

**Statement by
Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran**

**Fifty-Second Session of the Commission on the Status of Women
Agenda Item 3: Financing for gender equality and empowerment of women**

New York, March 3, 2008

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you and other members of the Bureau on your election to the 52nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women. I would also like to express my Government's deep regrets that the high-ranking Iranian delegation who intended to attend this session of the Commission on the Status of Women could not do so due to the failure on the part of the Host Country, the United States, to grant entry visa to the members of the said delegation. It is indeed for the second consecutive year that the Iranian delegation to this commission is denied of its rights to attend a United Nations meeting in New York. We consider such a failure by the host country a breach of the obligations it has undertaken in the Headquarters Agreement and other relevant international instruments.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Commission on the Status of Women, held every year, offers an opportunity to examine the challenges that confront women in the world, and to recommend new plans or initiatives to address them.

Since the 1980 Copenhagen Conference, the Islamic Republic of Iran's intention has been to actively participate in all international gatherings that address the status of women. Through this endeavor, we seek not only to engage in constructive discussions on the topic of women and express solidarity with all women, but also to defend the status of Muslim Iranian women to whom we attach great value.

Along with the overall improvements achieved over the past three decades in the status of Iranian women, the development of a comprehensive model was embodied in the agenda of the Iranian policy-making bodies. In this context, "the Charter on the Women's Rights and Responsibilities" was drafted on the basis of the most common needs of the human being shared by different societies. This can bring about a comprehensive balance and sustainable development in areas which affect all human beings—a point which is regrettably overlooked in relevant international documents.

Believing firmly in the concept of "balance" in creating an ideal status for women, the Islamic Republic of Iran has adopted this Charter while having focused on the three pillars, namely "spirituality," "justice" and "security" derived from the religious and cultural precepts. The Charter deals with the women's issues from a perspective that is wider than the one offered by other international conventions.

The efforts of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the area of women's issues are based on the principles, values, and moral foundations of the nation and are geared to address our own domestic problems. The priorities of issues confronting women in Iran is therefore based on the particular political, cultural, and economic conditions of the country against the backdrop of unfavorable international pressures which have all encouraged the Government to institute organizational changes relating to women consistently across its government sector. In addition to the allocation of a regular budget to every ministry, special budgets are also allocated to improve each ministry's performance as concerns the measures to improve women's welfare. In the same context, every ministry has introduced new measures to address the particular needs of the families of the imposed war martyrs and veterans, most of whom are women and children.

Budgeting women's issues from the perspective of gender equality alone is impractical and illogical to a large extent in Iran's context because in most areas, government services cover both men and women. For example, the programmes to address eliminating illiteracy, poverty and privation, and promoting education, health and social welfare cover all individuals, both men and women.

Parallel to the advancement made in areas related to the women's issues over the past three decades, empowerment, supporting the women who are the head of household, eradication of poverty and privation of women constitute the main policies of the current Government. With over ninety provincial visits made across the country in the span of the two years since his presidency, Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has approved special funds to help alleviate women's concerns in the country. In addition, the country's general budget allocates 20 percent of provincial expenditure credits, 0.25 percent of provincial budgets, and at least 3 percent of the surplus from provincial credits to women.

Given the importance the Islamic Republic of Iran attaches to the role of the family, special credits are given to promote the family physician program and protect women as the heads of household. Finally, especial funds are allocated to empower and strengthen the family unit.

In addition to the macro-budget allocated to empowering women, especial funds have been allocated to women's education in rural areas, to support youth and women's organizations, to provide assistance to women's NGOs and rural women's cooperatives.

As a result of the above measures, there is an 18 percent marked development in achieving gender justice in education, 30 percent growth in NGOs working on girls issues, literacy growth rates from 48.5 percent to 86 percent, 100 percent medical coverage for families in rural areas, and a general increase in the country's health indices (reduction of mortality rates to 0 percent in nine provinces, 20 percent reduction in mother's mortality rate, and 12 percent reduction in infant mortality rates).

It is noteworthy that the principal approach in development programme in Iran is based on protecting the health of the family. Hence, one of the key activities of the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran is to safeguard the integrity of the family through creating economic and cultural environment for eliminating social disorders through strengthening the important institution.

In the Islamic Iran women can be active members of the society without neglecting the family. In Iran, women in general are regarded the center of the family and hence regarded as the center of society, since society is but the connected parts of family units coming together, and women are its principal trainers.

We believe that by offering a new model of contemporary women who are pious and chaste and possess political wisdom, are accountable, self-sacrificing and promoters of spirituality in families, a new civilization will emerge.

The Islamic Republic of Iran maintains that examining the causes of women's problems and the challenges they confront in the moral, cultural and socio-political fields is a first step to building a serious commitment among states to arrive at common and realistic criteria to eliminate the shortcomings of existing documents, and hence to arrive at an efficient model for a universal consensus on how to promote the status of women that pays attention to the religious, national, ethnic differences of people across the world.

In conclusion, it is our hope that the United Nations will take into account the above-said concepts so that insecurity, injustice, and distrust among people are removed, and political challenges which threaten peace, generate oppression and lead to greater disparities among women and men, are eliminated.

Thank you