



## BANGLADESH

---

**Statement made by Dr. Mashiur Rahman, Economic Affairs Advisor to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh at the General Debate of the High-level Segment of the ECOSOC Substantive Session 2010**

**[Agenda item 2]**

**New York, 1 July 2010**

---

*Please check against delivery*

Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, let me congratulate you, Mr. President, for the successful conduct of the deliberations. While my delegation associates itself with the statement made by His Excellency the Permanent Representative of Yemen on behalf of G – 77 and China and that made by His Excellency the Permanent Representative of Nepal on behalf of LDC, I deem it a privilege to make a few remarks from my country's perspectives.

Mr. President,

As I take the floor, I feel a unique sense of happiness that the theme is empowerment of women and gender equality. Women occupy the top positions in political leadership in Bangladesh. Besides the Prime Minister and the Deputy Leader of the House, women hold important cabinet portfolios – viz. Agriculture, Home, Foreign Affairs, Women and Children Affairs. The Leader of the Opposition also is a woman. Since 1991, both the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition have been women.

Mr. President,

The Constitution of Bangladesh guarantees equality to women within the broad framework of non-discrimination on grounds of religion, race or gender. The Founding Fathers of sovereign Bangladesh grounded gender equality in the basic principles of democracy.

Bangladesh has subscribed to the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Twenty-third Special Session of the General Assembly, the Millennium Declaration, and CEDAW as well as its optional protocol. The Government has also taken steps to fulfill the related obligations.

The Government has adopted National Policy for Women's Advancement and National Plan of Action. A Women's Development Implementation Committee, headed by the Minister for Women and Children Affairs, monitors the implementation of policies for women's empowerment.

Enrolment of girls at both primary and secondary level exceeds that of boys, helped by waiver of tuition and provision of stipends for girls in secondary level.

Since 2008, the Government has approved or enacted laws for protecting women against domestic violence and recognizing that children can take the citizenship of Bangladesh from their mothers also as from fathers.

The Government is implementing a number of projects for developing capabilities of women. These include Vulnerable Group Development Programme (VGD), micro-credit, skill training including computer skill, product display centres. More women labourers are hired for rural public works than men.

Women registered for VGD and hired for rural works receive skill training and credit or some simple capital machinery – e.g. singer machine – so that they can set up their own enterprise or trade.

A number of affirmative actions – such as allowances and shelter – have been taken, which help women in distress and old age.

Dormitory and day care centres have been built for working women. Our efforts are too modest, and needs to be scaled up.

We have introduced Gender Responsive Budget in FY 11, and planning for development recognizes gender issues.

Mr. President,

Our all Female Formed Police Unit (FPU) has landed in Haiti early last month, evidencing our support that women participate in conflict resolution, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation as mandated in Security Council Resolution 1325.

Mr. President,

The resources for MDG have been inadequate. The economic downturn and climate change poses further threat to availability of resources while raising the level of need. We urge that the developed countries make the promised contribution of 0.7 percent of GNI, including 0.2 percent for LDCs.

Mr. President,

Let me end with a piece of history of women's right in Bangladesh. In 1973, Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman issued an order fixing quota for women in public employment. Since his gruesome killing in 1975, the policy was more honoured in breach than observance.

His daughter Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resumed the task. Several measures were taken during her previous term – and are being taken now – for bringing women into public life. There are women judges in the Supreme Court; permanent secretaries; senior police officers; and in the military, which had been opened to women during her previous term.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina often says: “I have a dream – and that is to make my father's dream real.”

The Government, under her leadership, is determined to secure equal right and opportunity for women, overcoming bigoted obscurantist opposition.

I thank you, Mr. President.