



Fifty-fourth Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

“Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA); the outcome of the twenty-third session of the General Assembly and its contribution to shaping a gender perspective towards the full realization of the Millennium Development Goals”

Statement

by

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Please check against delivery!

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Chairperson,

My delegation is honored to address the Commission on this important occasion when we are reviewing the 15 years that have elapsed since the adoption of the landmark Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

I would like to congratulate you Mr. Chairman and the other members of the Bureau upon your election to guide this session to a meaningful conclusion for women worldwide.

Suriname aligns itself with the statements delivered by the distinguished representatives of Yemen on behalf of the G-77 & China and Chile on behalf of the Rio Group.

We express our heartfelt condolences to the peoples of Haiti and Chile after the major earthquakes.

Chairperson,

The challenges identified in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, initiated a process which was followed up in various international agreements such as the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Millennium Development Goals.

The results of gender equality over the past 15 years have proven to be mixed. Governments across the world have committed themselves to improving the status of women. Ambitious action plans were adopted and implemented in that regard, in close consultation with and participation of civil society and the private sector.

Women in some countries and regions now account for the majority population in institutions of higher learning; In different regions of the world, countries were and still are being governed by women; Some countries have embraced the quota system for women in high political offices.

Our accomplishments are worth celebrating. But in the midst of our celebration we need to seriously reflect if all our efforts in gender equality and the empowerment of women have yielded adequate results.

Suriname also, in its overall development policy, has identified targeted policy interventions in the areas of poverty eradication, voice and decision-making, human rights, education and training, combating domestic violence and sexual violence.

It is worth mentioning that the law on domestic violence has been approved by our Parliament. This law aims at protecting victims of domestic violence at an early stage and allows for a simplified procedure to obtain a protection order by a judge.

Furthermore an agreement was signed between various Ministries to work towards a coordinated approach on the most effective ways to combat domestic violence.

The chapter in the Penal Code on offences against morality has been revised to make them compatible with our obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the Optional Protocol regarding trafficking in children, prostitution and child pornography, the Convention on Transnational Organized Crime as well as the Convention on Cyber Crime.

The crime of rape, which was already penalized in the Penal Code, has been revised to also make punishable marital rape. This article has also been amended sex – neutral and through this, the rape of males is also penalized.

The recent appointment of 3 additional female judges represents an increase of approximately 50%, compared to 0% in 1995 upon the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

I can inform this audience that, although disparities still exist, steady progress was realized in Suriname regarding representation of women in politics and decision-making. In the Cabinet of Ministers the growth is from 6% in 1987 to 18 % in 2005. In Parliament we have realized an increase in the participation of women from 7.8% in 1987 to 25% in 2005.

Just recently in February of this year under the auspices of the Ministry of Home Affairs a workshop was held on quota policy and the participation of women in decision making. The purpose of this workshop was to increase the awareness of women to participate in politics and decision making processes.

A research project entitled “Gender Equality, Gender Relations and the Position of Women in Suriname, A Situation Analysis”, is currently being carried out. The objective of this project is to get an overview of the existing gender relations and the position of women in Suriname in order to identify equality gaps where further policymaking and action is required.

Preparations are underway to conduct a time – use survey on the contribution of women and men to the economy and social protection especially in relation to paid and unpaid work carried out by women and men.

The Government, in cooperation with NGO’s is conducting employment projects for women to teach them skills in so-called traditional male professions.

Chairperson,

In celebrating our modest successes in the pursuit of gender equality we have to acknowledge that women continue to face many challenges.

Women and children are the first to feel the effects of global economic downturns. The feminization of poverty, the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the rising incidence of non communicable diseases, ongoing conflicts and sexual violence and climate change all show that women and children are disproportionately affected.

Inadequate sex-disaggregated data and the lack of indicators to measure inequality between women and men, make it even more challenging for informed interventions on gender equality and the betterment of the lives and opportunities for women. Insufficient financial resources also constrain the efforts being undertaken in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

If we all agree that investing in women is investing in development, we will have to redouble our efforts in implementing the Beijing Plan of Action and the internationally agreed development goals, including the millennium development goals.

Political will is therefore a condition sine qua non to realizing our commitments to women.

Suriname for its part will continue its efforts in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Thank u.