



PERMANENT MISSION OF TURKEY TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT BY H.E. MRS. SELMA ALIYE KAVAF,
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AT THE 54TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
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**Honorable Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is a great honor for me, as the Turkish Minister of State for Women and Family Affairs, to join you today to participate in the 54th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. I am pleased that this Session will review the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the 23rd special session of the UN General Assembly and its contribution to shaping a gender perspective in the realization of the Millennium Development Goals.

Empowerment of women and gender equality will be the priority themes of the UN's agenda throughout the year, during which we will direct our focus on these important issues, availing of the opportunity given by the Annual Ministerial Review of ECOSOC in July; the forthcoming MDG Review Summit in autumn and the commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and Security in September.

We, the Member States, should use this window of opportunity to reiterate our commitment to and the implementation of the goals we set for ourselves in Beijing, as well as at the Millennium Summit.

As Turkey, we are ready to spare no effort to this end and we are committed to continue our contribution both at the national level and the global context to these processes in the most effective manner.

I wish to emphasize that on the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Committee has proven to be a great catalyst in changing stereotypes in societies and achieving considerable progress towards the target of gender equality. We take due account of these institutional efforts, documents and Conventions in our national activities in Turkey on gender equality. Since the last review in 2005, Turkey has made important progress in promoting gender equality, strengthened the equality between women and men in its legislation and intensified its efforts to put the equality provided by its legislation into practice. A National Action Plan on Gender Equality, covering ten critical areas set forth in Beijing Declaration, has been prepared to eliminate those cases of gender inequality which may occur despite the equality provided by the legislation and are therefore reflected in the established indicators.

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**Honorable Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,**

Remarkable steps have been taken especially in girls' education. The schooling rate among girls has risen to 96 percent, and among boys to 97 percent and the schooling gap between girls and boys has been reduced through continuous and decisive efforts. However, our target is to achieve a 100 percent schooling rate both among girls and boys by 2013.

In order to ensure greater access to the labor market for women, whose number has decreased due to the global economic crisis and migration from rural to urban areas, measures have been taken towards raising women's educational levels and work skills through active labor policies. An Employment Package was launched in 2008, incorporating important provisions for enhancing the employment prospects of women and the youth. As part of the package, the government pays for social security premiums on behalf of employers recruiting women and the youth for a term of five years.

Furthermore, targeted training is provided to raise awareness among public personnel in decision-making mechanisms in rural areas, in view of the critical role of public servants in gender mainstreaming.

**Honorable Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,**

The prevention of violence against women, which is a global problem, is a state policy in Turkey. The Turkish Government is politically determined to combat violence against women. A circular has been issued by the Office of the Prime Minister on combating violence against women, as an indication of this determination. This is of great importance in assigning specific responsibilities to all relevant institutions on the subject and monitoring their activities in this respect at certain intervals.

The "Stop Violence against Women" campaign, launched in 2004 to raise awareness and consciousness among the public, is still in operation. A National Action Plan on Combating Violence against Women covering the period 2007 and 2010 has initiated specific work in such areas as legislation, awareness rising, and empowerment of women, protective services, treatment, rehabilitation and inter-institutional cooperation. A research project on "Domestic Violence against Women in Turkey" has been conducted countrywide in order to develop preventive and combative strategies on violence against women.

Moreover, training has been provided to raise awareness among law enforcement officers, health personnel and legal officers, who constitute the first-echelon in the application and assistance process in cases of violence against women. So far, 40.000 police officers, 50.000 health personnel, 250 judges and public prosecutors have benefitted from specific training on methods of approach to victims of domestic violence. Preparations are almost complete for launching similar training programmes for religious officers.

**Honorable Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,**

I have the pleasure to recall the recent announcement of the Turkish Government's decision to put forward the candidacy of Prof. Dr. Feride Acar for the Committee of the Elimination of

All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Prof. Feride Acar has served both as a member and Chair of the Committee in the past and the Turkish Government is confident that her renewed membership of the Committee will further contribute to efforts with regard to empowerment of women and gender equality in the international fora.

**Honorable Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

I am confident that the 54th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women will contribute to our activities in promoting gender equality.
Thank you for your kind attention.