



PERMANENT MISSION OF NEPAL TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Tel: 212 370 3988/89; Fax: 212 953 2000, embn@un.org, www.embn.gov.np

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Statement by H.E. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations at the fifty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women on agenda item 3. Follow up to the world conference on women held in Beijing, twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

(5 March 2002, New York)

Madam Chair,

I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the chair of the fifty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. I assure you of my delegation's full cooperation in discharging your important responsibility. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for reports submitted to this session.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Madam Chair,

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action remains the most comprehensive global policy framework for gender equality and empowerment of women. The Millennium Declaration includes gender equality and empowerment of women as one of its eight goals. Important international human rights instruments have been adopted for eradicating discrimination against women.

We welcome their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges and we believe that it is most appropriate in the context that rural women constitute one-third of the world's population. We believe that the empowerment of women, especially in rural areas, plays a significant role in the least developed countries like ours, as the rural population in Nepal comprises more than two thirds of the total population and out of which more than 50 percent are women.

Madam Chair,

Nepal is firmly committed to ensuring gender equality and empowerment of women and has adopted a rights-based approach to social, economic and political empowerment of women. Ensuring gender equality and women's mainstreaming is a constitutional obligation of Nepal. As required by the Constitution, women constitute 33 percent of that seat in the present Constituent Assembly of Nepal, which also has the responsibility of parliament. Similarly, special provisions have been made in Nepal's Civil Service Act for women's representation at policy-making level. Likewise, inclusionary representation of women is increasing in Nepal at many levels.

Access to education, health, entrepreneurial skills, resources, entitlements to land ownership and fixed property, and other services strengthen the empowerment of rural women. Nepal has introduced various targeted programs in the field of rural women's empowerment. Responsive budgeting and targeted allocation of resources to rural areas are also being implemented in the marginalized groups and regions.

Within the last few years, our government has introduced micro credit programmes, dedicated education and training programmes targeted to the girl and women have greatly contributed to empower them at the community level. We need to further strengthen and scale them up in the years ahead.

An intensive program targeted to employment and income generation for rural and urban backward groups has been extended to the Village Development Committee level by increasing their own involvement in formulation and execution of these programs.

Madam Chair,

Nepal has taken several legal, administrative and other policy measures to bring to an end all forms of discrimination and violence against women. Laws have been amended to make them compatible to gender equality. Human Trafficking Control Act has been enacted. The Legislative Council has enacted Domestic Violence (Crime and Punishment) Act. As a State party to CEDAW and its Optional Protocol, Nepal presented its combined initial and second report to the CEDAW Committee in July last year. At the regional level, Nepal has also ratified the SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution, 2002.

The Government of Nepal has adopted the National Action Plan for the effective implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 which signifies the high priority that the Government accorded to the full and equal participation of women in peace, security and sustained development in the country.

National Women Commission has been established as an autonomous authority under the National Women Commission Act, 2007, for the protection and promotion of the rights and interests of women including their effective inclusion in the development mainstream. Commission has recommendatory and investigatory powers.

All these developments in the last several years clearly show that we are heading towards the right direction. We need an enhanced level of support and cooperation from the international community to make further progress in these areas in the days ahead.

Madam Chair,

The empowerment of women is one of the key priorities of the Istanbul Program of Action for the LDCs for the decade 2001-2010 adopted last year in May. The Program of Action states that Gender equality and the empowerment of women are central to achieving better development outcomes, including all the internationally agreed development goals including the MDGs. The Program of Action aims at achieving equal access of women and girls to education, basic services, health-care, economic opportunities, and decision making at all levels. In this context, we underline the strong need to full effective and timely implementation of the Program of Action and provide enhanced level of finance and technical support for countries like ours to implement women's economic and income-generating opportunities, productive and access to credit as outlined in the Program of Action.

In conclusion, Madam Chair, my delegation reiterates its firm commitment to Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. We assure women's paramount role in building a peaceful, stable, democratic and prosperous world.

Thank you.