

Islamic Republic of

I R A N

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

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Intervention by

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on behalf of

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Advisor to the President

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the Islamic Republic of Iran**

General Discussion of the CSW 56

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000; gender equality, development and peace for the twenty first centry"

New York, 28 February 2012

In the Name of the Almighty God

Madame Chair,

First, I would like to congratulate you again as the chair for the 56th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. I am assured that through your good disposition the outcome of the session would lead to fruitful results.

I would like also to reiterate that since neither members of my delegation from the capital has been granted entry visa to the US by the host country, I would read the statement on behalf of H. E. Ms. Maryam Mojtahedzadeh, advisor to the President and Head of Center for Women and Family Affairs.

Madame Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen

The Islamic Republic of Iran maintains that the promotion of women's rights and dignity and their empowerment in its all aspects is a prerequisite for the comprehensive development in any community. Therefore, this session of the Commission on the Status of women is an adequate opportunity for the high ranking representatives of the governments to focus on the most suitable approach in this regard and share lessons on the problems and shortcomings faced by women at national and international levels and to take the essential steps in reviewing the previous strategies in promoting their status.

According to the inspiring school of pure Islam, new horizon is opened towards woman and her rights. This view is based on respect and dignity to various individual, family and social aspects in terms of equality and justice in creation, human rights, and social activities. This viewpoint is based on the features and capacities of woman which can lead her to growth and development of society.

We believe that family is the basic unit of human community and a family oriented approach should be viewed as a forward looking force and an essential element for advancement, spirituality and justice. It is from this perspective that the UN bodies especially the Commission on the Status of Women should regulate their strategies, and recommend steps regarding the integrative and comprehensive advancement of women.

Madame Chair,

We are of the opinion that the uprising of the people in the Middle East and North Africa is an extensive movement based on pure Islamic awakening features by the real widespread participation of women in the struggles. It is the people of these countries, in particular the women, who are defining the objectives and a bright future for their own countries. The women in these regions are pursuing to revive their human dignity based on religion, rationale, and

morality which have been trampled for years by despotic regimes and foreign interventions. Hence, any attempt to deny this awakening and to move against the will of people is doomed to fail.

Madame Chair,

The critical situation of women and children in the occupied territories of Palestine and the cruelly violence perpetrated by the Israeli regime against them is undoubtedly one of the gravest tragedies in current history. The continuous human tragedy in the Gaza Strip is a widespread violation of the international humanitarian law and demands the Commission on the Status of Women to deal with the main root cause of the issue of Palestine within the framework of its themes and reports, which is the continuation of foreign occupation in this territory.

Madam Chair,

We, in the Islamic Republic of Iran believe that men and women are equal in respect to dignity and human rights. This right is not to be confused with equaling men and women's role in family, society and in the development process. Hence, we believe, equality, complementarity and justice as well as taking complementary role is part of the basic concepts of the role of men and women in family and society.

Moreover, the Islamic Republic of Iran has also special attention towards the issue of women and the promotion of their status within the framework of Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Hence, in the follow up to the Tehran Declaration adopted in the third Women Ministerial Conference of OIC in Tehran in December 2010, my country was also the host for the international conference entitled, "The Eminent Ladies of the Divine Religions", participated by the ministers and senior officials of the OIC member States..

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has taken many initiatives, such as identifying women issues as a priority or cross – cutting issue and mainstream their status across all sectors in all stages of the policy process. Accordingly, in addition to raising of awareness, capacity building and training activities, my government has attempted to respect the gender perspectives in the policies and development processes envisaged in the national development plan. For this purpose, within the national development process, especial focus is made on the empowerment of women, including by promoting profession and capacity- build up in every ministries and national political and economic machineries.

Recently in implementing the article 230 of the 5th National Development Plan, the Center for Women and Family Affairs together with all the relevant ministries and organizations has attempted to formulate a comprehensive national development plan on women and family affairs.

Additionally, the National Women and Family Committee is established to achieve the principle ten of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran with the aim of strengthening the sacred family union and family member relationships based on Islamic rights and virtues. The Head of this committee is composed of the President and eight of the cabinet ministers of the Islamic Republic of Iran as well as the head of the women's fraction from the Parliament (Islamic Consultative Assembly).

In the same line, various policies were also adopted with the aim of rural women empowerment. Regular skill and technical trainings offered to rural inhabitants with the aim of empowering them to deliver services and cooperate in the industrial activities and in turn improve the quality of products and improve their talents for entrepreneurship at micro and medium scale levels have all been part of the programs implemented by offering funds and credits and improving the social insurance funds.

In this regard, my country has prepared a report on the strategies, policies, plans and achievements in the Islamic Republic of Iran for the empowerment of rural women, which will be submitted to the Secretariat of the CSW in the coming days.

Madame Chair,

I am proud to share some of the remarkable achievements of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the advancement and empowerment of women:

- 1- Today in the Islamic Republic of Iran the life expectancy rate is 76.14 % for women, more than 96.8% of women ranging in the age group of 6-29 years are literate with a rise of over 126% within the past three decades. In 2009, 51 % of state university admissions were women having a growth rate of 70 % in comparison with three decades ago. The number of women faculty members is over 18,173. The women's employment rate in 2011 was 82.7%.
- 2- While the Islamic Republic of Iran stands first in the scientific areas within the region and holds 15th in the world, the Vice- President for Science and Technology of the Islamic Republic of Iran is a lady and she is also heads the National Elite Foundation which aims to support scientists including women in the areas of research and technology.
- 3- The rate of women's participation at decision making levels has increased remarkably. Currently, four women are members of cabinet ministers and there are a number of vice ministers working in the government.
- 4- One of the organizational posts in each ministry is allocated to the advisor to the minister in women and family affairs. Thus, on the adoption by the cabinet, the advisors on the women and family affairs also enjoy the right in decision making areas.

5- The number of women nominees for the Islamic Consultative Assembly has increased 7 times in comparison to the first term and the elected members have doubled. Also the number of women members of the Islamic councils in the rural and provincial areas was 1,491 in the third term having a growth rate of 8.44 % as compared to the first term.

6- Equal pay for equal work for men and women, the increase in the number of women physicians in many fields, increase in the number of women inventors and researchers, the establishment of entrepreneurial cooperatives for women, supporting female headed households, the establishment of a women's trade union, supporting the girls and women athletes, increase in the number of NGOs are all among the achievements gained for the empowerment of Iranian women.

To conclude, I wish for a just, secure and a peaceful life for every freedom seeking nations of the world.

Thank you, Madam Chair.