

STATEMENT

By Her Excellency Mrs. Madina B. Jarbussynova,

**Ambassador-at-large of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Kazakhstan,
Member of the National Commission for Family and Women;**

**At the high-level plenary meeting of the forty-ninth session of the Commission on
the Status of Women:**

Madam Chairperson,

Allow me to express my sincere appreciation to you and the members of the Bureau of the Commission for the leadership, dedication and hard work in the preparation of this session. I am confident that under your skillful stewardship the 49th session of the Commission will be able to successfully address all important issues of our agenda here.

Madam Chairperson,

The outcome of the Beijing conference has a far-reaching significance. During the past decade, much progress has been made in the advancement of the rights and equality of women.

The Beijing Platform of Action has triggered the establishment of national policies and strategies for gender equality, adherence to relevant international and regional instruments and increased attention to gender-sensitive issues all over the world.

But in the 21st century problems related to the strengthening of the status of women remain an ongoing concern. Women continue to have unequal access to resources and opportunities and continue to be victims of abuse, poverty and discrimination.

Gender equality and women's empowerment, as enshrined in the Millennium Declaration, constitute effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate sustainable development.

Madam Chairperson,

10 years ago, at the time of the Beijing Conference the social, economic and political situation in my country was precarious. But the Government had a clear vision and spared no efforts to ensure a better life, to pursue freedom and, most of all, to make sure that our children and grandchildren would have a future worthy of them.

Today, we have every right to be proud of what we have accomplished in ten years. As indicated by the President of Kazakhstan in his recent state of the nation address, I quote: "Rapid economic growth has made it possible to expand substantially the social targeting of government expenditures", end of quote.

Kazakhstan actively contributes to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The advancement of women and the protection of their rights are priorities of our national policy. The National Commission for Family and Women, under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, has developed, in accordance with the recommendations of the Beijing Platform for Action, a national plan of action for the improvement of the status of women in Kazakhstan.

The national policy is based on four key elements:

- political promotion of women;
- wide involvement of women in economic life;
- improvement of health of women and their families;
- elimination of violence against women.

In accordance with the long-term strategy, effective mechanisms are being developed in Kazakhstan to increase women's integration into social and political life and to expand their representation at all decision-making levels. Women account for almost 60 percent of those employed in the public sector. More than 150 women's NGOs are functioning in the country at present time.

The Government takes necessary measures to provide sustainable economic growth and, hence, to improve the well-being of every family, especially through the creation of equal opportunities for women and girls. Special attention is paid to education and improved women's awareness of their rights.

In order to maintain real gender equality in the society, close attention is also paid to the economic advancement of women. We strongly believe that implementation of the micro-crediting policy is an effective way to eliminate poverty. In Kazakhstan 2/3 of microcredit recipients are rural women. Welcoming the decision of the General Assembly to proclaim the year 2005 as the International Year for Microcrediting, we are going to actively participate in the related activities.

On the basis of the Concept of the Gender Policy, the National Commission for Family and Women has drafted a Strategy on Gender Equality for the years 2005-2015. In this context, we would like to request the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and other relevant United Nations bodies to propose a model country plan of actions to achieve gender equality, something analogous to the Model Plan of Actions on the Improvement of the Status of Women, suggested as a follow-up to the Beijing Forum.

Madam Chairperson,

Despite all efforts and visible achievements in promoting gender equality and empowerment of women in Kazakhstan, there are still some problems, including discrimination of women in the labour market, a low representation of women in governmental bodies, especially at the decision making level. Nowadays, only 9.5 percent of the members of the Parliament are women.

The level of maternal mortality, especially in rural areas, is another problem that remains a matter of concern, despite the continued attention of the Government.

That is why in his recent address the President of my country once again emphasized, and I quote: "An important part of our strategy is to provide decent living standard for the most vulnerable members of the society – children, mothers and the elderly. The Government will not spare resources to address their problems", end of quote.

Madam Chairperson,

Today Kazakhstan has stable growth, mainly due to the export of its energy resources. But the state budget is not yet capable of covering all social programmes. And before we achieve a balance between our economic and social development, we will require international assistance. Availing myself of this opportunity, I would like to express our gratitude to the United Nations Development Fund for Women of the United Nations Development Programme for its cooperation in solving gender problems in Kazakhstan.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Equality of men and women is one of the Millennium Development Goals. Let me express my confidence that working together we will be able to make decisive steps forwards achieving these goals.

Thank you for your kind attention.