

**STATEMENT BY
H.E. MRS. GULDAL AKSIT
MINISTER OF STATE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY**

**FORTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION
ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

Distinguished Chairperson and Delegates,

It is an honour for me to come together here with the distinguished Ministers and Delegates who spend great efforts to achieve the common universal objectives of gender equality, development and peace, as well as to share national views and approaches to the advancement and empowerment of women.

On behalf of the Turkish Delegation, I wish to congratulate the members of the Bureau of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women for their efforts to organize this 49th Session. I also wish to express my thanks to the Secretariat for the documents they prepared for this session.

Distinguished Chairperson and Delegates,

Gender equality, development and peace are integral parts for the happy existence of all human beings. Beyond doubt, we are all facing new challenges in achieving these goals. Therefore, this Session, where the 5 years since the Beijing+5 process will be assessed and due actions will be taken, is a distinctive opportunity for all of us. We are here today to reiterate the commitments we have made at the Beijing Conference, and to take another big step in the direction of resolving new, as well as pending issues.

It is no secret that countries have faced many common, as well as diverse problems in the implementation process of the Beijing Platform for Action. Be it positive or negative, the experiences gained in this process should be a starting point for our future actions.

However, achieving gender equality, development and peace is not an easy task. Despite the measures taken in the world at both national and international levels with a view to strengthening and expanding gender equality, negative social factors such as inequalities which arise in various forms, as well as poverty and armed conflicts remain to be the main obstacles in realizing the objectives of the Beijing Platform of Action.

Distinguished Chairperson and Delegates,

During the last 10 years since the Beijing Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action, which, we believe, are the most important milestones in realizing gender equality, Turkey has implemented national policies in parallel with the Platform for Action, and has fulfilled most of its commitments made at the Beijing Conference. Turkey, which considers the full realization of women's and the girl child's human rights as a legal and moral responsibility, has achieved important progress in this regard.

In this process, Turkey has;

Put into force the Optional Protocol of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women,
Introduced the 8-year compulsory Basic Education Law,
Put into force the Law on the Protection of the Family to prevent domestic violence,
Made legal changes such as revising and amending the Turkish Civil Code, the Penal Code and the Labour Code, in line with the principle of gender equality.

Furthermore, Turkey has also accomplished considerable achievements in increasing the literacy rate and reducing infant mortality.

The recent Constitutional amendments reflect the progress made in women's issues in Turkey. With the addition of a provision to Article 10 of the Constitution in 2004, the State was given the responsibility for not only ensuring non-discrimination between women and men, but also for taking necessary measures to provide equal rights and opportunities in practice for women in every field. By the adoption of this amendment, Turkey took its place among a small number of nations having similar provisions in their Constitutions. With the amendment to Article 90 of the Constitution in 2004, supremacy was given to international conventions concerning fundamental rights and freedoms, including CEDAW, over all national laws. Hence, the relevant articles of the Turkish Constitution combined with the international instruments, constitute a stronger legal ground with a view to bringing about equality between women and men.

Distinguished Chairperson and Delegates,

Turkey continues its efforts to raise social awareness that gender equality is an issue of human rights, social justice and democratic representation. Our efforts to improve the status of women and to fully achieve gender equality in Turkey should be regarded as an indication of our determination on this issue. It is with the same determination that Turkey takes the necessary steps for the full implementation of the new legal arrangements, which are indeed a part of a comprehensive reform process.

Distinguished Chairperson and Delegates,

The empowerment of women can be achieved through parallel arrangements in the public and private sectors. We believe that this is the only way for women to lead independent, peaceful and happy lives and to fully realize their potentials.

With this understanding, I wish to stress that my country is ready to cooperate in all platforms to achieve gender equality and to reflect this in all areas of life.

Before I conclude, I wish to reiterate our appreciation for the Commission on the Status of Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women for their successful work.

Thank you.