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**STATEMENT BY**

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HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION AND THE OUTCOME DOCUMENT OF THE FIFTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: SHARING OF EXPERIENCES AND GOOD PRACTICES IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION WITH A VIEW TO OVERCOMING REMAINING OBSTACLES AND NEW CHALLENGES

Mr Chair/Madame Chairperson

Finland aligns herself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union.

Equal access for women and girls to education is an important human right and also know, effectively implement the Beijing Platform for Action. Finland believes that this session gives us a possibility to share good practices which can help us to take further steps in order to strengthen the rights of women and girls globally. Finland also actively supports the work of UN Women under the leadership of Michelle Bachelet.

Women's rights are one of the most basic international human rights. From a perspective it is important that a woman can fully participate in decision-making processes at all levels of society. Finland considers that education is an essential instrument that gives women and girls their capabilities in this respect.

A woman can only be an active participant in the society if she has the knowledge to make decisions concerning her own body, sexuality, and reproductive health. This increases possibilities of women and girls to receive education and get access to decent work outside their homes. Therefore Finland consistently supports the promotion of women's health and reproductive health and rights internationally through development cooperation.

Mr Chair/Madame Chairperson

Gender-based segregation in education is a concern also in Finland. It stems from the stereotypes of girls and boys.

The issue has been studied by European Union in its efforts to make proposals concerning education and training, with a view to alleviating gender stereotypes.

One of the Committee's main recommendations is that all pupils and students must be provided with equal opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills required in society and leading life.

girls' interests best, needs to offer them the right kind of guidance and counselling so as to allow them to make informed and informed choices based on their individual qualities, strengths and motivations – not on their gender.

Another recommendation was to conduct a link at the teaching materials, the school books. Gender stereotypes are very alive in them. Now there is guidance material for the publishers to make them aware of this and to avoid it.

In Finland also non-formal education has a relatively long tradition. This is now considered to be a vital contribution towards personal development and lifelong learning.

Participation in sports is a common activity of civil society organisations, one of the main activities of women's clubs and associations. Sport offers a dynamic way to engage citizens outside of the conventional educational structures. It can work to bridge the gender gap that persists with respect to positions of leadership and decision-making.

Mr Chairman/Madame Chairperson

I believe that any investment in girls and women will have a multiplier effect across all international development goals. Education is a basic human right, and not only that. It is a decisive catalyst for all human development, a powerful driver of economic and sustainable development, for more peaceful and equitable societies. It reduces child and maternal mortality, increases entrepreneurship and job opportunities. Not to mention that education has positive implications in reducing violence against girls and women.

With only four years to go until 2015 target date for the Millennium Development Goals, we all need to look into ways of transforming our educational systems so that they better meet the demands of the 21st century. We are not yet on track, but Finland is fully committed to the outcome of the document adopted at the MDG Summit in September 2010.

I thank you Chair.