



EGYPT

مصر

The Permanent Mission of Egypt
to the United Nations
New York

بعثة مصر الدائمة
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نيويورك

Statement
by
H.E. Minister. Mervat Tallawy
President of The National Council For Women
EGYPT

Before The 56th Session of
the Commission on the Status of Women

New York, February 29, 2012

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Madame. Chair,

Ladies and Gentlemen, Heads of Delegations

Allow me to congratulate you and members of the Bureau for the chairmanship of the Committee, I would also like to express our appreciation to the United Nations officials for introducing the issue of "rural women" as a priority on the agenda of this session. The Delegation of Egypt supported the statements of the Group of 77 and China and the African Group.

Madame. Chair,

Last month, Egypt celebrated the first anniversary of its January 25th revolution, in which Egyptian women played a key role, as many of them sacrificed their lives to realize the aspirations of the Egyptians; men and women, for freedom, dignity and social justice, as well as for their active participation in shaping the nation's future. There had been difficult moments last year, which was expected in light of the transitional period in Egypt, and we are fully determined to build new Egypt in the near future.

The National Council for Women has been recently revived, and I have the honour to be elected as its president. New members representing various social, political, cultural, and religious backgrounds have joined the council. The focus of the Council's new policy will be on development and empowerment of poor women and rural areas, in order to commensurate with the requirements of the Egyptians for freedom and social justice.

Egypt has worked to promote women's rights for many decades. For example, since the establishment of the National Council of Women in 2000, a special focus has been given to rural women. Among the activities carried out in this context:

- Assisting rural women to issue identity cards to enable them to have an access to government services, including loans and credit facilities. In this context, I would like to express our gratitude to Mme Michelle Bachelet for praising this leading program in her inaugural statement.
- The establishment of a training centre to develop women's skills in establishing small businesses and provide marketing counseling.
- The launch of women- headed households' small- micro credit programs, and providing them with new opportunities for marketing their products.

Madame. Chair,

Despite the vital role rural played by rural women in providing food for the family and ensuring food security at the national level, they still face multifaceted discrimination, in terms of less access to productive assets necessary for agriculture and food security, limited access to training opportunities, non-fulfillment of their legal rights, business difficulties, as well as the double burden, resulting from their involvement in income-generating activities, in addition to their household responsibilities.

Therefore, there is still much to be done in order to achieve self-sufficiency for the rural populations, and access to the same services in urban areas, in order to a decent life for people in rural areas. This requires the United Nations to compile successful experiences in the field of supporting and strengthening of

rural women, so as to guide other states interested in developing programs for the advancement of rural women.

In addition to the problems of the poor and the rural populations, the emergence of global crises related to high food prices, climate change, volatile markets, as well as the financial and economic crisis have their negative impacts on women, particularly rural women, due to their impact on deepening poverty, unemployment, marginalization, and social exclusion.

According to the outcome document of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals of 2010, which called for the need to give high priority to the empowerment of rural women, as well as to accelerate progress towards women's empowerment and their participation as critical agents for enhancing agricultural and rural development and food security, which will inevitably lead to the eradication of poverty and hunger, and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. This will have a value-added during the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20) and beyond.

Madame. Chair,

On the regional level, Egypt, in its capacity as a chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, Egypt reaffirms its strong commitment to promote economic empowerment of women especially in rural areas, as an implementation of what has been outlined in Doha declaration and programme of Action adopted two weeks ago during NAM third ministerial meeting on the advancement of women. Moreover, Egypt presides over the Afro-Asian Rural Development Organization which forthcoming meeting to be held in New Delhi next month, will focus on

strengthening efforts to reduce poverty, in particular in rural areas and ensuring the development of rural women, and the intensification of international and regional cooperation, especially with the United Nations specialized agencies and organizations.

Egypt, despite the difficult conditions experienced by, does not forget to support Palestinian women in the occupied territories. Egypt's efforts in the mediation between Palestine and Israel have resulted in the release of a number of Palestinian women detainees in Israeli prisons. Egypt will continue its historic support to brothers in Palestine, so that they can get their right to establish an independent state with its capital in East Jerusalem.

Madame. Chair,

I would like to conclude by reiterating Egypt's strong commitment towards the achievement of equality and the empowerment of women to ensure their enjoyment of their rights and fundamental freedoms, which can not be attained without the eradication of poverty, illiteracy and cultural prejudices, as well as the need to raise the awareness among decision-makers of the close relationship linking sustainable development and standard of living of the poorest in the society namely, women who are the poorest of the poor.

