

**Statement by H.E. Amb. Ertuğrul Apakan,  
Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations  
66<sup>th</sup> General Assembly  
Third Committee  
Agenda Item: “Advancement of Women”  
New York, 12 October 2011**

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset I wish to express to Your Excellency, Mr. Hussein Hannif, our congratulation for assuming the chairmanship at the Third Committee. Under your able guidance, I believe, this committee will make important decisions.

I would also like to express with satisfaction the progress that the UN WOMEN has achieved under the effective leadership of Under-Secretary-General Mme. Michelle Bachelet. We highly appreciate her leadership, vision and dedicated efforts. In this regard, Turkey shares the vision, mission, objectives and deliverables presented in the “UN WOMEN’s Strategic Plan 2012-2013”. We believe that this Plan provides a tangible terms of reference for the UN WOMEN in coordinating and promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women within the UN system and worldwide. UN WOMEN can be assured on Turkey’s continued support and contribution.

By the same token, the reports prepared and submitted by Ms. Lakshmi Puri -Assistant Secretary-General, Ms. Rashida Manjoo, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and Ms. Silvia Pimentel -Chair of CEDAW constitute important basis for further deliberations. We would like to express our thanks for their efforts.

Mr. Chairman,

Two recent developments as regards women and women empowerment deserve due attention and should not be passed unnoticed:

First of all, the passing of Professor Wangari Maathai of Kenya caused deep sorrow worldwide. Not only did her pioneering efforts usher a new era in environmental protection and sustainable development in particular in Africa, but her hard work to empower women and to advance women’s rights agenda earned her a unique place among women leaders. Secondly, by honoring three women (Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Leymah Gbowee from Liberia, and Tawakul Karman from Yemen) for their advocacy of women’s rights, Nobel Peace Committee demonstrated that democracy and lasting peace cannot be achieved if women do not obtain the same opportunities as men to influence developments at all levels.

Mr. Chairman,

Today we notice greater awareness towards the rights and needs of women. Since the adoption of the landmark Resolution 1325 in 2000, there has been progress across a broad range of issues for the protection and promotion of women’s and girls’ rights in conflict-affected situations. Thanks to these efforts more women have today access to governance, education, health, capital and the

market. More equitable laws that protect women from discrimination were introduced. More commitments were voiced to repeal discriminatory laws and social practices. More women took their rightful place in the social, economic and political fabric of their societies.

Yet, much needs to be done to ensure universal adherence to the rights of women. We believe that it is high time for the international community to move from words to deeds to deliver women's needs.

Mr Chairman,

(Turkey has made exemplary strides with a view to leaving no single legal barrier against gender equality. International conventions on fundamental rights and freedoms, such as CEDAW enjoy supremacy over all national laws. Furthermore, over the years since the Beijing Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action, Turkey has realized most of its Beijing commitments. By implementing policies in line with the Platform we have achieved important progress in the area of gender equality and women's rights.

We believe that the public awareness, among others, should be particularly focused on as regards gender equality and advancement of women. To this end, countless projects were launched in Turkey. The main topics covered were mainly the empowerment of women, violence against women, honour crimes, reproductive health and education of girls. Turkey has also made substantial contribution to raising awareness at the international level by hosting international conferences. "Human and social development, gender equality and empowerment of women" was indeed the title of one of the parallel panels to the plenary session at the Fourth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries convened in Istanbul in May. Mme. Bachelet's active participation into this panel was a vivid illustration of her committed leadership. Thanks to her efforts, the key role of women in development was strongly highlighted throughout the Conference, both in thematic debates and in special events. )

Mr.Chairman,

Allow me to conclude by underlining my country's unwavering commitment for human rights of women all around the world. The active participation of women, on equal terms with men, at all spheres of decision-making is essential to the achievement of equality, sustainable development, peace and democracy.

Thank you.