PERMANENT MISSION OF RWANDA TO THE UNITED NATIONS



Statement

By

Jeanne Byaje Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations

8TH Session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development

Promoting equality, including social equity, gender equality and women's empowerment

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New York, February 5th 2014

Mr. Co-chair,

I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on this important topic of promoting equality, including social equity, gender equality and women's empowerment. I would like to express my gratitude to all the panelists who addressed this audience for their invaluable contributions.

Rwanda aligns itself with the statement delivered by the African Group and the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Co-chair,

Yesterday, my country Rwanda was rightly mentioned for the progress achieved in gender parity that gave way to a fast growing economy. In that framework, allow me to briefly highlight the efforts deployed by Rwanda, to advance the agenda of gender equality and women empowerment.

During the last 20 years, Rwanda has indeed committed itself to gender parity and to the socio-economic and political transformation, ensuring an equitable distribution of power and opportunities to women and girls. Women are represented in all spheres of life both in business entities as well as on the political landscape.

It is gratifying to note that, women occupy 64% seats in Parliament, 38% in the Senate, 47% in the Government and approximately 40% in the judiciary sector and local administration contributing a great deal to the country development and nation building.

In addition, women are able to own land and they can legally have separate assets from their spouses. These milestones are a product of collective efforts by all Rwandans who understand the core value of a progressive and inclusive development agenda. Those gender equality gains are enshrined in the Constitution resulting in a significant increase in the number of women with decision-making positions. In addition, laws on inheritance, liberalities and successions and land tenure that give equal rights to both women and men have been enacted.

Mr. Co-chair,

To achieve sustainable development, we must ensure equal access of the marginalized groups to the most basic rights by affording them good quality education. Enabling a girl child through education will create a conducive environment to unleash her full potential. In this respect, Rwanda has achieved gender parity in primary school with a rate of enrolment that has increased from 76% to 90%.

My delegation is of the view that the post 2015 development framework must have specific targets geared towards elimination of gender inequality paving the way to poverty reduction. To sustain gender equality, there is a need to curb its underlying constraints that hinder progress, causing countries to lag behind, especially in LDCs.

To ensure progressive and sustainable development, it is critical to ensure that girls are not denied education due to traditional beliefs. Without mutual understanding that gender equality is a challenge for both men and women, it is not possible to have a forward looking development agenda.

To build on our gains, it is vital to eliminate discrimination against women in political, economic, and public life and to tackle the Gender based violence that remains the biggest challenge for women. Elimination of any form of violence particularly against women and girls must be reflected in every goal of the post 2015 development agenda. Development should be a two-fold tool used to advance and defend women as well as to prevent their exclusion since they represent half of the world population. To reap the economic development of such a massive human capital, it is essential to design policies fostering inclusive development for all.

Concluding, the MDGs have played a key role in the advancement of women around the world, it is rewarding to see that almost 15 years later, there has been a genuine increase in key positions held by women across many sectors. However, a more objective transformative agenda must continue to focus on women empowerment. I thank you!