



PERMANENT MISSION OF NEPAL TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Statement by H.E. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations at the fifty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women on agenda item 3: 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 century"

(5 March 2012, New York)

Madam Chair,

I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the chair of the fifty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. I assure you of my delegation's full cooperation in discharging your important responsibility. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for reports submitted to this session.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Algeria, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Madam Chair,

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action remains the most comprehensive global policy framework for gender equality and empowerment of women. The Millennium Declaration includes gender equality and empowerment of women as one of its eight goals. Important international human rights instruments have been adopted for ending discrimination against women.

We welcome this year's priority theme, entitled **"The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges,"** and we believe that it is indeed appropriate in the context that rural women constitute one-fourth of the world's population. We believe that the empowerment of women, especially the rural ones, plays special significance in the least developed countries like ours, as the rural population in Nepal comprises more than two thirds of the total population and out of which more than 50 percent are women.

Madam Chair,

Nepal is firmly committed to ensuring gender equality and empowerment of women and has adopted a rights-based approach to social, economic and political empowerment of women. Ensuring gender equality and gender mainstreaming represents one of our top priorities as enshrined in the Interim Constitution of Nepal. As required by the Constitution, women occupy 33 per cent of total seats in the present Constituent Assembly (CA) of Nepal, which also has the responsibility of a parliament. Similarly, special provisions have been made in Nepal's Civil Service Act for women's inclusion at the policy-making level. Likewise, inclusive representation of women is increasing in Nepal army and police also.

Access to education, health, entrepreneurial skills, resources, entitlements to land ownership and fixed property would greatly strengthen the empowerment of our rural women. Accordingly, we have introduced various targeted programs in the field of women development including gender responsive budgets and targeted allocation of resources to uplift the status of women, especially from the marginalized groups and regions.

Working with the civil society and other stakeholders, micro-credit programs, dedicated education programs and food for education programs targeted to the girl and women have greatly contributed to empower them at the community level. We need to further strengthen and scale them up in the years ahead.

An intensive program targeted to employment and income generation for rural women of backward groups has been extended to the Village Development Committee level by increasing their own involvement in formulation and execution of these programs.

Madam Chair,

Nepal has taken several legal, administrative and other policy measures to bring to an end all forms of discriminations and violence against women. Relevant laws have been amended to make them compatible to gender equality. Human Trafficking Control Act has been enacted. The Legislative-Parliament has also enacted Domestic Violence (Crime and Punishment) Act. As a State party to CEDAW and its Optional Protocol, Nepal presented its combined 4th and 5th report to the CEDAW Committee in July last year. At the regional level, Nepal has also ratified the SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution, 2002.

The Government of Nepal has adopted the National Action Plan for the effective implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and 1820 which signifies the high priority that the Government accorded to the full and equal participation of women in peace, security and sustained development of the country.

National Women Commission has been established as an autonomous statutory body by the National Women Commission Act, 2007, for the protection and promotion of the rights and interests of women, including their effective inclusion in the development mainstream. The Commission has recommendatory and investigatory powers.

All these developments in the last several years clearly show that we are heading towards the right direction. We need an enhanced level of support and cooperation from the international community to make further progress in these areas in the days ahead.

Madam Chair,

The empowerment of women is one of the key priorities of the Istanbul Program of Action for the LDCs for the decade 2011-2020 adopted last year in May. The Program of Action states that Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are central to achieving better development outcomes, including all the internationally agreed development goals including the MDGs. The Program of Action aims at achieving equal access of women and girls to education, basic services, health-care, economic opportunities, and decision-making at all levels. In this context, we underline the strong need to full, effective and timely implementation of the Program of Action and provide enhanced level of finance and technical support for countries like ours to augment women's economic and income-generating opportunities, productive employment and access to productive resources as outlined in the Program of Action.

In conclusion, Madam Chair, my delegation reiterates its firm commitment to Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. We underscore women's paramount role in building a peaceful, stable, democratic and prosperous world.

Thank you.