



PAKISTAN

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Statement

By

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on agenda item
Financing for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women

at the 52nd session of the
United Nations Commission on the Status of Women

28 February 2008

**Pakistan's statement at the 52nd Session of the
Commission on the Status of Women
February 28, 2008**

**Chairperson
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is a privilege for me to be part of this august gathering at the United Nations. At the outset, I wish to congratulate the Chairperson and the entire bureau on assuming their office for the 52nd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

2. My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of G77 and China.

3. I wish to take this opportunity to express our support to the Secretary General's campaign to end violence against women launched at the inaugural session of the Commission. We remain committed to work for comprehensive mechanisms to end violence against women under the framework of the General Assembly.

Chairperson

4. The Commission on the Status of Women is keeping the Beijing torch alive. It provides opportunities to Member States to share their best practices, achievements and challenges on the various critical areas identified in the Beijing Platform for Action and to devise policy options for a safer and brighter future for women across the World.

5. Gender equality and empowerment of women are crucial milestones in our efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. This year's priority theme "financing for gender equality and empowerment of women" is particularly relevant to accelerate the implementation of Millennium Development Goal 3 and to assess, analyze and integrate the costs of policy interventions in budgeting processes both at the national and international levels.

6. The Beijing Platform for Action emphasized that funding had to be identified and mobilized from all sources and across all sectors to achieve the goals of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Monterrey Consensus also underlined the need to empower women in the context of appropriate national policy and regulatory frameworks with gender sensitive investments in basic social and economic infrastructure, micro-credit for women, and business frameworks sensitive to gender implications.

Excellencies,

7. The goal of investing in gender equality and empowerment of women is both a challenge and opportunity for many developing countries. If realized, it could bring about a transformation in the economic, social and political life of not only the womenfolk but the entire communities. The primary responsibility to initiate this change rests with the national machineries to ensure that gender perspectives are incorporated into national economic policies, plans and programmes. At the same time, these efforts need to be sustained and complimented through international cooperation.

8. To this end, we endorse the observation in the Secretary General's report (contained in document E/CN.6/2008/2), which stresses the need to strengthen national capacities in developing countries to implement the Beijing Platform for Action. The report rightly concludes that the fulfillment of the agreed target of 0.7% as overall official development assistance (ODA) by the developed countries is vital to enable the developing countries in meeting their development agenda.

9. In Pakistan, the inspiration for gender equality and empowerment of women comes from the vision of our founding father Quad-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah who said "No nation can rise to the height of glory unless your women are side by side with you". Our Constitution guarantees equal rights for all its citizens without any discrimination on the basis of cast, colour, sex, or race. It further ensures full participation of women in all spheres of national life.

10. Following are some of the measures taken by the government to realize the goal of gender equality and empowerment of women in Pakistan:

One: Pakistan has launched its National Plan of Action to implement the various commitments of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. This Plan of Action establishes a set of priority action formulated to help achieve the agenda for the empowerment of women. Moreover to realize the socio-economic and political empowerment of all Pakistani women and to bring them into the mainstream of country's economy, a full-fledged and dedicated Ministry of Women Development has been set up. A National Commission on Status of Women was established in year 2000, with a mandate to examine the relevance and efficacy of all policies, programs and measures to the core issue of women development and gender equality

Two: Being mindful of the need to develop gender responsive budgeting, the Government has mainstreamed a gender perspective in the draft of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The Ministry of Finance, with the support of the Gender Responsive Budgeting Initiative (GRBI) project, has incorporated various gender-sensitive amendments in the government's Medium Term Budgetary Framework (MTBF) Budget Call Circular (2007-08). This budget call circular is being used by the three pilot GRB ministries - Education, Health and Population Welfare- as well as by 12 other ministries that have so far been included under the incremental MTBF reform.

Three: The Ministry of Women Development has launched a mega project “Gender Reform Action Plan (GRAP)” which is mandated to undertake a coherent gender reform agenda through phased implementation processes with particular focus on gender mainstreaming. GRAP envisages reforms in the key areas such as political participation of women, Institutional restructuring, employment of women in the public sector, gender responsive policy, budgeting and public expenditure mechanism and gender specific capacity building interventions.

Four: With the assistance from the UNDP a three year- long project on Gender Mainstreaming, has been launched by the Government through the Planning & Development Division. This project has developed gender-screening tools for the stakeholders and has trained public sector officials in gender sensitization and gender mainstreaming.

Five: Women employment schemes are being developed and many steps have been taken to facilitate their role in the development of the country at all levels. A Micro-Credit Scheme through Khushhali Bank, Agricultural Development Bank and First Women Bank for rural and urban poor women respectively on local basis has been introduced. Another micro finance service is the National Rural Support Programme with a focus on building capacities of rural Pakistani women through social mobilization, and technical assistance.

Six: Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, a corporate body, financed through tax levied for this purpose by federal, provincial and local grants and voluntary contributions, is providing funds and food support to poor and needy especially widows, orphans, disabled and old women irrespective of caste, creed or religion. Through the Islamic system of Zakat, collected and distributed by the government, voluntary funds are paid to needy and poor women directly.

Chairperson,

11. Women are an essential part of the global economy, their share in economic benefits, opportunities and access to resources is not proportionate to their share in the population in different countries. Furthermore increasing poverty as a result of structural adjustment programs and globalization is disproportionately impacting women.

12. Unless financial resources are mobilized across all sectors, through both domestic and international channels, progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women will remain slow. Therefore we call upon all member states to fulfill their domestic as well as international commitments, made today or earlier in order to secure a safe future for women.

I thank you.