



BANGLADESH

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Statement

By

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Bangladesh to the United Nations

At

the open meeting of the Security Council

On

Women, Peace and Security

New York, 28 October 2002

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Mr. President,

Bangladesh had certainly introduced a new agenda in the Security Council's work during its Presidency in March 2000- when we proposed that the Council issue a statement on "Women, Peace and Security". The Presidential statement contained in Press Release SC/6816 of 8 March 2000 recognized some of the basic premises-

- a. Peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men;
- b. Equal access and full participation of women in power structures and their full involvement in all efforts for the prevention and resolution of conflicts are essential for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security;
- c. While the entire communities suffer the consequences of armed conflict, women and girls are particularly affected;
- d. Women constitute the majority of the world's refugees and internally displaced persons;
- e. Although women have begun to play an important role in conflict resolution, peacekeeping and peace building, they are still under-represented in decision-making in regard to conflict;
- f. If women are to play an equal part in security and maintaining peace, they must be empowered politically and economically, and represented adequately at all levels of decision making both at the pre-conflict stage and during hostilities, as well as at the point of peacekeeping, peace-building reconciliation and reconstruction;
- g. There must be no impunity for war crimes against women and girls;
- h. The importance of promoting an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes while addressing armed or other conflicts;

Two years hence, these premises remain valid. We worked on these objectives further with fellow Council members. The outcome was the landmark resolution 1325 with Namibia taking the lead. The resolution provided the legislative mandate for immediate attention and also for defining further actions.

We thank the Secretary General for his report. In particular, for the proposed sets of the twenty-one actions. We are also in considerable debt to Ms. Angela King and her office for the very substantive inputs they have provided in defining the tasks. Acknowledgement is further owed to the contribution of the Inter-agency Task Force for their efforts to the process.

Mr. President,

Bangladesh hopes that the Security Council will examine these proposals and approve them. The Secretary General should have the necessary mandate for their early implementation. We would put specific emphasis on a few areas:

First, 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.

Secondly, the Security Council must add its voice to ensuring that there is no impunity for gender-based crimes. There have been allegations of violence against women including rape as weapon of war.

Thirdly, the Council should consider, where appropriate, the establishment of gender advisers/units in multidimensional peacekeeping operations

Fourthly, to facilitate greater contact with women's groups and networks, a database of gender specialists, as well as women's groups and networks in countries & regions in conflict has to be established

Fifthly, it is heartening to learn that some progress has already been achieved in incorporating gender perspectives into peacekeeping operations - UNMIBH, UNMIK and UNTAET, to cite a few.

Finally, efforts are needed to achieve greater representation of women in formal peace negotiations. We have seen the positive contribution of women in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, that set an example.

The experience of gender advisers and gender units in UN Missions in East Timor, Kosovo, Congo, Bosnia Herzegovina and Sierra Leone have amply vindicated our conviction about the role of women in peace and security. Not only at the peace-keeping missions, but at the grassroots and community levels, women have organized resistance to militarisation and created space for dialogue and moderation. By bringing their experience to the peace table, women can inject in to the peace process a practical understanding of the various challenges confronted by women in times of conflict.

Mr. President,

As Amartya Sen has warned - "When a nation allows a lower status for its women in any sphere of human activity, it does so at its own peril". In consonance with Bangladesh's positive attitude towards the effective mainstreaming of gender in all walks of life and as part of our commitment to strengthen the role of women in peace and security, we have begun to associate women with UN peace operations across a broad spectrum of Missions.

Bangladesh is a member of the "Friends of UNSC-1325" formed at Canadian initiative. We remain engaged in the implementation of this resolution. We look to a positive decision of the Secretary General's recommendations. We see these as a forward movement, not just in gender equality, though also that, but mainly as in the forging of a harmonious cooperation between the sexes to advance the aspiration of human kind.

I thank you, President.