



BANGLADESH

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Statement by

H.E. Mr. Md. Akbar Hossain, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN Offices and other International Organizations in New York, at the General Debate of the Third Committee of the 60th Session of the UNCTAD on 'Advancement of women' [agenda item 28]

New York, 12 October 2011

Mr. Chairman,

I thank the Secretary-General for his report on the agenda item 'Advancement of women' and Bangladesh has aligned itself with the statement made by Argentina on Monday on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

Since the assumption of office by Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in January 2009, the Government has initiated various programs and projects for the development of women which are making contribution to the economic development of the country. The main objective is to ensure women's overall development by ensuring their equal and active participation in the mainstream socio-economic activities. To expedite women's economic empowerment, comprehensive initiatives have been undertaken by providing extensive training, employment opportunities, ensuring participation in labour market and providing the support through micro and medium enterprises.

Mr. Chairman,

The Constitution of Bangladesh guarantees equal rights to women in all spheres of state and social life. Apart from the Constitution, there are several laws, rules and policies to deal with the matters related to women. The National Women Development Policy 2011 is the latest one.

Mr. Chairman,

Women being important agents of economic and social transformation, emphasis is being given by the Government on reducing feminization of poverty. Extensive programs have been undertaken to provide widow allowance, allowance for destitute women and for women with disabilities. Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) programs are being implemented to ensure access to 750,000 vulnerable women to various services. Government is also ensuring a large number of generating skill trainings are conducted in the areas of agriculture, viticulture, handicrafts and garments. Support is also given to small and medium women entrepreneurs by creating a dedicated fund and providing collateral free loan from there. The women entrepreneurs themselves are creating jobs for more women.

Legislative framework is in place to combat violence against women. Prevention of Domestic Violence Act 2010 has been passed by the Parliament. One Stop Crisis Centre operates in 6 divisions to give medical, legal and police assistance to women victims of violence. There is also a Trauma Counseling Centre. Women's participation in agricultural production is facilitated through access to agricultural technologies and loans given to agro-processing, fish, vegetable gardening, dairies, bee-keeping and other activities. Marginal and landless farmers, of whom 50% are women, are being given support. Enhanced participation and livelihood of poor rural women is a priority program of the government. The National Rural Extension Programme is giving priority to female households in every village. Steps have been taken for delivery of primary health care services through community clinics to rural, marginal and vulnerable women. The rural women friendly district hospitals have been established. Maternal Health Voucher Scheme provides a voucher package of three ante-natal check-ups, safe delivery under skilled birth attendants, postnatal check-up and transport cost.

We have increased the number of Ministries from 10 to 20 that will adopt the gender responsive budget in the FY 2011-12. Position indicator of women's advancement are reflected in continuing gender parity in primary and secondary school enrollment through increasing enrolment of students in girls and making secondary education free for them.

Economic empowerment aided by proper policy direction of the government has led our women to political empowerment. Women are at high level of decision making with Hon'ble Prime Minister chair a women's Deutscher Landes of Parliament for women and Minister in Cabinet. Opposition Leader and being women's participation in the Parliament has increased from 17.7% in 1991 to 18.6% in 2007. In different tiers of government bureaucracy, participation of women are visible and they are playing an active role.

Mr. Chairman,

As the member of the subcommittee on Trafficking, we hope that all the Member States will be working together in implementing the 'Global Plan of Action'. In our address to the General Assembly in December 2010, a draft law to combat trafficking in persons in July 2011 was passed. The draft law entitled 'The Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act, 2011' details a comprehensive approach to combat trafficking. It also addresses trafficking for the first time in a direct manner under national law of Bangladesh. It marks a step forward in defining trafficking to cover all people, not just women and children. It has provisions for stringent punishment.

Mr. Chairman,

We fulfill our international reporting obligation on women issues. During the 48th session of the CEDAW Committee in January 2011, the 6th and 7th Combined Report of Bangladesh was presented and discussed by the Committee members.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, we would like to mention that our government will eagerly look forward to the successful implementation of the Strategic Plan of UN Women for 2011-2013. We hope that the entity's representative office will enter to the country specific needs, design and develop programmes through consultation with the government. Here, we could not overemphasize the issue of funding. To meet the capacity building needs of LDC like Bangladesh, a huge amount of resources will be required. We are confident that the leadership and the wisdom of the USG's office on proper allocation of resources.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.