



Statement by  
Iqbal Abdullah Harun, Economic Minister, Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations  
at the Second Regular Session 2020 of the Executive Board of UN-Women  
New York, 15 September, 2020

Thank you, Mr. President. I congratulate UN Women on its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary

Over the last decade, UN Women has made remarkable contributions in advancing gender equality and providing critical support to the member states in achieving SGD5, as well as ensuring UN system-wide mainstreaming of gender issues.

**Mr. President**

In Bangladesh, women's empowerment is a national priority and our efforts have brought-about transformative changes by mainstreaming women in the national development agenda and helped reducing the gender gap by 72.6 percent. Bangladesh leads in the region in-terms of economic and political empowerment of women, pioneer in women's participation in peacekeeping and a leading champion of Women, Peace and Security.

This was possible due to our women-friendly policy interventions, large investment in women's socio-economic development and in girls' education, which have opened up new horizons for women. Women's financial inclusion helped us in alleviating poverty at the national level.

Mr. President, UN-Women is a trusted partner in our gender equality efforts and we appreciate its support in the implementation of the National Women's Development Policy 2011; as well as its support for the implementation of the national action plans for elimination of violence against women and for abolition of child marriage.

**Mr. President,**

The ongoing pandemic has posed a major blow to the gender equality agenda. In Bangladesh, women's economic advancement has suffered severely due to the pandemic and violence against women and other associated harms have also been on the rise.

To address women's livelihood challenges, the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has already taken multiple initiatives, including women-led small and medium industries to recover from losses. We are also conscious of the increased risks of Gender Based Violence during Covid situation.

**Mr. President**

In order to protect the advancement made in gender equality from possible roll back, UN Women needs to redouble its advocacy role and expand its engagements. At the policy level, UN Women must continue to voice the concerns about women's special vulnerabilities and special needs during this pandemic and integrate them into the responses. At the national level, UN Women needs to engage and empower women in tackling the pandemic and its socio-economic-political and cultural impacts in all situations.

We look forward to increased partnership with UN Women in realizing women's equal participation in every sector. Bangladesh stands ready to contribute by all means, including by sharing its innovations and experiences. I thank you