



Finland to the UN Security Council in 2013-2014

The 56th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

General Discussion (continued)

High-level policy review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the general assembly: Sharing of experiences and good practices on implementation of the platform for action, with a view to overcoming remaining obstacles and new challenges

Statement by

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(check against delivery)

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High-level plenary review of the implementation of the Beijing platform for action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the Commission on the Status of Women, with a view to assessing remaining obstacles and new challenges

State Secretary Jarmo Lindén, Finland

Finland aligns herself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Chair/Madam Chairperson,

Fulfillment of women's human rights is a prerequisite for achieving a balanced society and well-being for all. Women's participation in political and economic decision-making processes has become more important and visible than ever. During the past year we have witnessed women's active and strong involvement in the Arab Spring events, where women of different political, religious and social backgrounds have showed their will and readiness to demand dignity, justice and economic opportunities for themselves and their communities.

Women's economic empowerment and participation is one of UN Women's focus areas and Finland fully supports UN Women's work in this area. In addition, our efforts are national. We can achieve what is best for women, and for the entire core system, also if that discussion is not between UN Women and CSW. It is essential in reaching this important goal.

Gender equality, a fairer society and success in the world's economic development. The Economic Forum has identified Finland to be among the most competitive economies in the world. One of the factors contributing to our economic development has been paying due attention to gender equality. This has allowed both women and men to take effectively part in the economy.

Finland is convinced that education is an essential instrument that gives women and girls equal opportunities in all aspects of life. In Finland there is an obligation for each educational institution to complete a gender equality plan. This is a good and constructive way to promote gender equality through institutions, and engage young people to gender awareness work.

Non-governmental organizations have a vital role to play in promoting gender equality and should be considered by governments as partners in this endeavor. Girls and young women should be encouraged to participate in NGO activities as a means to promote their awareness and self-esteem. It is important to ensure that public funding mechanisms are distributed on an equal basis, so that resources go to the needs of both girls and boys. We also have to make sure that women participate in the rural policy-making processes.

A woman or a girl can only be an active participant in the society if she has the right and knowledge needed to make decisions concerning her own body, sexuality, and reproductive health. This increases possibilities of women and girls to acquire a good education and to find decent work outside their homes. Therefore Finland consistently supports the advancement of sexual and reproductive health and rights. It is very regrettable that we still do not have enough progress in this area in improving maternal health. Too many women die of diseases that would be easy to prevent. This is a grave reminder of the severe discrimination women and girls encounter in society. We must continue our tireless efforts in the MDGs.

Women's active participation is instrumental in safeguarding scarce natural resources, thus women have a crucial role in promoting socially, economically and ecologically sustainable development. Women's potential should be fully utilized in the Rio+20 process, and their participation in it must be strengthened.

Violence against women remains a serious challenge everywhere, both in Finland and in many other countries, both in cities as well as in the countryside. Finland is committed to combat this problem both nationally and through international agreements, such as the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Council of Europe's European Convention on Prevention and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.

Finally, we must remember that men and boys also play a crucial role in women's empowerment. We must mobilize men and boys to take part in our work on gender equality. Our commitments and common goals require the support of everybody. In the end, they also give the best results.

Thank you Mr. Chair/Madam Chairperson.