



PHILIPPINES

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

STATEMENT

BY

H.E. MR. LIBRAN N. CABACTULAN
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
PHILIPPINE MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

THIRD COMMITTEE DEBATE
ON
AGENDA ITEM 28
(ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN)

66TH SESSION
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
UN HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK
12 OCTOBER 2011

**Philippine Statement on
Agenda Item 28: Advancement of Women**

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Allow me to thank you for this giving us this opportunity to speak on the important issue of advancement of women.

My delegation wishes to thank the Secretary General for his comprehensive reports which serve to enrich our discussions. We appreciate the continuing attention given by the UN system to advancement of women and the efforts made in maintaining gender equality and the empowerment of women high on the international agenda.

MR CHAIRMAN:

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the G77 and China on the advancement of women and Malaysia on behalf of ASEAN.

Last year, we celebrated gains and strides taken on the advancement of women. We commemorated the fifteenth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and we witnessed the establishment of the UN Entity for Gender Equality for Empowerment of Women. Much progress has been made in the advancement of and empowerment of women. Gender equality is no longer just a women's issue but a human rights and a development issue.

This year, we have the opportunity to focus on areas where progress is much needed and work on the pressing concerns faced by rural women, older women and migrant women workers. The importance of addressing their needs cannot be overemphasized. Their concerns are all our concerns. Their advancement is vital to the achievement of the Millennium Development goals and other internationally agreed goals. Their empowerment is integral to our society's progress.

Mr. Chairman:

With the 2008-2009 global financial and economic crises, food and energy crises and climate change causing significant setbacks in the progress made towards achieving the Millennium Development goals and other internationally agreed development goals, rural women in many parts of the world continue to face manifold disadvantages and discrimination.

In his report on the improvement on the situation of women in rural areas, the Secretary General stated that rural women continue to be economically and socially disadvantaged because of their limited access to economic resources and opportunities, their exclusion from planning and decision making and their disproportionate burden of unpaid work.

This is unfortunate and could only mean that the vast economic potential of rural women in many parts of the world remains untapped despite the growing recognition that rural women and indigenous women are critical agents in poverty reduction, food security, environmental sustainability and other aspects relating to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

A systematic and strategic integration of the economic empowerment of women in rural areas into national development strategies and plans, including in areas of rural development, infrastructure and local governance is clearly needed if we are to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. Chairman:

Violence, abuse and discrimination negate the right of women to participate fully in all spheres of society – be it economic, political or social.

My delegation is heartened with the Secretary General's report that action has been taken nationally, regionally and internationally to address violence and discrimination against women migrant workers and that the number of States parties to relevant international instruments has increased. We are encouraged by the adoption of the Convention concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers which has resulted in a major addition to the international human rights framework relevant to the protection of women migrant workers. My delegation is proud of its contribution in shaping this historic ILO instrument which recognizes domestic work as decent work by ensuring domestic workers' protection, equal rights, and equal opportunities.

Much, however, remains to be done.

Key gaps persist in respect of implementing global normative and policy frameworks related to protecting women migrant workers against discrimination, violence and violations of their rights. Targeted measures to specifically address discrimination and violence against women migrant workers are lacking and undocumented women migrant workers remain particularly vulnerable to violence, exploitation and discrimination. This is unacceptable.

Mr. Chairman:

The Philippines views advancement of women and gender equality as integral to a country's progress and discrimination against women in any form has no place in society. No less than our Constitution makes it a state policy to recognize the role of women in nation building and to ensure the fundamental equality before the law of women and men.

Republic Act 9710, otherwise known as the Magna Carta of Women, serves as our legal framework to protect women against discrimination, exploitation, unsafe safe working conditions and human trafficking. The law ensures that Filipino women are legally protected from all forms of violence and from discrimination in employment, education and training; that women are guaranteed security in times of disaster or other crises; that

they are provided with comprehensive health care and information; and that women are afforded equal treatment before the law and in matters relating to marriage.

The Magna Carta of Women also has a particular focus on the rights of women in marginalized sectors such as small farmers and rural workers, informal sector workers and the urban poor, indigenous women and those with disabilities, as well as older women and girls. The law ensures their right to food security, affordable and secure housing, employment, the recognition and preservation of cultural identity. It guarantees protection and promotion of the rights and welfare of migrant women regardless of their work status, and protects them against discrimination in wages, conditions of work and employment opportunities in host countries.

The Magna Carta of women further ensures mandatory training on human rights and gender sensitivity to all government personnel involved in the protection and defense of women against gender-based violence, and mandates local government units to establish a Violence Against Women Desk in every barangay to address violence against women cases.

As regards women's participation and representation, the law provides for affirmative actions to accelerate and ensure women's equitable participation and representation in the civil service, development councils and planning bodies, as well as political parties and international bodies, including the private sector.

To complement our domestic policies and legislation, the Philippines continues to promote and support initiatives for the empowerment and advancement of women at the bilateral, regional and international levels. Cognizant that women make up a large number of the poor in communities that are highly dependent on natural resources for their livelihood and are disproportionately vulnerable to and affected by climate change, the Philippines at the 55th session of the Commission on Status of Women (CSW) shepherded a resolution on mainstreaming gender equality and empowerment of women in climate change policies and strategies.

Mr. Chairman:

A sustained, committed and strong collaboration with partners in the international community is essential to improve policies and programs geared to end violence against women, promote gender equality and empowerment of women.

Despite the continuing challenges that we face, my delegation remains optimistic that significant progress can be achieved for the advancement and empowerment of women. It is after all a shared aspiration and, with the establishment of UN Women, we have no doubt that the capacity of the UN system to strengthen gains made in gender equality and empowerment of women will be further enhanced.

Finally Mr. Chairman, following the practice of previous sessions, my delegation together with Indonesia, will submit under agenda item 28 (a) draft resolution on *Violence against Women Migrant Workers*. We look forward to the valuable contributions and support of all member states for this important resolution on advancement of women.

Thank you.