



Jordan

PERMANENT MISSION OF H.K. OF JORDAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Statement

By

H.E. Minister

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Commission on the Status of Women

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

In the name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful

Mr. Chair,

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you on your assumption as the chair of the Commission.

Our meeting here today commemorating the 15th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and its Platform of Action could not have come at a more appropriate time. The worldwide recognition of the pivotal roles of the two hallmarks in the advancement of women's rights is specially noted in so far as they aim to promote gender equality, end all forms of discrimination against women and promote the empowerment of women across the board.

I am also pleased to report to you that Jordan has made great strides in the direction of the fulfillment of the provisions and objectives of both Beijing Platform for Action as well as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As human rights are indeed indivisible, almost every international human rights instrument impacts the rights and status of women in one way or another. My country has therefore ratified the key seven international human rights treaties. All of these international norms have become part and parcel of domestic legislation and enjoy supremacy over them.

No less important in this vein is the withdrawing of our reservation to paragraph 4 of Article 15 of CEDAW, this is part of the national effort to combat discrimination against women in all its forms in Jordan, and admittedly more is needed to be done in this vein. No country has yet succeeded in eliminating all dimensions of gender discrimination and we are no exception.

His Majesty King Abdullah II have said it all when he described violence against women in all its manifestations as a form of "sabotage" that should have no place in our country. This stance sets our standards on women issues and outlines our goals.

Women can already be seen in greater numbers in the parliament, ministries, judiciary, armed forces and police, and have assumed very senior positions in both the public office and private sector.

Women's election to the legislature and municipal councils is being further bolstered by the existing quota system. The new draft law on elections is expected

to allocate even greater number of seats for women. We now have women governors, mayors, judges and ambassadors in addition to women CEOs in key industries and businesses, consultative bodies and chambers of Commerce and Industry. This growing participation of women is expected to even go further. The fact that 60% of the students in the Future Judges Program are females and approximately 55% of students at higher education institutions are females are important indicators for the trend for greater female participation.

The Personal Status Law has been consistently reviewed to accord women greater rights and protection, and is undergoing a substantial revision to give women even more rights, for example to seek divorce without jeopardizing their economic rights. The age of consent for marriage has been lifted to no less than 18 years old. The projected new law will also grant women more custody rights over their children with a view to enhancing the protection of their children.

Moreover, the Government has recently approved a comprehensive legislation to combat human trafficking especially of women and children. A National Anti-trafficking Committee has been recently created and headed by the Minister of Justice. This Committee has just adopted a comprehensive and multi dimensional strategy for combating human trafficking in partnership with civil society.

Jordan has now shelters for women and girls victims of violence or threatened with violence which offers protection, integrated services and support as well as a mechanism for reconciliation. A help-line has also been established to facilitate the reporting of violence cases. Obviously the so-called "honor crimes" is viewed very seriously even though the magnitude of this type of violence against women is limited. Recently, there is in place a special criminal tribunal to deal with these crimes which has already started to strengthen the punishment against male family members who commit these heinous crimes.

It is also noteworthy that domestic workers in Jordan, most of whom are women, are now covered by the Labor Law in order to provide them with equal protection as all other workers employed in the country.

I would like to lend Jordan's support to the enhancement of the role of National Human Rights Institutions; we believe that National Human Rights Institutions should take a standing position in the Commission on the Status of Women.

May I conclude my speech by referring to the last sermon of Prophet Mohammad (May Peace be Upon Him), before his death when he called on his followers to treat women well and fairly by singling out women in his farewell sermon, "واستوصوا بالنساء خيراً" Prophet Mohammad (PBHU) was telling Muslims that women occupy a privileged place in Islam and deserve a special treatment. This anecdote is most telling and reveals the true message of Islam on females. True Islam, therefore, accords women not only equal treatment with men in important matters but also a preferential status as well and to cherish and love at all times.

Thank you all very much and I look forward to working with you closely to make this session a major success.

