INDIA

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STATEMENT

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on

AGENDA ITEM 28: [a] ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN [h] IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOME OF THE 4TH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN AND OF THE 23RD SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THIRD COMMITTEE
65TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Permanent

Mr. Chainnan,

At the outset, please allow me to thank the Secretary General for all his reports under this agenda
item. We would also like to thank all the speakers who made presentations on this agenda item. Our delegation would like to broadly associate ourselves with the statement made by the Chair ofthe G77.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women remains the key focus area of social development and distributive justice globally. Socia-economic development will be incomplete, if women are ignored. In fact, gender equality and the empowennent of women is an integral part of the realization ofthe Millennium Development Goals.

Soon after gaining independence, the founding fathers of India ensured that in the Constitution of
India., the principles of gender equality and the empowennent of women were codified and enshrined, which not only guarantees equality to women, but also advocates affinnative action for women, wherever necessary. These have been further reinforced through periodic amendments in legislation and policy. Following successive policies and programmes, in 2001, we fonnulated the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women with the main objectives of empowering women socially, economically and politically; ensuing equal access to health care, education and employment; strengthening legal systems to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women; and building and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women's organizations. The ongoing Eleventh Five Year development plan of India (2007-12) has recognized women as agents ofsustained socio-economic growth and change. Gender has been made a cross--cutting theme in all the development plans. The purpose of this holistic approach was to reduce gender disparities across regions and communities and ensure access to basic physical infrastructure as well as health and education services to all. While a large number of programmes and schemes are being implemented to mainstream gender in all activities throughout the Government of India under the dynamic leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister of lndia., Dr Manmohan Singh, I would like to highlight a few.

In the field of education, the Education for All Campaign (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan) has made tremendous impact on girls. There has also been a special focus on girls' education, aiming to target the <hardest to reach' girls through residential schools, mid day meals and other incentives. In order to address adult illiteracy in women, the National Literacy Mission has been recast as the Female Literacy Mission and aims to target 70 million adults. in the next 5 years, out of which 60 million will be women.

Significant progress has been made in the field of economic and social empowennent. One of our
flagship schemes in this regards has been the 'Swayamsidha' scheme, which means <self help'. This scheme seeks to empower women hy creating economically sustainable Self Help Groups. With more
than 2.2 million Self Help Groups across the country, covering 33 million households, this programme
has been a silent revolution for women. In my our experience as a Member of Parliament from Alleppey District (which is popularly known as the Venice of the East), self help groups have created tremendous results by setting up small and medium scale industrial units, especiallye c o n and