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The Permanent Mission of Egypt  
to the United Nations  
New York

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**Statement by  
Dr. Safa Elbaz  
The National Council for Women  
The Arab Republic of Egypt**

**Before  
The 55<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women**

New York, February 28, 2011

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Statement by  
Dr. Safa Elwan  
The National Council for Women,  
The Arab Republic of Egypt

The 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women  
Geneva

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Geneva, February 28, 1981

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your re-election for this important position in the current session of the commission that discusses and follows up critical issues related to women, gender equality, and issues of unemployment, training and labour. I have 35 years of professional, managerial, and administrative experience, as well as the honourable distinction to add the work of the Commission and our discussions with the committee to my list of achievements. In this regard, Egypt pledges to exert each and every effort to ensure the success of this session.

Mr. Chairman,

Information technology and modern means of communication play a key role in motivating and organizing community-based movement, as well as their role in the formation of ideas, systems, policies and new initiatives that reflect the aspirations of the Egyptian people, particularly young people of both sexes. There is no doubt that the transformations that are taking place in our Arab countries did not take place by hazard rather than being a result of important qualitative shifts over the recent years, including the high level of awareness, the high level of participation, and the high level of expression and association.

The most important impetus for the work of this commission is to discuss the actual impacts of women empowerment and human resources, as well as their high participation in political, economic and social development, including enacting and implementing legislations and policies aimed at eradicating discrimination against women and their contribution to development in all its dimensions. This includes, among others, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, the preparation of gender-responsive budgets, addressing, reducing the disparities between males and females in respect of primary education, with a focus on increasing political, economic and social representation of women in leadership positions.

In the economic area, the past years witnessed a surge of interest from Egyptian women to enter new areas in industry, electronics, information technology and communication, pharmaceuticals, arts, and to be also engaged in investment projects, as well as establishing business women associations, which are related to their economic empowerment and enhanced their participation to increase development revenues and to enjoy their benefits.

The progress was a result of increasing women's opportunities and capacities in education and training. The rates of females in basic education are higher than male counterparts in most governorates, including the rural areas. Girls attained higher than boys in all stages of pre-university and university education, and consequently numbers of female graduates from more than 25 college specializing in science and technology increased. In addition, the females who are occupying leadership positions in universities and research centers, including the Egyptian National Center for Social and Criminological Research, the Council for Scientific Research Ethics and the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology.

Most of these quantitative developments that the Egyptian society witnessed, either in the field of women's education beyond primary learning, or in the advancement of women in education, training, scientific research and technology, have been achieved by a number of national institutions and mechanisms that have coordinated their efforts and integrated programs in a manner that provided a remarkable coherence and impact. On top of these national institutions, the National Council for Women, that was established in 2000 to serve as the comprehensive national mechanism for the advancement of Egyptian women in all aspects. The Council is working in coordination with various government ministries, bodies as well as local governments, and in close coordination with civil society organizations, research centers, universities, and the media, the Ministry of Economic Planning, which was established recently, and the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology, which established a national committee for women's affairs and its role in the field of science and technology.

In this regard, a significant tribute to international cooperation programs that have been conducted for years between the National Council for Women and UN Women, which has contributed to many of the national initiatives, program known as the initiative of Sustainable Gender Equality. Egypt is confident that these programs will continue to contribute to the development of the country with the UN Women, I would like to express our appreciation for all the efforts for international cooperation in terms of training and capacity-building, with other agencies, bodies and stakeholders at the national, regional and international, as well as in the form of bilateral, regional organizations and specialized agencies.

Mr. Chairman,

Egypt will continue its intensive efforts aimed at increasing women's access to education, training and employment, and will encourage them to work in areas of scientific research and technology. However, many problems and challenges are to be faced and dealt with in the coming period. Among these most prominent challenges is the increase in the economic development rates in order to address the high unemployment rates for both sexes, as well as to address some cultural traditions and social values, which still deprive governmental work opportunities of many qualified women, and to strengthen scientific and technological training programs in a number of advanced countries' activities towards the maximum benefit of global technological and scientific progress in all areas, which should not be obstructed by the developed countries through programs to transfer technology and help the developing countries to enable women's full use of them.

In Egypt, we will have to deal more effectively with the issue of women's labour. One third of women, especially in rural areas, still work in unproductive jobs, and they are mostly concentrated in agricultural sector without wages. The rising unemployment rates among women exceed those among men, and this requires a social, cultural and economic confrontation in order to eliminate this waste of women's energy and to direct it towards behaviour which women serve as of active participation in the National Plan in all branches, side by side with men, in order to ensure that they achieve better standard of living in a more open society based on equality and joint work.

Mr. Chairman

These are some of the main Egyptian priorities and efforts regarding empowerment of women and gender mainstreaming, as well as to expand the available opportunities for women in fields of education, scientific research and technology. We believe that the future holds for our country many opportunities and expectations as long as it carries the challenges and difficulties. We have great confidence that our country will rise above these difficulties and achieve sustainable development and the advancement of our people, and we have fervent hope that the international community in all its institutions and organizations will continue cooperation with us in this regard.

Thank you.

Mr. Chairman,

Egypt will continue its intensive efforts aimed at increasing women's access to education, training and employment, and to encourage them to break the areas of scientific research and technology. However, many obstacles and challenges are to be faced and dealt with in the coming period. Among these most prominent challenges is to increase the economic development rates in order to address the high unemployment rates. In order to do so, we must address some cultural traditions and social values, which still favor governmental work opportunities rather than the private sector, and promoting scientific and technological training programs in a manner that best women's activities towards the maximum benefit of global technological and scientific progress in all areas, which should be boosted by the developed countries through programs to transfer technology and help developing countries to ensure women's full use of them.

In Egypt, we will have to deal more effectively with the issue of women's labour. One third of women, especially in rural areas, still work in low-productivity jobs, and the majority concentrate in educational sector without wages. The rising unemployment rates among women exceed those among men, and this requires a societal, cultural and economic confrontation in order to eliminate this waste of women's energy and direct it towards achieving what women deserve of active participation in the National Action in all branches, side by side with men, in order to ensure that they achieve better standard of living in a more open society based on deposit and fair work.

Mr. Chairman

There were some facts about the Egyptian policies and efforts regarding empowerment of women and gender mainstreaming, as well as promoting the available opportunities for women in fields of education, scientific research and technology. We believe that the future holds for us of the opportunities and expectations as long as it carries the challenges and difficulties. We have great confidence that our country will pass over these difficulties, to be devoted to achieving economic development and the advancement of women for the Egyptian people, and for all other peoples and countries. Meanwhile, we have fervent hope that the international community in all its bodies and organizations will continue cooperation with us in this regard.

Thank you