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Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations Office
and other International Organizations in Geneva

Committee on the Elimination of Discriminations against Women

General Discussions on Girl's and Women's Right to Education

Madam President,

At the outset, we would like to express our appreciation to the Committee for organizing discussions on such an important issue and also to thank for all presentations which have highlighted different aspects of the right to education and its significance and impact for young girls and women.

Brazil welcomes this opportunity to reiterate the high importance we attribute to the right to education as a human right. Our Constitution guarantees "equal educational opportunities and access to education to all citizens", while recognizing that education leads the way to economic empowerment and social inclusion.

The Brazilian government has been guided by the urgency to promote access and to ensure universalization of this basic right, in line with its international commitments and its national social and economic development strategies. Public policies for

the promotion of gender equality in education are a priority for Brazil, in accordance with article 10 of the CEDAW Convention.

In the last decade, Brazil has succeeded in increasing in more than 80% the number of enrollments in universities, the majority of which are female students. As a result, women have more years of formal education than men. Despite such achievements, many challenges still remain to be tackled. Brazilian women face higher unemployment rates and, on average, receive less than men. In the education system, they represent 81,5% of the professionals engaged with basic education. Although this sector accounts for 90% of the Brazilian educational system, it faces lower salaries and less prestige than its higher education counterparts.

In order to address these problems, the II National Plan for Women's Policies established several education-related goals: (i) to reduce female illiteracy, especially among the afro-descendants, indigenous and the elderly; (ii) to increase access to vocational training and higher education; (iii) to eliminate sexist and discriminatory content and promote the inclusion of gender equality textbooks in basic education; (iv) to train all the public education system professionals on issues related to gender equality; (v) to contribute to the reduction of gender violence; and (vi) to encourage academic research on gender studies and to promote the participation of women in scientific careers. Launched in 2005, the program "Women and Science" aims at increasing the number of young women in Engineering, Computer Science, Biotechnology and Physics studies. By the end of 2014, the Brazilian Government will have invested \$5 million dollars in financing 250 women research projects in those areas.

Madam President,

Brazil has gone a long way in promoting transformative changes in the field of education, and women have been at the centre of these developments. Gender equality strategies and access to quality education are fundamental for the social inclusion of women and men in all aspects of human, social, and economic development. Brazil is determined and committed to continuing to work for the universalization of access to quality education for girls and women in our own country and around the world.

Thank you!