



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
8 December 2014

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women

Fifty-ninth session

9-20 March 2015

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and
to the special session of the General Assembly entitled
“Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for
the twenty-first century”**

Statement submitted by Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Towards Women's Human Rights, Dignity and Social Justice

Violence against Women and girls is one of the fundamental critical issues for promoting and protecting women's human rights dignity and social progress. This issue has been addressed more than 4 to 5 decades ago by women's movements in different parts of the world.

Socially constructed discrimination against women and the girl child has been addressed in detail and properly in the United Nations 2nd human rights conference (Vienna 1993). In the Vienna declaration and plan of action, global women's and human rights movements got two important slogans "Women's Rights are Human Rights" and "Violence against Women is Violence against Humanity". These declarations and plan of actions actually echoed the main spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was declared in 1948.

In 1995, the Fourth World Conference on Women took a declaration and plan of action with 12 critical areas for promoting women's empowerment and human rights. The analysis and definition has been taken from the declaration on Violence Against Women which was declared by the United Nations in 1993, 6 November. The issue of resisting Violence Against Women and Girls has been taken very seriously and multi-dimensional approaches have been taken by different women's rights, development organizations, Civil Society Organizations, state and governments.

Nationally, Regionally, Globally different declaration and plan of action has been taken from both right based and multi-sectoral approaches, different action plans and steps and activities are going on continuously. Bangladesh, continuously, for the last three and a half decades, has been resisting and eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls. Multi-dimensional activities are going on addressing the root causes of Violence against women and the girl child and multi-sectoral steps have been taken by women's and human rights movements in Bangladesh. Within these three and a half decades 10 laws, few fundamental, preventive important laws, have been introduced by the successive governments of Bangladesh where women's movements are the first imitator, voice raiser, drafter and off course implementer of all these laws.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad is one of the oldest pioneer initiators of this process, launching a strong rigorous law-reform movement, giving free legal aid (legal aid clinic), giving para-legal training, running a home (safe home), organizing an awareness raising movement all over the country. Bangladesh Mahila Parishad and many other women's human rights and legal aid organizations have been playing an important constructive role in resisting and eliminating all kinds of violence against women and the girl child. From 2000 and 2009 one stop crisis centres and victim support centres have been running. From every corner there is a continuous effort but in spite of these multi-sectoral, multi-dimensional efforts the Violence against Women and Girls is not decreasing in an expected way.

Vienna (1993), Beijing Platform of action (1995), United Nations Member States made their commitment to resist and eliminate violence against women and Girls. United Nations Commission on the Status of Women also addressed the issue very seriously. In spite of global, regional and national efforts by different state and

non-state actors and development partners Violence against women is not decreasing in an expected way. Using the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as a tool for promoting women's human rights, innovative interventions have been made in the last two decades such as gender budgeting initiatives, allocation of more resources for resisting violence against women, inclusion of women's human rights issues, gender issues in the different national policies, national curriculum, engendering economic and other national development policies etc.

Surveys and research studies have been continuously going on by national, regional and United Nations organizations. There is remarkable progress in some areas of this resistance movement but at the same time there are some areas of great concern for national, regional and global women's and human rights movements, which should be mapped and critically evaluated by the United Nations system and women's human rights movements globally. Evaluation of 20 years of Beijing declaration and plan of action needs a critical appraisal.

Recommendations

- Attitude towards women should be addressed multi-dimensionally by national, regional and global institutions.
- Patriarchy should be addressed by educational and cultural policies.
- Role of families, role of man, women, boys and girls.
- How much multi-sectoral approaches are effective and if not, why? What are the causes and issues that should be addressed?
- Role of institutional mechanism should be reviewed critically.
- Role of state violence should be taken into account.
- Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women should be taken seriously by member states.
- Not only implementation of the Millennium Development Goals but also the implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action should be taken into account more seriously. United Nations system, Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women should make member states more accountable.
- Mid-term evaluation and another time frame for the full implementation of Beijing platform of action should be declared.
- Resisting violence against women is not only a women's rights issue it is one of the fundamental issues of human rights and meaningful democracy and democratic culture.
- United Nations Human Rights council should give more priority and importance on violence against women's issues in its Universal Periodic Review.
- Consolidated Global and National effort should be strengthened to resist violence against women and girls.

- Global resource allocation should be increased especially for addressing Violence against Women and Girls.
- United Nations Women both globally and locally should take a more pro-active role with both governments and civil society efforts in resisting violence against women and girls.
- United Nations Women should focus more on training programs for both governments and activist organizations who are directly engaged in resisting violence against women and Girls.
- Principals of equality and non-discrimination as mentioned by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (that is Equality needs equal opportunity, Equality should bear equal results, Affirmative action should be taken by state society and governments) should be followed by all United Nations member states more seriously and more effectively.
- The issues of religious extremism, fundamentalism should be seriously addressed by United Nations system. Member states should respect their commitment to resist communalism, religious fundamentalism and terrorism.
- Political conflict and culture of conflict in politics should be addressed by United Nations system.
- Political and state violence also aggravating the situation of Violence against Women and Girls.
- Questions of identities of a person's and Violence against women and Girls are highly linked especially in the politically conflicted and war zones of the globe.
- Rape is a war tool; anti-rape law should be introduced and should be implemented effectively, campaign should be strengthened globally, more strategically and in a very effective way.
- State should take more responsibility and accountability for rape victim.
- Anit-Fatwa, anti-honour killing, awareness campaign should be strengthened by United Nations System such as United Nations Women, Member states, and Civil Society organizations more seriously.
- Religious extremism should be censored and stopped by the state mechanism. All the campaign movement should be launched in a multi-dimensional way.
- The attention during the last 20 years in implementing the 12 areas of concerns to improve the status of women globally should be critically examined.

During the last 14 years member states and government were too busy with the Millennium Development Goals implementation rather than implementation of Beijing Platform of Action. My practical activism tells me implementation of Beijing Platform of Action should be given more preference in the future.

- For resisting Violence against women and Girls and for implementing Beijing Platform of Action effectively and to remove the gaps in the ways of implementation.
- In future programmes, designing a more balanced approach (right based — Equal rights of property and resources, welfare based, multi-sectoral both ways approaches should be balanced).