Statement
By
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to the United Nations in New York

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Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to thank Mrs. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the Executive Director of UN Women for her insightful opening statement in the morning session, and her active and strong leadership of the UN Women.

I would like also to thank Mrs. Ngcuka for her report on the progress made on the implementation of the strategic plan (2011-2013) which highlighted remarkable results achieved in 3 years to advance gender equality; including the new strategic plan, the new regional architecture, the successful role in the discussions on the post-2015 development agenda, peace and security and climate change as well as supporting member states in their national plans to improve the lives of women and girls. Egypt remains concerned about the challenges related to violence against women in all its forms and manifestations around the world, particularly sexual violence in armed conflict, and the exploitation of the ICTs in violence, girls’ education, women’s access to justice, forced and child marriage, and trafficking in women and girls.

Mr. President

Our delegation has followed with appreciation of all reports before the session on the evaluations, funding as well as the country visits. In this regard, allow me to make the following remarks:

1. While the United Nations is shaping the new sustainable development goals, Egypt supports the inclusion of gender equality and the empowerment of women as a stand-alone goal. In this context, Egypt welcomes the adoption of the agreed conclusions of the 58th session of the Commission on the Status of women last March and the important role played by UN Women in facilitating the discussions. The text shed light on the major issues related to the rights of women and girls, which should be given due attention in the post-2015 development agenda.

2. We commend the efforts of the UN Women in supporting Egypt through its initiatives related to Safe Cities, girls’ education and violence against women, including sexual harassment and domestic violence.”

3. Education and Economic empowerment of women and girls are indispensable tools that should receive more attention, while addressing gender equality. Girls education in specific is not a luxury, but one of the best strategies for protecting girls against any harmful practice, that denies their childhood, limits their opportunities, increases their risk to violence and abuse, and above all steals their dream of a bright future. In this regard, Egypt stresses the urgent need to stand united and committed against all armed groups that terrorize our girls and jeopardize their right to education. In this context, we reiterate our full condemnation of the terrorist act of kidnapping 200 Nigerian girls and to express Egypt’s support to the State of Nigeria.
Mr. President,

Egypt is confidently passing through its path for democracy. The role of Egyptian women was indispensable in supporting the democratic transition, including through the unprecedented massive participation of women all over Egypt in the referendum on the constitution and the recent presidential elections. Women issues are on top of the new President’s agenda as stressed in his inaugural speech. Allow me to highlight the major steps taken recently in this regard:

First: In consistency with Egypt’s international commitments to human rights conventions to which it acceded, the new constitution comprises over 20 articles on women or ultimately benefit women such as insurance and pensions, social justice, social security systems, equal opportunities for all citizens without discrimination, granting the Egyptian nationality to their children born of a foreign father and workers rights. The reference to women’s rights within the chapter on the State and its fundamental constituents is a matter which is in itself, a significant development that emphasizes the importance of women and their role in the state and society. The state is obliged to guarantee the equality between women and men in all spheres, to take measures to ensure the adequate representation of women in all parliamentary assemblies and local councils shall be reserved for women, and their right to hold public office and senior management positions without discrimination. The State is committed to the protection of women against all forms of violence and to ensure the reconciliation between their duties in the family and work requirements.

Second: Egypt recently approved a significant anti-sexual harassment law amending the Egyptian penal code. The new amendment defines the crime of “sexual harassment” for the first time. It makes the offense punishable by up to five years in prison. It prohibits to accost people by implying sexual or obscene gestures in any manner, including by ICTs.

Third: As a collective societal effort to take a firm stand against all forms of violence against women and girls, in cooperation between the Government, UN Women country office in Cairo, and the civil society, media awareness-raising campaigns have been launched, with support and involvement of men and boys and with the aim to encourage victims to file their complaints to the police against perpetrators. The new specialized police department for combating sexual violence crimes is tightening security measures and surveillance in public places.

Fourth: The Egyptian Feminist Union launched an important national campaign called “women for women” to recruit and support women candidates from all over Egypt to run for the parliamentary elections.

Mr. President,

I conclude by extending Egypt’s full support to UN-Women goals and activities as a major partner and reiterating our commitment to all international conventions to which we acceded, for the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of women, as well as our commitment to cooperate with the United Nations system in this regard.

I Thank you, Mr. President