



BANGLADESH

As delivered

Statement by

H.E. Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, M.P. Hon'ble State Minister,

Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

at the 55th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

on 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, 24 February 2011

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Bangladesh, having signed and ratified the CEDAW Convention, Beijing Platform for Action and Millennium Development Goals is committed in attaining the objectives of ensuring gender equality and empowerment of women. My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by Argentina on behalf of G-77 and China.

Since independence of Bangladesh, policies and institutional measures were undertaken for women development and elimination of discrimination under the leadership of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The Constitution of Bangladesh guarantees equal rights to women in all spheres of state and public life. Under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh government has been actively engaged in formulating pro-active policies and taking affirmative actions for accelerating the implementation process in achieving the goal of holistic empowerment of women.

Women have been mobilized to stand up for their rights. Increased economic participation of women can be traced from their employment in various sectors including garments industries and self-employment in non-formal sectors. Women work in agricultural sector, crop production, livestock, forestry and fisheries. There is a growing trend of women working in construction sites. Positive indicators of women's advancement are reflected in continuing gender parity in school enrolment through introduction of stipend for girls and making secondary education free for them. Lowered infant mortality and decrease in maternal mortality rates also signify the same.

Mr. Chairman

Bangladesh government in achieving the *Vision-2021* is committed in mainstreaming gender issues. Economic empowerment of women is a high priority agenda of the government. Women being important agents of economic and social transformation, emphasis is being given on reducing feminization of poverty. Extensive social safety net programs have been undertaken to provide widow allowance, allowance for destitute women and for women with disabilities. Widow allowance is given to 920000 women. Maternal allowance is given to 88 thousand poor pregnant women for 24 months. Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) program is carried out for ensuring food security to 750000 vulnerable extreme poor women by providing 30 kg of rice every month to each. Income generating skill trainings are conducted and productive assets are

distributed in rural areas. In addition, there is agricultural training, computer training, beautification and garments training. Support is given to small and medium women entrepreneurs by providing collateral free loan.

Legislative framework is in place to combat violence against women. *Prevention of Domestic Violence Act-2010* has been passed by the Parliament. One Stop Crisis Centre operates in 6 divisions to give medical, legal and police assistance to women victims of violence. There is also a Trauma Counseling Centre. Women's participation in agricultural production is facilitated through access to agricultural technologies and loans given for agro-processing, homestead gardening, nurseries, bee-keeping and other activities. Marginal and landless farmers of whom 50% are women are being given support. Enhanced