

Islamic Republic of

I R A N

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

Statement by

H.E. Mrs. Maryam Mojtahedzadeh

Advisor to the President

and

Head of the Center for Women and Family Affairs

of the Islamic Republic of Iran

before

the 57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

New York, 5 March 2013

In the Name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful

Madame Chair,

I have the honor, on behalf of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, to extend our warmest congratulations to you for the assumption of the chairmanship of the 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. My felicitations also go to Mrs. Bachelet, the Executive Director of the UN-Women, and her office for their valuable contribution in promoting the goal of empowerment of women throughout the world. I hope his meeting could be a turning point in the process of elevating the dignity of women and preventing and ending all forms of violence against them all over the world.

Madame Chair,

At the outset, I would like to share with you the general approach of the Islamic Republic of Iran towards women and their dignity. We believe that the Almighty God has created both man and woman equally from essence and for perfection and growth, complementary to each other whereby giving them each a specific role to play.

Woman is the manifestation of the beauty of God and is the center of love and mercy and is to promote love through motherhood within the family environment. If her soul and behavior coarsens and she is deprived of her basic right of motherhood and wifehood, this in fact would lead to a society laden with violence with irreparable damage. Thus, paying attention to this pivotal issue can be a breakthrough in securing women. In the modern age, no doubt, to save human society and to uphold peace and security, we need to devote efforts to reform such roles and allow women to play the leading role.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, with the firm belief in the prominent status of woman underlined by equality between man and woman in terms of dignity and nature, tries to achieve the goals which affirm the human nature from its inception and always endeavored to eliminate all forms of violence against women as one of the most significant indexes of women's empowerment and promotion of her rights.

The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the related legislations have aimed to prevent violence against women and also provide for compensating and reducing the trauma caused by probable violence against women. To this end, the Charter on the Rights and Responsibilities of Women in the Islamic Republic of Iran was adopted by the Parliament, which encompasses a set of comprehensive laws and regulations. In addition, the laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran in some instances such as women's abuse and trafficking guarantee heavy penalty against the perpetrators. Moreover, the Iranian law on the Protection of the Family provides for the conduct of special proceedings in the family courts.

Recently in an another important step, we are drafting the Bill on women's security, which would include: providing a broad definition of all forms of violence against women, setting up a national committee to safeguard women's security against violence, determining the duties of all relevant executive and judiciary bodies in the face of violence and persecuting the perpetrators even without complaints by the victims.

At the executive level, my government endeavors have been concentrated on the optimum implementation of those laws and regulations that relates to the Iranian women's advancement in various walks of life including education, economic, social and political areas as well as their participation at the high -levels of decision making.

The Government has taken many initiatives such as the establishment of social support centers at the police stations and the Welfare Organization; women's affairs offices of the Ministry of Interior in all provinces, appointment of advisors for women affairs in all ministries, providing support to offended girls and women by the Welfare Organization, expansion of insurance for single mothers and housewives, support for single mothers, allocation of annual pension for widows and the elderly women, providing emergency social services and the adoption of the Bill on supporting children and juveniles are among those measures undertaken for the empowerment of women and girls.

The Judiciary of the Islamic Republic of Iran has taken firm steps in combating violence against women and girls based on the laws and penalizing the perpetrators, including through the presence of women advisors in the family courts, providing free judicial advices to victims, the establishment of a protection office for the rights of women and children in counseling centers in line with family courts, establishment of a council for settling disputes with the aim of accelerating access to justice and to reduce penalty against convicted women. In addition, there are 560 women judges, and another 150 female judges who have been recently appointed. These efforts has led to secure participation of all Iranian women in the social life and stronger the family bonds in my country.

Madame Chair,

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran considers the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls as a priority. To this end and based on the successful national experiences, I would like to draw your Excellency and the meeting's attention to the following key point:

Despite numerous efforts made to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, based on the UN-Women reports, still seven of ten women around the world are victims of violence in one or other forms. Such shocking figure indicates that the present mechanisms have been unsuccessful. Finding the causes to this failure can be a major step to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women. This is a question that first and foremost should be answered. We believe many manifestations of violence against women are rooted in the dominance of ideologies that are based on the principle of profit or in other words a materialistic approach towards women. Based on such pathology:

- Has not the time come to deal with the root and structural causes of violence against women, instead of focusing on minor approaches?
- Would it not be more effective to strengthen the family institution as one of the key elements of society in preventing and reducing violence?
- Is it not true that morality and spirituality is in fact the lost ring of all endeavors for elimination of all forms of violence against women?
- Do the present definitions on violence against women and its causes include the viewpoints of all members of the international community?
- Are instances of violence against women and girls which result from socio-political powers against women such as armed conflicts, foreign occupation, targeted terror and killing, trafficking, pornography, objectifying women and unilateral and extraterritorial economic sanctions imposed against women paid enough attention to by those who claim to fight against violence?

The questions above necessitate the reviewing of the current opinions and infrastructure related to violence against women and show that so long as a holistic approach detecting the root causes are not included in the agenda, the human community will continue to incur heavy costs.

Madame Chairperson,

Violence is demonstrated in various overt and hidden forms, including domestic violence and the sufferings of women and tense social relationship arising from some other developments such as unilateral and extraterritorial sanctions and military threats imposed upon nations, which cast doubt on the intention behind the claims to combat violence against women. This Conference is an opportunity to counter such negative development and strive towards improving the living conditions of all human beings especially women and girls. It also burdens all of us with heavy responsibility as representatives of the women of the world to work hard towards realizing the sacred goals that we try to achieve.

Finally, the Islamic Republic of Iran is of the view that the strengthening of the family institution as the foundation of the society and highlighting its role in the prevention of violence against women and girls together with strengthening of moral and spiritual values and respect for human dignity and cultural diversity are the most important elements for the prevention and reduction of violence against women throughout the world.

I thank You.