



BANGLADESH

Please check against delivery

Statement by

H.E. Mr. Md. Abdul Hannan, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the UN Offices and other International Organizations in Geneva and Vienna, at the General Debate of the Third Committee of the 66th Session of the UNGA on 'Advancement of women' [agenda item 28]

New York, 12 October 2011

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 Argentina on Monday on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

Since the assumption of office by Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in January 2009, the Government has initiated various programs and projects for the development of women which are making contribution towards the achievement of the targets set in the "Vision Paper 2021". The prime objective is to ensure women's overall development by ensuring their equal and active participation in the mainstream socio-economic activities. To expedite women's economic empowerment, comprehensive initiatives have been undertaken by providing extensive training, creating job opportunities, ensuring participation in labour market and providing support to the small and medium entrepreneurs.

Mr. Chairman,

The Constitution of Bangladesh guarantees equal rights to women in all spheres of state and public life. Apart from the Constitution, there are several laws, rules and policies to deal with the matters related to women- the '*National Women Development Policy 2011*' being the latest one.

Mr. Chairman,

Women being important agents of economic and social transformation, emphasis is being given by the Government on reducing feminization of poverty. Extensive social safety-net programs have been undertaken to provide widow allowance, allowance for destitute women and for women with disabilities. Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) program is carried out for ensuring food security to 750,000 vulnerable extreme poor women by providing 30 kg of rice every month to each. Income generating skill trainings are conducted in the areas of agriculture, computer & ICT, beautification and garments. Support is also given to small and medium women entrepreneurs by creating a dedicated fund and providing collateral free loan from there. The women entrepreneurs themselves are creating jobs for more women.

Legislative framework is in place to combat violence against women. *Prevention of Domestic Violence Act-2010* has been passed by the Parliament. One Stop Crisis Centre operates in 6 divisions to give medical, legal and police assistance to women victims of violence. There is also a Trauma Counseling Centre. Women's participation in agricultural production is facilitated through access to agricultural technologies and loans given for agro-processing, homestead gardening, nurseries, bee-keeping and other activities. Marginal and landless farmers, of whom 50% are women, are being given support. Enhanced participation and livelihood of poor rural women is a priority program of the government implemented through the 'One House, One Farm' program, giving priority to female households in every village. Steps have been taken for delivery of primary healthcare services through community clinics to rural, marginal and vulnerable women. Ten model women friendly district hospitals have been established. Maternal Health Voucher Scheme provides a voucher package of three ante-natal check-ups, safe delivery under skilled birth attendants, one post-natal check-up and transport cost.

We have increased the number of Ministries from 10 to 20 that will adopt the gender responsive budget in the FY 2011-12. Positive indicators of women's advancement are reflected in continuing gender parity in primary and secondary school enrolment through introduction of stipend for girls and making secondary education free for them.

Economic empowerment aided by proper policy directives of the government has led our women to political empowerment. Women are at high level of decision making with Hon'ble Prime Minister being a woman, Deputy Leader of Parliament, five women Ministers in Cabinet, Opposition Leader all being women. Women's participation in the Parliament increased from 12.7% in 1991 to 18.6% in 2008. In different tiers of mainstream bureaucracy, participation of women are visible and they are playing an active role.

Mr. Chairman,

As one of the member of the 'Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking', we hope that all the Member States of the UN will help each other in implementing the 'Global Plan of Action'. In our domestic front, the Cabinet approved in principle a draft law to combat trafficking in persons in July this year. The draft law entitled '*The Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act-2011*' details a comprehensive approach to human trafficking in Bangladesh and addresses labour trafficking for the first time in a direct manner under national law of Bangladesh. It marks a step forward in defining trafficking to cover all people, not just women and children. It has provisions for stringent punishment.

Mr. Chairman,

We abide by our international reporting obligation on women issues. During the 48th session of the CEDAW Committee in January-February 2011, the 6th and 7th Combined Report of Bangladesh was considered which was appreciated by the Committee members.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would like to mention that our Government will eagerly look forward to the successful implementation of the Strategic Plan of UN Women for 2011-2013. We hope that the entity's representative office will cater to the country specific needs, design and develop programmes through consultation with the government. Here, we could not overemphasize the issue of funding. To meet the capacity-building needs of LDCs like Bangladesh, a huge amount of resources will be required and we count on the support of all the donors and the wisdom of the USG's office on proper allocation of resources.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.