



Bangladesh

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Statement by Dr. Abul kalam Abdul Momen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations, New York in the open debate of Security Council on Women and Peace and Security, New York, 23 February, 2012.

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to express my appreciation to you for organizing this important meeting. I also thank Ms. Margot Wallström, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for her comprehensive presentation of the report on sexual violence in armed conflict.

In the landmark resolution 1325 (2000), the Security Council recognized the important role of women in maintaining peace and security. It also highlighted specific needs and concerns of women during and in the aftermath of armed conflicts. We feel proud that Bangladesh, then as a member of the Council and one of the main co-sponsors of the resolution was closely associated with the adoption of this historic document. Periodic meetings of this sort offer us an opportunity to take stock of the progress achieved and the challenges remain in fulfilling the objectives of this resolution as well as subsequent resolutions 1820, 1888 and 1960.

Some initiative by the global community in the first decade of its adoption have been praiseworthy. The establishment of a new body, UN Women and the appointment of a Special Representative of Secretary General for sexual violence in armed conflict has been two significant developments that have placed women at the top of the global agenda. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations has also undertaken commendable steps for better protection and enhanced participation of women.

The situation is, however, far from being satisfactory. We are disappointed to note that violence against women and girls are still prevalent in many parts of the world engaging in armed conflict. Women and girls, we all know, suffer most as victims of such conflicts. Their suffering is compounded as they are ignored or marginalized in the peace process. Women are too often excluded from both the negotiations that make peace and the institutions that maintain it. We underscore the need to do more to ensure safety and security of women and girls, particularly during conflict situation as well as in its aftermath. Participation of women should be ensured at all stages of peace process-prevention of conflict, negotiations for peace and post-conflict reconstruction.

Mr. President,

We also believe that poverty and socio-economic deprivation are the breeding grounds for conflicts including sexual violence against women and girls. We, therefore, stress on the fulfillment of the economic needs of women, and necessity of their engagement at all levels and in all 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, vocational training, public health; the latter could be ensured through recruitment of women particularly in senior level positions.

Mr. 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', as she believes that if peace is attained, development and prosperity would follow. The central message conveyed in the model emphasizes on empowering people including women and vulnerable. I am happy to note here that General Assembly adopted a resolution recently (A/RES/66/224), entitled, "People's empowerment and development".

Women occupy many top leadership positions in our 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 345-member National Parliament of Bangladesh has 45 seats reserved for women. We have also significant number of elected women representatives in local bodies.

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. We are benefiting greatly from all these initiatives. 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.

Mr. President,

We are pleased to make our modest contribution in the maintenance of international peace and security. Our troops and police are doing excellent job in various UN Peacekeeping missions. In line with our pro-women policy, we have been recruiting women in our regular forces like the police and the military. While contributing to our national security, they are also being sent to respond to international calls. For example, we have a Full Contingent of All- Female Formed Police Unit (FPU) in Haiti following the devastating earthquake there.

Finally, Mr. President, let me emphasis that we have a solemn responsibility to protect women and girls against all forms of violence and ensure their rightful place in line with the letter and spirit of the resolution 1325. On our part, we stand ready to make our humble contribution to global efforts in promoting the status and role of women both nationally and internationally.

I thank you all.