





Mr. Chairman,

Gender equity and equal opportunities and rights between men and women are principles enshrined in our Constitution and they govern the national development model.

In the role of women in society and the impact of their participation in the country, the President of Colombia Juan Manuel Santos continues to support the National Mechanism for Women called Office of the High Counsellor for Women's Equity, in its administrative and coordination mandates.

Colombia has developed a solid gender perspective and a series of affirmative actions for women, which comprise several key components. The actions in the area of Employment and Enterprise Development have sought to provide access to financial services for women in the Bank of Social Justice, as well as the realization of national and regional fairs for women entrepreneurs. Being the most important the Businesswomen's Summit held on June 21, 2012 with participants from 16 countries and exporters in 26 out of the 32 departments of our country.

We have worked in the development of an Agenda for Labor Equality, in coordination with business associations, to promote women's role and to establish their effective inclusion in the workforce.

For our country, women's economic empowerment is a key factor to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. We believe that an economically empowered woman who has the opportunity to contribute to her own development, as well as to the development of her family and of the society as a whole, will be able to contribute in creating a less vulnerable environment.

In the area of prevention of violence against women we have strategies being developed in partnership with international cooperation entities to prevent and eradicate gender based violence. These include initiatives such as the national strategy for women to improve their knowledge about their rights and the establishment of an interagency committee for the Redirection of Violence against Women, whose purpose is to unite efforts for the identification and appointment among government entities in order to achieve comprehensive, differentiated and quality accessible care for women victims of violence.

Among others, Law 1146 of 2007 on the care of children victims of such violence, Law 1329 of 2009 amending provisions to our criminal law to counter the commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, Law 1257 of 2008 "Ley de Víctimas de la Violencia contra las Mujeres", which has been declared based on international standards; and Decree 164 of 2010 which establishes the Interagency Committee abovementioned.

Mr. Chairman,

International cooperation is also important in promoting the advancement of women. In this regard, my country has been working with UNFPA, UNDP, UNHCR, UNFPA and UNICEF, as well as the IOM, in favor of women and girls.

Likewise, Colombia welcomes the establishment of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women known as UN-Women. We convey our congratulations to Mrs. Michelle Bachelet, Chile's former president on her decision to create this entity, which is fulfilling the purposes explained yesterday before this Committee.

My delegation would like to express the support of Colombia to all future efforts to strengthen this new entity. We are confident that UN-Women will be able to incorporate the cross-cutting agenda of gender equality, empowerment of women and the UN Secretary-General's agenda for the advancement of women in all regions of the world.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.