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**STATEMENT**  
**BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF UKRAINE,**  
**AMBASSADOR YURIY SERGEYEV ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF**  
**EASTERN EUROPEAN STATES**

**on the occasion of the General Assembly Commemorative  
meeting to mark the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of the  
Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**

*New York, March 2, 2010*

**Mr. President,**  
**Distinguished Ministers,**  
**Excellencies,**  
**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a particular honour for my delegation to take the floor, on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, to commemorate at this session fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of outcomes of the Fourth World Conference on Women. This General Assembly Commemorative event gives us an ideal opportunity to assess how far Member States have come in fulfilling their promises, to address the shortcomings, to face the new challenges and to reaffirm their commitments to fairness, justice, health and opportunities for half the human race.

Members of the Eastern European Group reaffirm their commitments to the Beijing documents, which constitute an overarching policy framework, and attach particular significance to their effective implementation. We consider gender equality, gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women not only as important objectives, but also as means to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and an essential part of the development agenda.

**Mr. President,**

Undoubtedly, there has been progress in implementing the Beijing outcomes. Violence against women is now illegal almost everywhere. In many countries, new health strategies have saved thousands of women's lives. A record number of women have become leaders and decision-makers, in particular here at the United Nations. There has been worldwide mobilization against female genital mutilation and cutting, as well as violence and killings in the name of honour and other harmful practices. Above all, more countries have understood that women's equality is a prerequisite for development.

Much has been accomplished, but much remains to be achieved. Women and girls still face multiple forms of discrimination, that often are the result of laws, policies, customs and practices that restrict women's access to participate fully in development processes, public, political and private life.

As we review the Platform for Action, we would like to emphasize that when we speak of the empowerment of women we should address feminization of poverty, violence against women — physical, psychological or sexual, at home or on the street, in situation of armed conflicts, trafficking of women and girls.

Women's health rights remain curtailed by poor access to health care, maternal and infant mortality remain unacceptably high in many countries. There are very few effective programs to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic among women in many parts of the world, especially in Africa.

Women's representation remains low in political and economic life. It generally remains marginal in public and private-sector employment. Women are very poorly represented at higher levels of decision-

making, preventive diplomacy, conflict-resolution negotiations and post-conflict peacebuilding and reconstruction. Perhaps the most insidious barrier to women's equal participation in leadership roles is the persistence of stereotypes towards women, which perpetuate discrimination and entrenched prejudices.

These challenges can be met only if we enable women to build on the best this world has to offer, rather than condemn them to suffer the worst of it. That means, above all, that women must be educated and enabled to play their part in the global economy, life of their families, communities, states.

**Mr. President,**

The Eastern European Group thanks the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General for their leadership and crucial support for gender reform and promotion of Beijing agenda. We recognize the vital importance of a strengthened United Nations gender architecture in advancing women's rights and believe that the new entity will bring an important shift to the work of the UN in the area of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

It is also imperative to involve all actors in the implementation of the gender agenda: men and women in general, governments, parliaments, civil society — including the private sector, social partners, non-governmental organizations and international, regional, national and local institutions. We must all work together in a global partnership, bringing our skills and resources together to achieve our common purpose.

**Mr. President,**

It has been said that "Women hold up half the sky". Let us not forget that there are still a lot of things to do for women here on the ground - they also manufacture textile and computers, give birth to children and raise them, write books, cultivate the land, govern people's lives, support our families, invest for the future.

Let us all together help them. Let us strive to live up to the expectations of billions of women in the world. Let us offer a clear vision for the future and bold ideas that will help ensure that will be a brighter, kinder, more peaceful and prosperous future for all. Future where women are healthy and educated, free from violence, have a chance to live, work and enjoy life as full and equal partners in society, where their children, their families and their communities flourish.

We need strong political will, abundant energy and extraordinary spirit to move it forward, to demonstrate that empowering women not only means better lives for women; it means better lives for everyone on the planet — men and women alike.

I thank you, Mr. President.