



PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
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Statement by Mme. MENG Xiaosi
Head of Chinese Delegation to 54th Session of the
Commission on the Status of Women, Vice-Chairperson of
the National Working Committee on Women and Children
under the State Council of China
(1 March 2010, New York)

Mr. Chairman,
Honorable ministers,
Distinguished delegates,

Good Morning.

2010 marks the 15th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, 10th anniversary of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), 30th anniversary of Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and 10th anniversary of its optional protocol. This session of the Commission on the status of Women is of great significance and far-reaching impacts.

Over the past 15 years, global gender equality has made mixed progress. With concerted efforts by state governments, the international community and the civil society including non-governmental organizations, gratifying achievements have been witnessed in the implementation of the twelve critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action, in particular in repealing and amending gender-based discriminatory laws, improving national mechanisms for women's empowerment, enhancing gender mainstreaming and improving girls' education. However, it should be pointed out that although equality between men and women and the

protection of women's rights have been written into international instruments as well as national legislations, gender stereotypical ideas are still deeply entrenched and gender-discrimination continues to be widespread in the sub-consciousness, in hidden standards and under the table. In real life, women still face unequal treatment and are disadvantaged in gender competition. In this regard, the Chinese delegation believes all states and the international community should speed up actions to further promote women's participation and benefiting from development, and strengthen dialogues and cooperation to create a harmonious world based on real equality and mutual-benefit.

Mr. Chairman,

China is home to one fifth of the world's women. The Chinese government has made tremendous efforts to promote gender equality and deliver its international commitments including under the BPFA, the Outcome Document of 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly, the MDGs and CEDAW. In particular, under the guidance of people-centered development concept, China concentrates its resources to solve problems most pertinent to people's life, such as education, employment, social security, public health, housing and transportation. A series of new measures have been adopted to further promote gender equality and marked progress has been made since Beijing+10:

1. Further strengthening gender awareness in legislation. In recent years, gender equality principles have been introduced and promotion of women's rights strengthened in the formulation and revision of laws including Law on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests, Land Contract Law, Property Law, Employment Promotion Law and Law on Protection of Minors, etc. Apart from a specific national program for the development of women, protection and promotion of women's rights and interests became a full chapter of the national five-year development plan (2006-2010) .

2. Actively taking various policy measures to promote women's participation in political decision-making. At present, there are 8 women among the state leaders, 230 ministerial and vice-ministerial/provincial level women leaders, and 670 mayors and deputy mayors of the over 600 cities of

China. Women account for over 40% of government officials compared with less than 1/3 of 1995. There are women in most neighbourhood and village committees.

3. Increasing input to achieve nine-year compulsory education. China has eliminated gender gap in primary school net enrollment rate. In 2008, the national primary-school enrollment rate of school-age girls reached 99.6%, 0.1% higher than boys. Female students account for 49.86%、48.16% and 34.70% of college/university undergraduate students, graduate students and doctorate students.

4. Constantly increasing funding for women's health care and improving service networks for women's health. Projects on reducing maternal mortality rate and neonatal tetanus were vigorously pushed forward, and pilot programs for free screening of cervical cancer and breast cancer among rural women were conducted. In 2007, there were 3,051 women and children's health service institutions with over 100,000 beds. Maternal mortality rate dropped from 53 per 100,000 to 36.6 per 100,000 and the mortality rate of children under the age of five dropped from 39.7‰ to 18.1‰. The average life expectancy of women reached 75.3 years.

5. Incorporating women's rights in the National Action Plan on Human Rights and formulating National Action Plan against Trafficking in Women and Children. 25 out of 31 provinces have issued laws/regulations against domestic violence. Various levels of legal assistance centers for women reached over 50,000.

6. Enhancing economic empowerment of women, and increasing women's income through skill training, regional partnerships and developing women's professional cooperatives, etc. Now women account for 45.4% of the employed, and many women have taken the lead in building the new countryside. Women entrepreneurs reached 25% of the total. Preferential national policies have been put in place to provide full subsidized interest incurred from loans to women to help them to start business, get employment, meet challenges and overcome difficulties in the face of global economic and financial crisis.

China is a developing country. To reduce poverty, diseases and disasters, and to protect the people's development and improve their life will continue

to be our long and arduous tasks. Gender awareness among various sectors and levels of government still need to be strengthened, violence against women and gender discrimination at employment take place from time to time, women still lack equal opportunities to lifelong education and vocational training, women's participation in political decision-making need to be further enhanced. We have a long way to go to achieve gender equality.

Mr. Chairman,

Women is a great driving force for human civilization. Without the participation of women, equality, development and peace will forever remain elusive goals. 15 years after Beijing, at this new starting point of global women's advancement, we call for the following:

I. Turn commitments into concrete actions. All state governments should invest more manpower, materials and resources to implement the BPFA, the Outcome document and the MDGs.

II. Continue to focus on women and development and pay increased attention to the voices of women from the developing and least developed countries.

III. Enhance experience sharing and dialogues among different regions with great efforts to address the key obstacles and difficulties in advancing gender equality.

Mr. Chairman,

Men and women are never born enemies, but equal partners. Women's liberation movement should never be an endless war between men and women, but a cause for gender harmony. It never seeks after privileges for women above men, but tries to reach gender equality. So, women's liberation movement is not the business of women alone. It is a great cause and shared endeavor for both men and women whose roles are mutually reinforcing.

I sincerely wish this CSW a successful session for adding vigorous new momentums to global gender equality.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.