



BANGLADESH

Statement by
H.E. Dr. A K Abdul Momen
**Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations at the General Debate of
the Third Committee of the 65th Session of the UNGA on 'Advancement of women' [agenda item 28]**

New York, 13 October 2010

Mr. Chairman,

I thank the Secretary-General for his reports on the agenda item 'Advancement of women'. Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement made by Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The year 2010 has been remarkable from the viewpoint of advancing women's causes. We celebrated the 15th anniversary of the *Beijing Declaration*; we have unanimously adopted the '*Global Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons*'; we also agreed on establishing the 'UN Women' this year. In this connection I would like to congratulate Ms. Michelle Bachelet on her appointment as the USG for UN Women. We would like to assure her of our full support in discharging her mandates.

Mr. Chairman,

Empowerment of women has consistently been a flagship agenda for development of the present Government of Bangladesh. During her first term in office in 1996-2001, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina spearheaded the *National Women Development Policy of 1997* - the first of its kind in Bangladesh. In 1998, a *National Plan of Action* was drawn up for 15 ministries, departments and agencies in line with the Beijing declaration and PFA's objectives. After coming to office this time, Hon'ble Prime Minister revived the Policy and her Government has already taken measures to introduce a number of equality issues including equal rights of women to inheritance, extended maternity leave etc.

Mr. Chairman,

Poverty eradication and empowerment of women are inextricably linked and therefore, they constitute an integral feature of our development planning. We have already implemented Gender Responsive Budgeting in several ministries. Gender dimension is duly reflected in Bangladesh's *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)*. We have invested considerably in women's education, which is increasing every year. This has yielded the results - we have already achieved gender parity at the primary and secondary school enrollment in line with the MDG-3. The Government has made a commitment to provide tuition-free education to women up to undergraduate level by 2013.

Eradication of poverty with special emphasis on eradication of feminization of poverty by strengthening social safety net programme is yet another important agenda of the Government. At present, about 0.92 million women are beneficiaries of the *Widows & Destitute Women Allowance Programme*; while about 80,000 women benefit from the *Maternity Allowance Programme*. To ensure food security of extreme poor women, a programme named *Vulnerable Group Development Programme* is in operation with about 0.83 million beneficiaries. Extensive training programme in agricultural and fisheries and livestock, computer, sewing,

block-batik trade, handicrafts and other income generating skills are being conducted. Support is being given to small and medium entrepreneurs (SMEs). All these efforts have made the women 'agents of change'.

Mr. Chairman,

Economic empowerment aided by proper policy directives of the government has led our women to political empowerment. Presently, we have prominent representation of women in all professions including at decision-making positions. Such important ministries as Ministry of Defense/Power & Energy/Foreign Affairs/Home Affairs/Agriculture are all headed by women. About 19% of all the parliamentarians are now women.

Mr. Chairman,

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the UNSC resolution 1325. As a member of the Peacebuilding Commission, we remain vigilant in our focus on the provisions of 1325. Multidimensional peacekeeping operations have large potential in addressing the security and well being of women in conflict and post-conflict situations. We have integrated gender perspective in some aspects of UN peacekeeping operations. You would be happy to note that an all-female Formed Police Unit (FPU) of Bangladesh - the second of its kind ever - has joined the UN peacekeeping Mission in Haiti in June this year.

Mr. Chairman,

The Government is taking necessary measures to curb trafficking in women and children. Now that we have a 'Global Plan of Action' in hand, we hope that all the countries will help each other in fighting this crime that is trans-boundary in nature.

Mr. Chairman,

We are happy to note that the global situation of Obstetric Fistula has been well presented in the Secretary General's report A/65/268. The Government of Bangladesh, in partnership with UNIFEM and some NGOs, has taken a number of measures for the treatment of women with obstetric fistula as well as their social reintegration, which has been mentioned in SG's report.

Mr. Chairman,

We abide by our international reporting obligation on women issues. In January this year, we submitted the 6th and 7th Combined Report of Bangladesh to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which, we hope will be considered by the Committee soon.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman,

We note that only \$500 million has been allocated for the newly-established UN Women - which is too paltry an amount for half of the entire population of the world! Since UN Women will be working mostly in the developing countries which are home to majority of the world's poor women, we feel that much more funding will be required. The concerned national governments also have to do a lot; but they won't be able to do much without increased international cooperation, resource mobilization and stronger global partnership. In this connection, I would like to once again urge upon the developed countries to fulfill their ODA commitment of 0.7 percent of their GNI to developing countries and 0.2 percent of their GNI to LDCs by 2010, as reaffirmed in the Brussels POA. The due portion of the ODAs may be used for programmes and activities related to empowerment of women which, as a result, would reap higher social and economic returns.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.