BANGLADESH

Please Check against delivery

Statement by

H.E. Dr. A.K. Abdul Momen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Bangladesh, at the General Debate of the Third Committee of the 68th Session of the UNGA on ‘Advancement of women’ [agenda item 28]
New York, 16 October 2013

Thank you Mr. Chair.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by Fiji on behalf G77 and China. We take note of the Reports of the Secretary-General under this agenda item.

Mr. Chair:

An empowered woman can substantially contribute to the health, education and productivity of her family and thereby accelerate overall development. But it is a matter of concern that with less than 800+ days in hand before the MDG deadline, gender-based inequalities still persist in many areas. Women by and large remain marginalized from decision-making.

Mr. Chair:

Advancement of women is a priority area of the present Government of Bangladesh. We have undertaken a number of pro-woman policies and strategies and they are effective:

First, the present government considers education and skills development of women as fundamental building blocks for women’s inclusion into national economic plans and activities. To this end, education for girls has made completely free up to grade 12. Free education is supported by free books, free school meals and special stipends for girls. As a Champion State in UN Secretary Generals’ Education First Initiative, we have set
up record numbers of vocational training institutes that provides vocational training in farming, computer and ICT, tailoring and beautification, RMG industry and housekeeping, for national and overseas employment. Education and skills, helped tremendously in delaying early marriage, lower maternal mortality and childbirth, and create a healthy generation of women labor force, which we increased from a 7% in 1980s to a 36% in 2013 with 3.5 million only in the RMG sector.

Second, we also foster women’s entrepreneurship and enterprise with their access to banking and credits. collateral free bank loans for women is helping to transform women folk into small and medium entrepreneurs. The government has also set up commercial sales outlet for marketing their products in all Districts. 10 percent industrial plots are reserved for women at the state-owned industrial estates. Collateral free access to government sponsored micro-credits at only 5% service charge is creating more than 3 million women micro-entrepreneurs in rural Bangladesh and thousands of women-led agricultural businesses through its ‘One House, One Farm’ program targeted for female-headed households only. Since it is much easier for women to get credits, if a man needs credits, he prefers to sign off his properties to his wife or daughter to get it.

Third, special quota for women reserved in different services is ensuring women with decent job. 10% position is reserved for women in public service and nearly 65% in primary school teaching.

Fourth we have also achieved some success in the area of political empowerment of women. Key policy and decision making positions including Head of the Government, Speaker of Parliament, Leader of Opposition, Deputy Leader of House, few key cabinet ministers, some 14 thousand and 200 elected women reps at various tiers of Local Government, are held by female. Global Gender Gap Report 2012, has ranked Bangladesh 8th in the world in terms of political empowerment of women.

These successes have been possible because of dynamic leadership, strong political will, partnership and cooperation with development partners and UN agencies. I would be remiss if I do not mention the continuous support of civil society and NGOs to government led programs.

Mr. Chair:

Secretary General in his report has rightly pointed out that advancement of women is a collective endeavor. While states have the primary responsibility in this regard, the success depends on collective effort of all stakeholders. We need to support each other in our efforts.