

ISRAEL

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Commission on the Status of Women

Check Against Delivery

Statement by:

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“Access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women’s equal access to full employment and decent work”

United Nations, New York
24 February 2011

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your able stewardship of the Commission on the Status of Women, and thank you for your work.

Mr. Chairman,

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action continues to shape Israel's approach to promoting the advancement of women. In particular, Israel shares the belief that resources must come from many sources and sectors to meet our collective commitments in pursuit of these critical goals.

Over the last decade, we have significantly enhanced public awareness initiatives and expanded public budgets to advance the status of women within Israel, establishing numerous frameworks for mainstreaming gender. Advancing the status of women is viewed in Israel as a universal human rights issue. As such, it receives significant attention and widespread support.

In this regard, Israel's civil society plays a critical role in monitoring state systems, promoting gender equity, and building capacity for women's development and empowerment. Many of these organizations work specifically with Arab-Israeli women and other minorities.

Allow me to mention a few of the most prominent mechanisms that the Government of Israel supports to promote gender equality.

Israel's Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women focuses on many critical issues that are discussed in the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Situated within the Prime Minister's office, this authority publishes a comprehensive guide on women's rights, sponsors innovative research, heads an inter-ministerial committee to promote family-friendly workplaces, and oversees the appointment of a gender advisor for every local government authority in Israel.

A second example is the Parliamentary Committee on the Status of Women, which offers a platform for discussing, drafting and promoting gender-oriented legislation in our national legislative body.

Israeli legislation requires a review of all proposed laws for gender implications. This requirement is based on the rationale that every policy has different implications for men and women, as they have unequal access to power and resources.

In the area of employment, the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission acts as an ombudsman in cases of workplace discrimination against women and minority groups. I am honored to serve as the first National Commissioner of this body, which has the authority to investigate complaints of discrimination on the grounds of gender,

pregnancy, fertility treatments, and parenthood and to bring legal action against employers who violate anti-discrimination laws.

Mr. Chairman,

Access to education is another area where we continue to see major progress. In 2010, the majority of students studying for a university degree were women. Last year, Israeli professor Ada Yonat of the Weizmann Institute became one of four women to win a Nobel Prize in chemistry for her groundbreaking work, which advances human understanding about how cells build proteins.

Mr. Chairman,

In terms of the peace process, Israel recognizes that women must be part of negotiations from the earliest possible stages. Recently, the Israeli Women's Equal Rights law was amended in the spirit of Security Council resolution 1325 to mandate that Palestinian and Israeli women are actively involved in peace-building negotiations and conflict resolution. It is our hope that this law be fully implemented in the near future.

Mr. Chairman,

Opportunities for women in Israel have steadily improved over the years. However, we recognize that women and men will share responsibilities equally only when society as a whole addresses the structural causes of inequality. Thus, ensuring equal access to education, full employment, and decent work remain integral parts of our agenda. Ultimate success in Israel and around the world will also depend on engaging men in all programs dealing with social change and economic development.

While the systemic challenges associated with true equality between the sexes remain considerable, Israel looks forward to partnering with others to take advantage of the real opportunities to make significant progress at both the national and international levels.

Thank you.