LEARNING. THUS, COMMUNICATION BECOMES A POLITICAL SPACE ON ITS OWN, A STRATEGIC INSTRUMENT FOR DEFENDING EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE.

THE TASKS IMPOSED BY THIS RICH AGENDA ARE THE RESPONSIBILITY AS MUCH OF THE GOVERNMENT AS OF SOCIETY AS A WHOLE. IT DEMANDS ACTION BY THE NATIONAL STATES BUT IT CANNOT DO WITHOUT INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION.

MADAM CHAIRPERSON,

THE BRAZILIAN DELEGATION CONSIDERS THAT THE DRAFT PLATFORM OF ACTION WHICH WE HAVE BEFORE US CONSTITUTES A STEP FORWARD TO ATTAIN THE OBJECTIVES SET OUT BY THIS CONFERENCE. THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH STILL PERSIST CAN BE OVERCOME WITH AN EFFORT TOWARDS FLEXIBILITY AND TOLERANCE, FOR THE SAKE OF THE COMMON OBJECTIVE WHICH UNITES US ALL.

THE BRAZILIAN DELEGATION IS CONVINCED THAT HERE WE ARE EXPERIENCING THE BEGINNING OF THE 21ST CENTURY, WHICH WILL BE, WITH ALL WOMEN'S HELP, THE CENTURY OF PEACE.

THIS MOMENT IMPOSES GREAT CHALLENGES ON US. ONE OF THE GREATEST IS THE NEED TO UNITE! IN MOBILIZING OUR RESOURCES, SO THAT THE PLATFORM OF ACTION WE WILL APPROVE HERE BECOMES REALITY FOR THE BENEFIT NOT ONLY OF WOMANKIND BUT OF ALL HUMANITY.