



BANGLADESH

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Statement

By

H.E. Dr. Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury
Ambassador & Permanent Representative
of Bangladesh to the United Nations

at the

Open Debate of the Security Council

on

Women, Peace and Security

New York

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Mr. President,

I should be remiss if I did not begin by applauding the Japanese Presidency for its effective stewardship of this forum. I also thank you for your initiative in organizing this open debate. It is on a subject dear to our hearts.

It has been six years since the adoption of 1325. That is a landmark resolution which Bangladesh, then sitting in the Council was closely associated with. It was primarily based upon a simple thesis of equal access and full participation of women at all levels of power structure. The role of women in prevention and resolution of conflicts has been an essential element for the making and sustaining peace and security. To this effect, Bangladeshi presidency at the Security Council issued a statement on the Women's Day in March 2000. Eventually it culminated in the resolution. Bangladesh therefore is deeply committed to its full and effective implementation.

Women suffer most as victims of conflict. In peace processes they are mostly deprived of the dividends. Their voices are not fully listened to or even heard. Six years on since 1325 we need to reflect further on how best to advance its goal. We need to analyze as to what constitutes the challenges. Also how these can be overcome. We need to ensure adequate representation of women at all levels of decision making in conflict prevention. This must include early warning mechanisms, both during hostilities and through post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation. The true measure of women's participation in peace negotiation is not through numbers, but through power in decision making. It is undeniable that in consolidation of peace the roles of women remain vital.

We welcome the review of the System-wide Action Plan this year. We hope that we will succeed in overcoming its weaknesses through concerted efforts in the years to come. It is our belief that integrating gender perspective across the UN system will keep in view geographical, cultural and ethnic factors. Adequate resources should also be mobilized to this effect. Active involvement of the civil society and NGOs is a sine qua non.

From our national experience, we believe that gender mainstreaming and empowerment of women are categorical imperatives for development. Also for social stability. Access to education, health, combining with provisions for micro-credit facilities can unleash the entrepreneurial skills of women. Women's empowerment tends to marginalize extremist thought and action in the community. This addresses a root cause of violence and terror. The award of 2006 Nobel Peace Prize to micro-credit pioneer Professor Yunus of Grameen Bank Bangladesh clearly demonstrates the linkage among poverty alleviation, women's empowerment and peace. Bangladesh, despite her many and varied constraints, has set an example in this domain. She stands ready to share her "best practices" with others of comparable milieu.

The overall experience in implementing 1325 at all levels of decision making has been mixed. Sadly, violence against women continues to occur in war. This is also true in peace. We have integrated gender perspective in some aspects of UN peacekeeping operations. However, in post conflict peace building efforts, much remains to be done. As one of the largest troop contributing countries to UNPKOs, Bangladesh is ever conscious of her responsibilities to incorporate essential elements of 1325 in the pre-deployment training of peacekeepers.

As member of the Peace-building Commission we will remain vigilant in our focus on the provisions of 1325. We will also make best endeavours to ensure that our urgings on all UN agencies in this regard remain sustained.

We believe that protection of women and girls from gender-based violence and abuse is a primary and enduring responsibility. There should be zero tolerance with respect to the perpetrators. We should brook no impunity in this regard. All will agree, this is truly a noble goal. Indeed a nobler goal would be hard to find.

I thank you, Mr. President.