



BANGLADESH

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**Statement by
H.E. Dr. A.K. Abdul Momen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative,
Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations at the
First Regular Session 2014 of the Executive Board of UN-WOMEN
New York, 20 January, 2014**

Thank you Mr. Chair.

At the very outset let me congratulate you and the members of the Bureau of the Executive Board of UN Women for your election. At the same time, I also congratulate the Executive Director and Under-Secretary-General Madam Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka for her comprehensive and insightful statement this morning. Her statement provided a detailed overview of efforts and global challenges facing by UN-Women during its current and past years.

Mr. President,

It is to be mentioned that UN-Women operational activities are conducted within an intensely resource-constrained environment where different regions demonstrated the ongoing challenges associated with achieving gender equality with the situation of many women and girls experiencing a setback in the face of prior gains.

The strategic plan, 2014-2017, updates the strategic plan, 2011-2013 ([UNW/2011/9](#)), which laid out the priorities of the organization up to 2017, with a focus on its results frameworks, including clearer results chains, indicators, targets and baselines, strengthening links between outcomes, outputs and indicators, and on reflecting the experiences of UN-Women in responding to national, regional and global needs and priorities and requests from the United Nations system to guide a coherent and coordinated investment in gender equality and women's empowerment. We think that the plan reflects lessons learned in implementing the strategic plan, 2011-2013; the provisions of General Assembly resolution [67/226](#) on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

We would expect that during its 2014-2017 Strategic Plan period, the UN-Women will overcome many of its the challenges and will focus on its results frameworks responding to national needs and priorities in a coherent, coordinated and cohesive way.

We are happy to know that UN Women will strengthen its work in humanitarian action and collaborate closely with UN system partners, in particular with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Mr. President,

We recently completed our national election in a free-fair and transparent manner and the newly elected Government as in the past has also demonstrated its unwavering commitment to women's empowerment. There was fear especially among women that if the Opposition alliance that allied with a few fundamentalist parties that oppose women empowerment, that oppose women to work outside home, that demand women to lead a primitive life-style would have won, much of the achievements over the past years would go down into drain. Good news is, they did not win. In fact, they boycott the election and tried utmost to foil and sabotage it.

This shows that women empowerment is still vulnerable and there is long way to go to institutionalize and build them on a solid structure. This also demands that the global partners including the UN system not to support or promote those that are opposed to women empowerment and to those that want to roll back the progress. Surprisingly, many countries that believe in women empowerment, that promote women to work side by side with men outside their homes, is in fact, indirectly supported those alliance that wanted roll back. However, good news is, they could not win and now, we need global support especially from development partners more than ever to continue our progress and achievements.

Mr. President

Bangladesh being a signatory to the MDGs, CEDAW and Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) and as a champion of women empowerment, let me now highlight some of our national achievements. In Bangladesh, the top political leadership including the head of Government, the Speaker of the Parliament, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the House, the Deputy Leader of the House, the Agriculture Minister -- all are still all women.

Mr. President,

In order to help women empowerment, the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has instituted gender-responsive budgeting so that budget is correctly spent on women. It has also created a reserve quota for women employment at every level of administration to enhance women participation in government jobs. No wonder, there are Women Judges, Women Ambassadors, Women Secretaries, women police and army officials. Government also made a rule that in each Union, if the elected Chair is a male, then the Vice Chair has to be a female and vice versa. More than 12,000 women were elected as public representatives.

Mr. President,

To empower women and also to make them capable to efficiently discharge their responsibilities, the GoB has attached top priority to girls education. Primary education is compulsory and free for all children aged between 6 and 10. All children attending primary and secondary schools receive textbooks free of cost on the first day of the year in a festive atmosphere. This year, on the 1st of January, government distributed nearly 120 million books to students. Not a small accomplishment. The education of girls up to grade XII in public institutions is also free. Apart from this, to encourage girl students to continue their studies and also to reduce drop-out rates, the government is giving stipends especially to girl students. Government's proactive strategy for girls education resulted in gender parity---for example, in Primary school, female enrolment

is 51% and in Secondary schools, it is 53% while male is 47 percent, a sharp departure of from few years ago when male was 65% and female was 35%. .

Mr. President,

Violence against women is a common phenomenon everywhere, even in rich and developed societies. It is still present in Bangladesh. Therefore, the GoB has given high priority to ensuring protection of women against violence. Besides legal protection, the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) operates a Central Cell to ensure coordination of work on prevention of violence against women and children and extends necessary support to the victims of violence. The MOWCA now maintains a helpline (10921) to provide legal, medical, rehabilitation and counselling help to victims of violence. Bad news is, till to-date, violence is not over, till to-date, child marriage is daunting us, till to-date, there is discrimination between male and female. Therefore, the challenges of UN-Women is not over. It has to gear up its efforts in a coherent and coordinated way so that it can create a global wave that can wipe out women discrimination and violence against women across all nations.

Finally, Mr. President, I would like to reiterate our fullest support to the UN Women in its journey towards changing the lives of millions of girls and women across the globe including that of ours.

I thank you Mr. President.