



MYANMAR

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Statement

by

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of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations

at the 57th Session of

the Commission on the Status of Women

in General discussion

under agenda item 3:

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women
and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly,
entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace
for the twenty-first century”**

(New York, 11 March 2013)

Madam Chairperson,

May I join the preceding speakers in offering our congratulations to you and the Bureau for your election to guide this important annual global forum for advancement of women.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of ASEAN and the statement made by Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Madam Chairperson,

It has been almost two decades since the adoption of the landmark Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995. The fundamentals of the Declaration remain valid and relevant. Thanks to its follow-up actions, significant progress has been made in raising awareness and attracting priority attention to the issues related to women. There has also been widespread recognition that supporting the advancement of women and gender equality is an important instrument to achieve both equality and sustainable development. Gender equality is also viewed as a means for achieving all the other development goals and peace and security.

While much progress has been made, inequality between men and women remains in many parts of the world. We need to focus on the challenges in implementation and chart out effective plans and strategies to help the developing countries in addressing them in a cooperative approach.

In my own country, Myanmar, women enjoy equal rights with men by both tradition and by law. As the country is now undergoing a peaceful democratic transition, the reform measures embracing democratic values have created even more conducive environment for protection of the vulnerable groups including women and girls. Their rights are clearly enshrined in the Chapter 8 of the new State Constitution adopted in 2010. Gender equality and protection of women occupy a place of priority in the social agenda. It was reflected by the increase participation of women in the political process. In the newly emerged multi-party parliamentary system, the number of women in both executive branch and the legislative branch has also increased compared to previous era.

The government has stepped up its efforts for elimination of discrimination and violence against women by devotedly implementing the articles contained in the CEDAW. As a State party, Myanmar has taken a series of national-level plans for the well-being of women and girls. At present, the government is preparing to submit the combined fourth and fifth periodic report of the States parties to CEDAW. A ten-year National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (2012-2021) is now put in place in Myanmar in line with Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action. The Government's cooperation with such organizations as the Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation and Myanmar Women Entrepreneur's Association has contributed to promoting the policies to address the needs of women and their protection from gender-based violence.

Madam Chairperson,

This year's selection of the priority theme, elimination of violence against women and girl is very relevant, as many women and girls are still subject to this worst manifestation of discrimination. Myanmar's traditional values, which abhor and prohibit sexual exploitation of women, strongly contribute to the Government's efforts to protect women and girls from human rights abuses, including sexual and gender-based violence. My delegation joins the international community in its condemnation of all sexual and other forms of violence committed against women and children.

In situation of armed conflict, the most vulnerable among the civilian population include women and girls. Armed conflict provides fertile grounds for actual perpetration of violence against women. At the same time, the issue can also be exploited to smear the image of the other conflicting party by making up stories of violence, as such allegations are hard to be verified. Such violence is being prevented through strong legal actions against all perpetrators. As Myanmar is moving forward to an open society and promoting human rights, media is now enjoying greater freedom to monitor and report any rights violation, thereby contributing to reduce violence against women and girls.

My delegation believes that the best way to ensure protection of women and children in armed conflict is to put a speedy end to such conflict. The Government has therefore been relentlessly working to achieve permanent peace and national reconciliation, resulting in ceasefire agreements with all but one armed groups. Ending of conflicts will do away with all acts of violence.

Madam Chairperson,

Human trafficking for sexual exploitation is one of the menaces posing a serious threat to the security of women and girls. Myanmar is therefore cooperating closely with its neighbours in the Mekong region to put an end to this hideous act. The government has instituted effective law enforcement measures such as enactment of the Anti-Human Trafficking Law in September 2005. To facilitate the task, a Central Body as well as State/ Regional/ Township level bodies on the prevention of human trafficking and protection of trafficked victims were established in 2006. The government is now implementing the third 3-year plan (2011-2013) to combat human trafficking. Myanmar's serious efforts in this area were reflected by the raising of its rank from Tier-3 to Tier-2 watch list by the United States' report on human trafficking.

Madam Chairperson,

In including, I wish to express our appreciation to the UN Women, the Commission on Status of Women and NGOs for their respective efforts for the advancement of women and elimination of violence against them. My delegation reiterates its commitment to cooperate with these efforts and hopes that the Commission will be able to adopt concrete responses to support the national, regional and global efforts in making the lives of women and girls free from poverty, discrimination and violence.

I thank you.