



**25** years at the  
United Nations

# **BANGLADESH**

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**STATEMENT**

**BY**

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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BANGLADESH  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**ON**

**WOMEN AND PEACE AND SECURITY**

**SECURITY COUNCIL  
NEW YORK, 24 OCTOBER 2000**

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Mr. President,

Finally, the voices of women have reached the Security Council. And it had to be today – the United Nations Day – that we begin to address openly in the Security Council not only how conflicts shape the lives of women, but also how women are coming together to shape peace and security and what the Council can do to facilitate women's involvement in peace making and peace operations of the United Nations.

Yesterday, the Council members heard the concerns of women representatives on this issue and interacted with them. It was an Arria formula meeting – behind closed doors and without official records...

It would have been so much better to have those presentations here at the Council Chamber.

Nevertheless, the women have spoken. They have made their recommendations to the Council. The onus is now on the Council to act. Through today's meeting and through the resolution we will be adopting in a few days, we must send a powerful message across that women need peace, but more importantly, peace needs the involvement of women.

Mr. President,

We congratulate Namibia wholeheartedly in particular Ambassador Andjaba & his team for the leadership in organizing these historic meetings of the Security Council on women and peace and security. Throughout your Presidency of the General Assembly last session we have seen your commitment towards women's issues. It is gratifying for us to see you chairing this meeting today.

These meetings are the results of the efforts of numerous women and their organizations who have been demanding for some time now that the Council formally takes the matter up. Today, we pay a tribute to their dedication and hard work in making it happen.

We thank Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his important statement this morning where he has highlighted areas that need attention by the Security Council.

We also acknowledge the contributions of the two women who have addressed the Council this morning. Ms. Angela King and Ms.

Noeleen Hyzer have played a great role in making women issues matter in the United Nations, and no doubt will continue their important work.

Mr. President,

Bangladesh is fully committed to realizing the potential of women in promoting peace. We feel proud to have as our Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, a women leader of great vision and courage, actively contributing to peace at the national level as well as globally spearheading the culture of peace and non-violence.

Bangladesh had the proud privilege of taking the pioneering step in the Security Council with its first-ever pronouncement on women, armed conflict and peace on 8 March 2000 — the International Women's Day. In that statement, the Council members recognized that peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men and affirmed that the equal access and equal participation of women in power structures and their full involvement in the prevention and resolution of conflict are essential for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

Mr. President,

Our work in the Security Council on this issue must be set in the broader context of the commitments of the Beijing process, both the 1995 Conference and the 2000 review, which provide us the way forward.

The Security Council decisions affect women in situations of armed conflict. It is therefore only appropriate that those decisions are made keeping women squarely in the picture.

We believe that the Council has to take into account three our broad areas.

**First, the impact of conflict on women and girls.** As the nature of conflict shifts in a post-cold war globalized world, civilians, in particular women and children, are increasingly the victims. Women and girls form the majority of the refugee and internally displaced populations. They are particularly in danger of being harmed, abused and face gender based and other human rights violations of

unimaginable grossness. As a participant of the Council Mission to Sierra Leone, I had seen first hand the ravages of war on women in that country.

The Security Council must demand of all parties to armed conflict that they comply fully with international law applicable to the rights and protection of women and girls and take special measures in this regard. To respond to their needs, all UN peace operations must include a gender unit. The human rights components of peace operations should integrate women's rights in all documents and reporting.

At the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration sites, the different needs of women and men combatants and accompanying family members have to be addressed. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court recognized war crimes against girls and women. The Security Council must add its voice in ensuring that there is no impunity for gender-based war crimes.

**Second, involvement of women in the peace process.** From Burundi to Somalia to Northern Ireland to the Middle East and Cambodia, women have shown great capacity as peacemakers. They assumed activist roles while holding together their families and communities. At the grassroots and community levels, women have organized to resist militarisation, to create space for dialogue and moderation and to weave together the shattered fabric of society.

We must ensure that women get more avenues to promote peace, not only at the local level but also at the national, regional and global levels. By bringing their experiences to the peace table, women can inject in the peace process a practical understanding of the various challenges faced by civilian populations. The mechanisms that come out of such involvement are naturally more sensitive to the needs of civilians and therefore, more sustainable and useful.

Women also have a great role to play in promoting a culture of peace in strife torn societies that lies at the root of lasting peace and reconciliation. Unless there is a culture of peace with women at its helm, long term solutions will elude us.

**Finally, UN peace operations and women.** At the decision-making level and on the ground, there has to be more representation of women. There has been demand for more women SRSGs. We welcome that. At the same time we have to be careful in avoiding tokenism. We should not go only for visibility in representation of women but for representation that is wider and more effective.

Bangladesh have begun to send its women to peace operations with the first five civilian police deployed in East Timor. The armed forces in Bangladesh have recently opened its doors to women and would soon be having women in command positions. As a country that has contributed over the years to the most difficult UN missions, we shall be doing our part by sending more women peacekeepers in future.

One area where the United Nations and its member states must act urgently is in improving the training of peacekeeping personnel by fully gender sensitizing them. The peacekeepers must never be violating the trust the civilian populations place on them and can have no impunity for their actions.

We believe that it is an opportune moment for the United Nations, and in particular the Council, to do much more than it has so far in promoting women issues in peacekeeping. The Brahimi report is under active consideration. We have already welcomed its useful recommendations. We noted, however, that a gender dimension of peacekeeping and peace support operations must be highlighted, which is a missing link as far as the report is concerned.

We support the Windhoek Declaration: the Namibia Plan of Action on "Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations". We believe that the actions identified in the Declaration can compliment and fill in the blanks in the recommendations of the Brahimi panel report.

Mr. President,

As I said, the women have spoken. They made it clear that they are willing to shoulder their responsibilities and take charge of their lives and peace in their societies. The Council in particular, and the UN at large, has to respond through concrete actions.

I thank you, Mr. President.