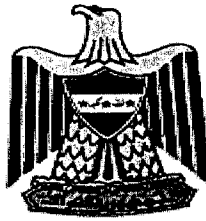


**Permanent Mission of the
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Statement by

**H.E Ambassador Dr.Hamid Al-Bayati
Permanent representative of Iraq to the United
Nation**

At the
53rd session
of the Commission on the Status of Women

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New York
Please check against delivery

Mr. President,

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you on your election as president of the commission and to congratulate the newly elected bureau members.

My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Sudan on behalf of G77 and China.

My delegation also wishes to express its appreciation for the Secretary-General's reports presented to CSW, particularly:

The Report of the SG on The situation of and assistance to Palestinian women,

The Report of the SG on the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care giving in the context of HIV/AIDS,

And the Report of the Secretary-General on Women, girl children and HIV/AIDS

Mr. President

In my statement I will try to shed light on some aspects of the improvement in gender equality and the situation of women in Iraq, and the endeavors of the Iraqi government, for the last 5 years, to ensure women in Iraq are represented at all levels of government and in all sectors of society.

Women's living conditions, security and advancement in Iraq has declined for 3 decades because of Saddam's regime's policies of dictatorship, repression and brutality as well as because of wars, economic sanctions, and negligence which had eroded conditions for all Iraqi people including Women.

There had been systematic breach of human rights particularly against women who were subjected to gender specific abuse and violence as well.

As for the new Iraq, equality between women and men and protection against discrimination have been enshrined in the Transitional Administrative Law and the new Iraqi constitution, which was adopted by the majority of the Iraqi people in a general referendum in October 2005.

The New Iraqi constitution contains new articles that ensure the principle of equality between women and men, such as Article (20) which provides for the equal rights of men and women to participate in public affairs, and enjoy political rights, including the right to vote, election and nomination. Also Article (14) provides that the Iraqis are equal before the law without discrimination based on sex, race, nationality, origin, color, religion, sect, belief, opinion or social or economic status.

Iraqi women have proven throughout the period of difficulties the country has been going through, their resilience, courage, and determination. During the last few years they have been playing a bigger and more efficient role, as part of the political process in the new Iraq, having not less than 25% of the parliament seats as provided by the new constitution. The recent provincial elections witnessed the competition of 14,431 candidates (3,912 of whom were women) in which the percentage of not less than 25% of women's quota was observed as well. According to the law of the

Provincial Elections, women were given 25% of the seats even if they get fewer votes than men.

The role of women has recently become more empowered with the creation of the cross-party women's caucus, which is composed of 73 women parliamentarians. The creation of this caucus was a result of joint effort with the United Nations agencies to advance the development enactment of policies to help victims of violence including widows and orphans, war victims, families and Iraqi refugees.

The cross party women's caucus will enable Iraqi women parliamentarians to emerge as more efficient and influential actors in the legislature by bridging either/or political views held by their various parties.

Iraqi women have as well been playing for the first time a very important role as ministers of important ministries. For example the minister of human rights, minister of municipalities and public work, minister of state for women, minister of housing and construction and the minister of environment are all women.

I have to mention here that the country has witnessed for the first time, the establishment of women's organizations through which Iraqi women can prove their capabilities in defeating challenges by taking difficult responsibilities on different levels. These organizations have been playing an important role in advancing and empowering the role of women in Iraq.

My country is going through the process of institutional reconstruction, and my government realizes that without the effective participation and full role of women, many of our long term goals will not be achieved. There is a significant increase in the number of women working in the Foreign Service, and for the first time women have been appointed as Ambassadors, there is in addition a significant increase in the representation of women in the diplomatic missions abroad and in the official delegations representing the country - something they were deprived of for so long.

Mr. President,

Iraq's current political situation offers an opportunity to redress persistent violations of women's rights, as the Iraqi constitution will be further amended as part of the political process. It will open space to continue to influence the process to better systematically address women's rights, and promote gender equality as part of Iraq's institutional rebuilding.

It is anticipated that 60 laws will be either revised or enacted as stipulated in Iraq's new constitution providing an unprecedented opportunity to further influence the constitution and legislation and to align them to international conventions, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

The Government of Iraq in partnership with UNIFEM is implementing programs and projects to promote the role of women with the aim of strengthening the role of civil society organizations to mitigate violence and to contribute to build peace in Iraq.

Another program implemented in Iraq by different UN agencies includes work to disseminate information on emerging issues and innovative solutions towards conflict resolution and increasing tolerance in order to enhance the capacity of community groups and women's NGOs that promote the culture of peace and foster dialogue among various groups.

The Iraqi Government maintains an awareness of the concept of gender and the empowerment of women within its institutions in line with the Convention of the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. Awareness-raising sessions on women's rights have been conducted by the Government for the members of the Supreme committee for the advancement of women, on a range of concepts and basic principles of human rights.

In addition the government has established the social protection network for supporting displaced families- especially those headed by women, widows, victims of violence, women with disabilities, and unemployed women.

Mr. President,

In Iraq, the challenges are great but our ambitions to achieve full realization of women's rights in accordance to the Beijing platform of action, CEDAW and all the other relevant instruments, and in improving the over-all situation of the people of Iraq will remain greater.

To conclude Mr. President

Today women in the world are becoming further victimized by the challenges the world is facing, from the lack of education, diseases and lack of proper healthcare and services, to the recent financial and food crises, and conflicts in many regions of the world.

We believe that the solutions should be reached through global efforts, and through a serious commitment from all parties, to which we commit ourselves.

Thank you Mr. President...