



# PAKISTAN

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Statement

By

**Mrs. Nilofar Bakhtiar,**

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On

Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome **documents** of the Special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000:gender equality, development and peace **for the 21<sup>st</sup>** century"

And

Current challenges and forward-looking strategies **for the advancement and empowerment of women and girls**

at the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the  
49<sup>th</sup> session of the  
**Commission on the Status of Women**

**March 2, 2005**

Madam **Chairperson,**

Allow me to extend, on behalf of Pakistan delegation, our warmest felicitations on your assumption of the Chairmanship of the Commission on the Status of Women. You will have Pakistan's full support in making the proceedings meaningful as well as fruitful during this significant high-level session. My delegation would like to associate with the statement made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of G77 & China.

Madam Chair

Beijing was an inspiration. It was a breaking ground. We were not there as emissaries or government representatives - - -but were there as women –as women activists. And we came back charged and fuelled with a lot of new ideas and strength. Whatever we have been able to achieve in the last ten years, has become a part of our personalities and our souls. Thank you Beijing. Thank you United Nations. And thank you UNIFEM for keeping it alive.

After the conclusion of the Fourth World Conference on Women at Beijing, Pakistan prepared a National Plan of Action on the twelve areas of concern. A thirteenth area, on women with disabilities was added to the global agenda on women by us.

And now allow me to share the outcome of the process, something that has made all of us proud. Today we see 22 percent women in the country's Parliament including two federal ministers, five State ministers and seven provincial ministers, in addition to several chairpersons and secretaries of parliamentary committees. At the grass roots we have elected 40,000 women councilors, also as Mayors and Deputy Mayors. We have trained 27,000 of them through a woman's political participation project. In addition to this, 2000 women councilors have been facilitated to become computer literate. Recently, Women's Political Schools have been established in Pakistan, a globally unique experiment with the purpose of empowering women in public offices.

A National Commission on the Status of women was established in the country three years ago. The Commission is mandated to act as a watch dog and review all discriminatory laws.

Economic and Social empowerment of women is a major focus of the present Government. Massive micro credit programs are under way to fund income generation projects for women by The First Women Bank, Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund, Khushali Bank, Agricultural Development Bank and the NGO sector. The First Women Bank is unique also because it is run exclusively by women for women. The Ministry of Women Development is a major share holder in the Women's Bank. Besides, Women's business Chambers of Commerce have been set up and they are now being connected with display centers and business incubators in major cities.

Gender Budgeting is a relatively new concept for the world. We have taken a lead in accepting the challenge and feel proud to share that a separate chapter has been included in the poverty reduction strategy paper. 7 million US dollars have been allocated for the initial implementation of the project.

Madam Chair

Violence against women is a global concern. The Govt. has established ten Crisis Centers for women in distress along with shelter homes and a helpline service. Free of cost, medical, legal, and psycho social counseling services are available at these centers round the clock. Ten women police stations and several women police complaint cells are operational throughout the country.

Our biggest achievement in the last one decade, after women's political empowerment through the quota system is the passage of the law commonly known as Honour Killing Bill.

The Bill stipulates that the crime committed in the name of honour or on the pretext of honour will be considered as a pre-meditated murder and dealt with accordingly. A minimum penalty for honour crimes is 10 years. Maximum punishment is death or life imprisonment. The Law imposes severe punishments on violations of law in the name of honour and equally applies on incidents like hurt, attempted murder and murder.

A national committee on violence against women has been formed to monitor the implementation of this law and has registered 5000 volunteers including religious leaders to combat all forms of gender injustices.

Pakistan is signatory to major human right treaties and conventions including CEDAW and CRC, ILO Convention 100 and SAARC Convention on Trafficking in Women.

GRAP, the Gender Reform Action Plan is a major stride aiming at a 10% quota for women in government jobs. It will also facilitate the formation of special cells in different Ministries to deal exclusively with gender issues. The Ministry for Women Development will be the focal point for overall coordination for GRAP.

For Beijing+ 10, we have had a national consultation, one by the NGOs facilitated by the Government and one by the Government itself. After a similar consultation process, the CEDAW report is ready and will be soon presented to the CEDAW Committee.

Pakistan will host two Conferences in the coming months. One on the MDGs and the other on Beijing + 10.

Madam Chairperson

As I conclude, I would like to highlight that millions of pairs of eyes are looking up towards this forum- where do we go now- what next?

We, the women, should not only be a game of numbers. The role- the influence, the share must be ensured- the process must continue. My friends, our glory is not in never falling but in rising each time we fall. This time is our time- today is the only thing we can be sure of- right here right now- hold the moment in your hands. Yes, we can do it.