



Bangladesh

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Statement by Dr. Abulkalam Abdul Momen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations, New York in the open debate of Security Council on Women and Peace and Security, New York, 28 October 2011.

Madam President,

I thank the Presidency of Nigeria for organizing this important event. I also commend the insightful statements made by the Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki Moon, the Under Secretary General Ms. Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director of UN-Women and other speakers, on women and peace and security.

Madam President,

Eleven years ago, we adopted the landmark resolution 1325 on women, peace and security in this Council. Bangladesh, then as a member of the Council and one of the core co-sponsors of the resolution was closely associated with the adoption of this historic document that endeavors to ensure women's rights and roles in peace and security. The decisions adopted in the document apply not only to States but also to actors involved in the post conflict peace process. We take a modicum of pride for what we have done a decade ago.

Thereafter, several resolutions such as resolutions 1820, 1888, 1889, and 1960 have been adopted to buttress the process initiated through resolution 1325. We are, however, disappointed to note that violence against women and girls are still on as delineated in different reports. As we have mentioned earlier, women and girls suffer most as victims of conflict, while in the peace process they are mostly deprived of the dividends. Therefore, onus lies on us to ensure that oppression against women and girls particularly gender related ones are stopped forever.

Madam President,

We are well aware that poverty, struggle for scarce resources, and socio-economic injustice and unfairness lie at the heart of conflicts and all of them, sadly create breeding ground for such social blight including violence against women and girls. The resulting impact not only leads to insecurity of women and girls but also impairs the political and economic stability as well as national security. Therefore, protecting women's rights is not an option; it is a compulsion that requires coordinated actions from all of us.

We recognize that empowering women entails them to have command over resources and adequate leadership capability for efficient management of those resources. Therefore, we stress on the fulfillment of the economic needs of women, and necessity of their engagement internationally in all levels and forms of decision making process. While the former could be achieved through ensuring their access to and participation in income generating and entrepreneurial activities such as micro-credit, education, vocational training, public health; the latter could be ensured through recruitment of women particularly in senior level positions. For clearer understanding of the needs of women from South, we have to make sure that women from global south get due recognition while considering recruitment. For proper coordination with field, fair representation of TCC/PCCs must be ensured as decided previously in the General Assembly and C-34 of the United Nations.

Madam President,

We believe, women's participation can be ensured through an inclusive process. At policy level, it necessitates the creation of a conducive arrangement for integrating women in decision making process. This should be supported by necessary capacity building initiatives at community level as enablers for their effective participation. We strongly believe that our debate and discussion should not be confined in capitals. It should transcend over boundary and reach the grass-root women who lack even the language of expressing their agony. This has to be done through people's empowerment, especially empowerment of women particularly at grass-root level. If we fail to do so, our achievement will be slow.

Madam President,

In Bangladesh, from our experience of nation building and women empowerment, we have embraced this view and developed a model what our Prime Minister, Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina calls a 'peace model'. The central message conveyed in the model emphasizes on empowering people including women and vulnerable groups through imparting them education and skills, empowering them to have right to vote and participate in governance and empowering them by enhancing their income level, by ending poverty and hunger and by ending all forms of discrimination and terrorism. Bangladesh Prime Minister, during the General Assembly, has presented her model before the world community as she believes if peace is attained, development and prosperity would follow. We would be happy to share our experience with the interested delegates.

In Bangladesh, women occupy the top political leadership in the country. The Constitution of Bangladesh guarantees equality of men and women within the broad framework of non-discrimination on grounds of religion, race or gender.

The Government has adopted National Policy for Women's Advancement and National Plan of Action. A Women's Development Implementation Committee, headed by the Minister for Women and Children Affairs, monitors the implementation of policies for women's

empowerment. It has also created gender-based budget. The result is highly positive. Just to cite an example, enrolment of girls at both primary and secondary level schools exceeds that of boys, helped by waiver of tuition and provision of stipends for girls in secondary level.

The Government has enacted laws for protecting women against domestic violence and is currently implementing a number of projects for developing capabilities of women. Many affirmative action have been taken that help women in distress and old age. In order to involve women in decision-making process, government has adopted quota system for women in national parliament as well as in the recruitment of our civil service alongside the direct election and open competition.

Madam President,

In maintenance of international peace and security, we take pride for our modest contribution of troops and police to the UN Peacekeeping missions. Recruitment of women in police and military amply delineates our commitment towards women empowerment nationally as well as in international arena. We are pleased that we could deploy a Full Contingent of All- Female Formed Police Unit or FPU to the friendly country Haiti following the devastating earthquake there.

I am pleased to inform that our all men troop contingent are fully briefed on the gender issue. We provide necessary and on the job training to reinforce their understanding and sensitivity. We are aware that we need to ensure a gender perspective into all conflict prevention activities and strategies, develop effective gender sensitive early warning mechanisms and institutions, and strengthen efforts to prevent violence against women, including various forms of gender-based violence.

Madam President,

In conclusion, I would reiterate that we in Bangladesh have been making our best efforts to ensure women's empowerment and participation in all spheres of our lives as we believe, 'educating a man means educating a person and in contrast, educating a woman means educating a family'. We are willing to replicate in our national policy, any good practice that we will come across globally, similarly we are ready to share our experience with others for the good of mankind.

I thank you all.