



Statement by Mrs. Nouzha Ukhli
Minister of Social Development
Family and Solidarity
KINGDOM OF MOROCCO

54th session of the
Commission on the Status of Women
Beijing+15

New York, March 1st, 2010

Honorable Chair ;
Excellencies Ministers ;
Ladies and Gentlemen ;

First I would like to thank the Bureau of the Commission on the Status of Women and United Nations Secretariat for the successful organization of this "Beijing 15" Summit.

This meeting is an important milestone in the process of building and bolstering gender equality and women's empowerment. It provides us with an opportunity to assess what has been accomplished and what challenges remain as well as to build momentum for the implementation of our commitments.

The Beijing Action Plan reflects a global vision of gender equality and of women's rights.

The stakes are high and the challenges remarkable, and we clearly assert that gender equality is a priority for our world, for its sustainable development and for the progress of humanity.

It is urgent to act. 15 years have passed since 1995, and undeniable progress has been made in women's participation in decision-making and in the labor economy, their access to education, and the realization of their basic rights. However, there still are challenges in various areas, such as:

- School drop-out rates among girls,
- High maternal mortality,
- Violence, whether it is denounced or silenced by taboos and tradition,

- Visible and hidden, de facto and de jure forms of discrimination, which prevail in most societies.

What's more, financial and economic crises, the lack of food security and climate changes have further compounded inequalities particularly detrimental to women.

Promoting women's jobs and equality is the royal road towards building a fairer, more humane world in which solidarity prevails and which undergoes a new model of governance designed and implemented with equal share women's participation.

This is the track based by the Kingdom of Morocco thanks to the leadership and vision of his Majesty Mohammed VI, King of Morocco, who has committed the country to building a society based on high standards of human rights, of freedom and gender equality.

Morocco has committed to working with the Union for the Mediterranean. In November of last year, my country hosted a Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on "Enhancing Women's role in Society" attended by 32 countries, in addition to representatives of the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the Arab League of States.

The Kingdom of Morocco is committed to working with the community of Arab countries, African States and the United Nations, which share our ideals of equality and progress for humanity.

We have built numerous partnerships with various sectors of the State, NGOs and civil society, which have become the fulcrum of great energy, of citizen involvement and activism, as well as with international organizations.

While capitalizing on the many values of our civilization, our action also seeks to be universal and to advance sustainable development. We have a clear sense of our responsibility to mobilize our efforts so as to maximize the chances for us meeting our objectives.

Madam Chair ;

The Kingdom of Morocco has always been committed to implementing an agenda that promotes human rights and gender equality through a set of major reforms ensuring respect for fundamental human rights in general and for women's rights more specifically.

This reform process provides us with an opportunity to renew our commitments to the Beijing Declaration and Action Plan as well as to CEDAW, whose 30th anniversary we will be celebrating on 12 December.

Fighting discrimination is a continuous and essential endeavor for the advancement of social justice, equal opportunity, and women's rights in Morocco and the world at large.

Based on this conviction, Morocco was able to carry out a major reform of its Family Law in 2004, currently founded on equality and shared responsibility and to reform its Nationality Law which enables women, in the same capacity as men and regardless of circumstances, to pass a

on their citizenship to their children born to non-Moroccan fathers.

We have stepped up our fight against discrimination through a National Equality and Equity Strategy which has led to the Government's Agenda for Equality.

Since 2002, we have been implementing a strategy against various forms of violence women are subjected to, which has mobilized major institutional players and generated partnerships with civil society.

Morocco is also a MDGs Fund pilot country thanks to the TAMKINE program: a cross-sectorial program against gender-based violence through the empowerment of women and girls. Within this framework, a first national survey of the prevalence of violence was carried out and a draft bill against domestic violence has been introduced to Parliament.

The objective is to enable the convergence, institutionalization and organization of actors against gender-based violence through the empowerment of women.

Gender-responsive budgeting has also made significant headway in our country, where we publish Gender Budget Statements on a yearly basis, covering 25 governmental sectors this year.

Gender parity in the management of financial affairs has been a major concern and 2009 constituted a turning point in this field.

At the June 2009 municipal elections, the number of elected women increased by 500%, going from 12,176 to 34,287 women elected, raising women's representation rate in communes from 2.56% to 12.23% of all communal representatives.

This major achievement dovetails with the systematic efforts exerted to promote women at all levels of decision-making and to fight gender-based disparities.

Morocco is fully committed and keenly aware of the stakes, especially as the Millennium Development Goals will not be met unless the implementation of the Beijing, Beijing +5 and Beijing +10 commitments is expedited.

How can we ignore that a fact that gender inequalities are a structural factor of underdevelopment?

Madam Chair,

Fighting for equality also means making equal progress in combating discriminations, violence and exclusion; it involves endeavoring for sustainable and fair economic, social and human development, all of which are factors of progress, democracy, and peace.

In all of these fields, we commend the personal commitment of the United Nations Secretary General and his Advisor.

Nothing would be possible if all of us did not pool our efforts to re-launch equality, progress, and mechanisms, in a reassertion of fundamental rights.

It is equality that makes the world change.

Nowadays, the majority of the world's poor are women. Women also have formed an experience in terms of wealth, intelligence and skills, a potential insufficiently tapped into for sustainable development and environmental conservation.

Currently, the equality dynamic stimulates a surge in performance, innovation, progress, sustainable development, and hence of wealth in all societies.

It is this very equality dynamic that is likely to bring all economies all over the world into a virtuous human development globality.

In the 21st Century, the Beijing Platform is more than ever before, topical and, at a time of global crisis, the world, it constitutes a new global partnership that must generate effective and consistent policies.

In addition to celebrating the fifteenth Beijing anniversary, we are here called upon to mobilize so that defending women's rights remains at the heart of the debate and that the equality dynamic that is moving us forward remains the driving force for a new, fairer, more human and more inclusive world.

Thank you.