I hope we all will celebrate all together in the near future the return of the Egyptian women as a leading force in their society and in their region. I am confident that women will overcome the difficulties prevailed after the revolution and ensure the attainment of the revolution's slogans; freedom, dignity and social justice.

Thank you, Madame. Chair.



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

NEW YORK, 29 FEBRUARY 2012

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, 56TH SESSION

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTIAN WENAWESER

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Chairperson,

We welcome the focus of this year's session on the situation of rural women. Their particular needs as well as the risks and challenges they face, including multiple forms of discrimination, must to be addressed urgently as they cause ongoing poverty, marginalization and violence. Rural women encounter numerous challenges, for instance deprivation from access to economic, legal and political services in areas such as education, health systems and the judiciary. As gender equality and women's rights are fundamental human rights, States have an obligation to end all forms of discrimination and address all human rights violations against women and girls. Therefore, empowering rural women and girls is a key challenge on the agenda for the advancement of women. Gender equality is a key enabler of sustainable and equitable economic growth and the overall development of a country. Studies have shown that the participation and active engagement of women in agriculture, politics, health and other sectors are directly linked to the economic performance, stability and well-being of a country. With their talent and productive potential rural women are important agents of development. For too long has their potential gone unacknowledged and untapped. Therefore, the empowerment of rural women and girls, their participation in societal processes and decision-making, their access and control of resources, need to be strengthened with a view to eliminate discrimination and inequalities between genders.

In order to increase the economic empowerment and independence of rural women, the Liechtenstein Development Agency supports projects such as the Lupane Women's Centre for sustainable livelihoods for rural women in Zimbabwe. The Center gains 50% of its yearly budget from own earnings and helps rural women to get an income, support their families and decrease their dependence from subsistence economy through the manufacturing of baskets, goat breeding or creating vegetable gardens.

Chairperson,

Gender-based violence, in particular domestic and sexual violence as well as harmful practices for example Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting, violates fundamental human rights and is a major obstacle to development. Ending discrimination and violence against women continue to be a priority for Liechtenstein and we remind States of their obligations under international law to end impunity for such violations and to ensure redress for victims. States have a legal and moral obligation to protect the human rights of all their citizens and to prevent especially the most vulnerable groups from violations of their basic rights. Rural women are particularly vulnerable in this regard. They often face even more restrictions in their access to judicial services than their urban counterparts. Ending impunity is crucial to avoid revictimization and future acts of violence and therefore necessary to end an ongoing vicious circle impacting many women on a daily basis. The collection of relevant data in this regard can support accountability and tailored protection policies. In order to address the current lack of data on violence against women in rural areas, access to remote areas should be improved. Women's representation in judiciary bodies has to be strengthened and gender-sensitive law reforms need to be promoted. Liechtenstein welcomes pioneer projects in this field, such as the UN Police Vulnerable Persons Unit in Timor-Leste.

Chairperson,

In order to achieve peace, stability, and sustainable development, rural women should get every chance to fully participate in decision-making at all levels and in all contexts. Rural women continue to be marginalized from the political sphere, particularly in political processes at the national level. Active at grassroots level, they face discriminatory practices that exclude them when laws are codified and constitutions are written. States must do more to ensure that rural women's voices are carried to capitals. They should also be obliged to protect the rights of women to participate on equal terms throughout all phases of political transition, to guarantee their right to speak their minds, and to assemble freely. The UN must support these efforts and, in this regard, we welcome UN Women's focus in 2012 on women's political participation.

Despite the significant normative progress made in the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda of the Security Council's over the last years, mainstreaming the agenda in the country-specific work of the Council remains a challenge. Women continue to be underrepresented as stakeholders in peace processes in various conflict affected regions

throughout the globe, leading to a neglect of their rights in peace accords and institutional arrangements. Women have to be involved in peace processes from the beginning or their interests and protection needs risk being unaddressed at later stages. In addition, sexual violence must be addressed throughout all stages of conflict resolution processes, starting with ceasefire agreements, and the presence of adequate gender expertise at the peace table. Here, we believe that the Security Council has a crucial responsibility. To support the Council's efforts in mainstreaming its thematic agenda on Women, Peace and Security, the Liechtenstein delegation held a workshop, from 28 to 30 January 2012 in Schaan/Liechtenstein, hosted by H.E. Foreign Minister Aurelia Frick, on the implementation of the WPS agenda in Afghanistan. The workshop has been organized in close partnership with the Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination at Princeton University (LISD) and was supported by the delegations of Afghanistan and Germany. Along with our Afghan partners we invite all delegation to a presentation of the main findings of the workshop on 29 March at 3:00 PM in Conference room 5.

Thank you.

