



PHILIPPINES

STATEMENT
BY

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DURING THE
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55TH Session of the Commission on the Status of Women
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Thank you Mr. Chairperson.

I have been attending the Commission on the Status of Women off and on for almost a quarter of a century. But this 55th session of the CSW is extra special. With women all over the world, the Philippine delegation celebrates the birth of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women or U.N. Women. And we welcome Ms. Michele Bachelet as its first Undersecretary General and Executive Director. To say that there is a lot riding on U.N. Women and that expectations are very high, would be an understatement. At the country level, our wish list is long. We wish that the U.N. at the country level was more engendered, that all U.N. agencies really worked for women; we wish that the U.N. would help make gender central to national planning and that national machineries for women like U.N. Women, are more highly placed and are brought to the mainstream of development planning and negotiations; that gender mainstreaming be revisited, reclaimed and returned to the goals of gender equality and women's empowerment; that the U.N. work more closely and consistently with the women's movement. And speaking of the women's movement, I wish to recognize the Gender Equality Architecture Reform (GEAR) Campaign, a global network of NGOs that worked tirelessly for the creation of U.N. Women. Congratulations to all and together let us get to work.

The Philippines remains deeply committed to the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Millennium Development Goals. Our national efforts have been strengthened by the recent passage of the Magna Carta on Women, the comprehensive Gender Equality Law which is the translation of CEDAW in national legislation.

Allow me to address the theme of this 55th Commission on the Status of Women. In almost every aspect of education, women and girls outnumber men and boys in the Philippines. Girls fare better in terms of enrolment indicators in primary and secondary education. More girls are able to complete the prescribed number of years in both levels with the drop-out rates lower for females.

To address the issue of higher rates of male drop out in schools, the Philippine Government scaled up its inclusive education policy through the Philippine Education for All 2015 Plan which aims to bring all school age children to school through dropout reduction programs, alternative learning systems, distance education, and back to school programs for out of school youth and adults most of whom are boys.

Girls continue their advantage in tertiary or higher education where women make up 54% of total enrolment and 57% of graduates. In the Philippines, the issue seems not to be gender equality in access to education but access to quality education for the poor and those living in rural areas. We are also warned not to be lulled into complacency by simple access statistics as gender sensitivity and access to gender fair education are also issues, surfacing in situations where girls and young women suffer more subtle discrimination such as sexual harassment and violence against women and girls. There are also concerns about lingering gender tracking in fields of study and career choice. Women dominate the fields of teacher education, humanities, social sciences, business administration medical and allied fields, home economics, mass communication, and even natural sciences and mathematics, but remain underrepresented in engineering and technology, fine and applied arts, religion and theology, law and jurisprudence, architecture and town planning, trade and industry, agriculture, fisheries and forestry, and maritime studies.

To address these, The Department of Education conducted training of teachers and school administrators on integrating gender and development into the curriculum, gender-related training to eliminate gender stereotyping in textbooks and instructional materials, and raising teachers' awareness of gender issues.

The Personal Safety Lessons (PSL) which aim to give information, develop skills, and build self-esteem in children to increase their ability to resist sexual offenders were piloted in 14 schools in 3 regions.

At the tertiary level, faculty from universities have formed the Women's Studies Association of the Philippines committed to include gender and women's studies in the general education curricula and in their fields of expertise, including agriculture, environment and science and technology.

And changes are evident. The College of Engineering of the University of the Philippines reports that 40% of the students are women comprising the majority in chemical engineering, industrial engineering, and materials engineering and growing numbers in other fields. To boost enrollment in science and technology, Congress passed the Science and Technology Scholarship Act of 1997. It aims to expand and upgrade educational opportunities for women and men to pursue careers in science and technology.

It is important to note that while girls and women perform quite well in most traditional educational indicators, their educational gains have not fully translated into increased employment opportunities and better quality jobs.

The labor force participation of women remains low compared to men despite higher educational levels. Men are more likely to be wage and salary and own account workers while women are likely to be unpaid workers and comprise 85% of the informal economy.

The Philippines is committed to pursue the Decent Work Agenda as spelled out in its Philippine Development Plan. The Decent Work Country Programme has been translated into National Plans of Action for Decent Work. This plan seeks to increase employment and income opportunities for women, and recognizes that gender is a major cross cutting issue that should be a major concern in all decent work projects.

To facilitate decent work, gender based discrimination legislation has been enacted in such areas as sexual harassment, solo parenting and the granting of paid paternity leave to married male employees. The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority Women's Center since its establishment in 1998 has been continuously operating and focusing on activities that promote the economic empowerment of women and gender equality through training, research and advocacy, gender and development. Aside from providing a whole range of vocational and technical education such as household service work and caregiving, opportunities are available also for training of women in non-traditional trades such as auto mechanics, electronics and welding. Recently, TESDA has also offered training for women bus drivers acting on data showing that female drivers have less accident than male bus drivers.

To enhance the enabling environment for women's access to microenterprise development, the Philippine Commission on Women facilitates synergy of services provided by agencies from the government economic cluster---trade and industry, science and technology, environment and natural resources, occupational safety and health as well as social protection agencies like the national health insurance system.

Two final points, Mr. Chairperson.

The Philippine Government recognizes the important role of national mechanisms which promote and protect women's human rights stipulated in UN conventions, and strongly supports the application for independent participation by national human rights institutions in CSW.

Finally, the Philippines has sponsored a resolution on Mainstreaming Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Strategies. We enjoin member states to support our resolution.

Thank you.

