



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE KINGDOM OF NEPAL To THE UNITED NATIONS**  
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Statement

By

The Honourable Mrs. Durga Shrestha,  
Minister for Women, Children and Social Welfare  
and Leader of the Delegation of Nepal

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At

The High-Level Plenary of the Forty-Ninth Session  
of the Commission on the Status of Women

New York  
7 March 2005

Madame Chairperson,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of His Majesty's Government of Nepal and on my own, allow me, Madame Chairperson to congratulate you on your election to the high office of Chairperson. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. I would like to assure you of my delegation's full support to make this session a success.

Madame Chairperson,

I would also like to associate myself with the statement made by the Chairman of the Group of 77 and China.

The overall improvement of the plight of women, who constitute more than half of the world population, has been our common concern. The commitments expressed in the Beijing Platform for Action adopted in Beijing in 1995 and the outcome of the Special Session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-first Century" are achievable if the national efforts are complemented by the efforts of the international community. The delegation of Nepal firmly believes that this session is an important opportunity for us to express our resolve in attaining gender equality, development and peace for women.

Madame Chairperson,

We have been witnesses to the fact that poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy, lack of adequate maternity and reproductive health services, trafficking in women and girl child and HIV/AIDS have crippled the living conditions of the millions of women along with their children in developing countries, particularly in the least developed countries. These problems are more acute in conflict-ridden countries. It is obvious that women and children are the ones that are mostly affected by conflict, violence and anarchy. It is our belief that the plight of the vulnerable section of society, including that of women, will be improved also with the overall attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. In this regard, Nepal supports the efforts of the United Nations linking the MDGs and Beijing Platform for Action for concerted actions by Member States and the international community.

Madame Chairperson,

Let me briefly mention about the efforts Nepal has undertaken over the past years towards the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. His Majesty's Government of Nepal has reaffirmed its full commitment to gender equality and women's advancement. In view of the crosscutting nature of the issues, Nepal has accorded high priority to gender equality, gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in its development plans, policies and programmes. A National Plan of Action adopted in 1997 and updated in 2004 is under implementation with regard to twelve critical areas of concern that focuses on gender mainstreaming and the elimination of gender discrimination. For the overall advancement of women, several national institutions are put in place including the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, the National Coordination Committee and the National Women's

Commission at the centre. There is a countrywide network of gender focal points in all line Ministries. A working manual of gender mainstreaming in district level has been adopted which is entrusted with the task of coordinating activities carried out by government agencies in collaboration with non-governmental organizations. Women development offices and District Coordination Committees have been established in all 75 districts in this regard.

Nepal has made significant progress in increasing female life expectancy as well as in improving female literacy levels and primary and secondary school completion rates. Yet large gender gaps remain. As Nepalese women's representation in the Civil Service of the country lags far behind men, the Tenth Plan has set a target of placing 20% women at the decision-making level through the introduction of affirmative actions. Immediately after the present Government assumed office, it formulated a 21-point programme, which provides, inter alia, that a policy of positive affirmation will be pursued to ensure adequate representation of women, the deprived and the indigenous people in the Civil Service for a specified period, with a view to making them participate in the State apparatus.

Madame Chairperson,

Despite all our efforts at the national level to translate into reality the commitments expressed in Beijing +5, many challenges still lie ahead of us. Nepal, a least developed country which has been suffering from atrocities committed by the terrorists for the last ten years, has been undergoing a very difficult period in our history, affecting the lives of each and every citizen including women. The concepts of development, gender equality, gender mainstreaming and women empowerment could be built only on the foundation of peace. It is in this context that we have made peace the main national agenda. His Majesty's Government, being mindful of the importance of peace and security in the development of the country, is committed to restoring peace and security. We are confident that the international community will extend its support and assistance to complement the efforts undertaken at our national level.

Madame Chairperson,

Nepal commends very much the work of the United Nations, and its funds and programmes to strengthen the capacity of national machineries in order to enhance their effectiveness and efficiency. Technical assistance and financial resources to national machineries would be instrumental in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Let me reiterate our dedication to working together with the United Nations and Civil Society in achieving the objective of gender equality and enhancing the status of women in the days to come. I am confident that working together, we can make a difference in the life of the millions of women.

Finally, may I also take this opportunity, on the eve of the International Women's Day, to convey, through you Madame Chair, my best wishes to all women of the world. And I do hope that this Session would come to a successful conclusion and would be remembered as an historic moment in improving the conditions of women of the world.

I thank you, Madame Chairperson.