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Statement by H.E. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations, at the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women on agenda item 5. Follow up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and its twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

(28 February 2000, New York)

Mr. Chairman.....

I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the chair of the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished Representative of Argentina, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Nepal welcomes the newly launched United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, UN Women...

Mr. Chairman,

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action remains the most comprehensive global policy framework for gender equality and empowerment of women. The Millennium Declaration includes gender equality and women's empowerment as one of its eight Millennium Development Goals. Important international human rights instruments have been adopted for ending discrimination against women. However, much remains to be done.

In line with the Beijing Platform, Nepal attaches great importance to the interests of women. We believe that we cannot achieve sustainable peace and development without ensuring equal rights to women.

The Constituent Assembly of Nepal elected in 2002 stands today as one of the most inclusive assemblies in the world with one third representation of women.

Mr. Chairman,

Nepal has adopted a rights-based approach to social, economic and political empowerment of its women. Ensuring gender equality and women's empowerment is one of our top priorities as enshrined in the interim Constitution of Nepal. We place gender equality a basic human right, a fundamental value and an issue of social justice in Nepal.

women like in the past have not ensured proportional and inclusive representation in the State Institutions, including bureaucracy, army and police.

Mechanisms relating to gender budgeting have been initiated which take into account the advancement of women in the programs launched by the Government in all sectors. Involvement of women in the formulation and implementation of local development programs has been institutionalized.

Working with the civil society and other stakeholders, micro-credit programs, adult education programs and teacher education programs targeted to the girl and women have been implemented to empower them at the community level.

Despite all these efforts, resources and capacity constraints stand in the way of full implementation of the programs related to women empowerment. International cooperation and support measures go a long way in further strengthening national programs in our countries. Nepal has taken several legal, administrative and other policy measures to bring to an end all forms of discrimination against women. Relevant laws have been amended to make them compatible to gender equality. Human Trafficking Control Act has been enacted. The Legislative-Parliament has also enacted Domestic Violence (Crime and Punishment) Act.

The Government has also implemented the National Action Plan for the effective implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and 1820 which signifies the high priority that the Government accorded to the full and equal participation of women in peace, security and sustained development of the country.

National Women Commission has been working as an autonomous statutory body for the protection and promotion of the rights and interests of women, including their effective inclusion in the development mainstream. The Commission had recommendatory and investigatory powers.

Despite significant resource constraints, Nepal has made impressive progress in reducing the maternal mortality rate. MMR has been reduced to 220 per 100,000 live births from 539 per 100,000 live births. Our aim is to reduce it further and that to substantially in the next few years.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development reiterates its firm commitment to BPEA. We underscore women's paramount role in building a peaceful, stable, democratic and prosperous world.

Thank you!