

74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

Third Committee

Agenda Item 26:
Advancement of Women

INDIA STATEMENT

Ms. Paulomi Tripathi, First Secretary

07 October 2019

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation aligns with the statement made by the State of Palestine on behalf of the G-77.

We thank the Secretary-General for the reports under this agenda item.

This year, we commemorate the 40th anniversary of the adoption of CEDAW and prepare for the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action – two important frameworks that guide our action.

Despite significant progress made towards gender equality, women and girls around the world continue to face restrictions to access education, employment and political participation. They are still married as children, trafficked into forced labor and sex slavery. Every day more than 800 women die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth.

As we renew our collective resolve to continue to work towards the realization of women's empowerment and gender equality, there is no space for weaponizing women's rights issues through empty rhetoric for self-serving political gains.

Today, one delegation has callously chosen to politicize this agenda by making unwarranted references to internal matters of my country.

As they covet territory of others, they camouflage their vile intentions with fake concerns.

It is ironical that a country, where violations of women's right to life in the name of so called 'honor' go unpunished, is making baseless statements about women's rights in my country.

The international community still remembers that the armed forces of this country perpetrated dreadful sexual violence against women with impunity, in our immediate neighborhood in 1971. We still hear accounts of these gruesome violations at the annual high level general debate.

We do not wish to engage further on this issue with a delegation with such credibility.

We hope that the precious time of this Committee is better utilized to deliberate on the agenda before us.

Mr. Chairman,

Gender equality and empowerment of women is an integral part of India's inclusive development strategy.

India attaches utmost importance to representation of women in decision making positions. We are proud that the first woman President of the General Assembly was Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit from India.

Pioneering contribution of Dr. Hansa Mehta from India in drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is well recognized.

Women scientists at the Indian Space Research Organization have become inspirations for many.

Today, more than 1.3 million elected women representatives lead in formulation and implementation of public policies at grassroots level.

Measures such as financial inclusion, income guarantee programmes, cash benefit transfers, improved access to healthcare and education for women and girls have improved lives of millions.

These measures are linked with increased productivity and better access to labour markets for women, to derive sustainable, long term benefits for the society and the economy.

More than 197 million women, who previously did not qualify to open bank accounts now have bank accounts through government's Financial Inclusion Initiative.

This has increased their access to insurance, loans, and social assistance. 'Stand Up India' and 'Mudra Yojana' programmes promote women entrepreneurship by providing access to loans.

Ensuring cooking gas connections to more than 80 million women has had positive impact on their health, and reduced environmental degradation from using firewood.

In order to consolidate women farmers' role, 30% of the budget allocations are earmarked for women in all ongoing programmes in this sector.

Every woman giving birth in public health institutions, receive free and cashless services, which include free drugs, diagnostics, diet and transportation. A cash transfer scheme for pregnant and lactating women provides wage compensation during childbirth and childcare.

Engagements with the community health workers enable women to take informed decisions about their reproductive health and access safe contraception.

A National Nutrition Mission has been launched to eradicate malnutrition by 2022, with special focus on children, women and adolescent girls.

Mr. Chairman,

Laws and initiatives such as The Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, Working Women Hostels, New Taxi Policy Guidelines, 24x7 women helplines, CCTVs at strategic locations, the Safe Cities Project and increasing the number of women in the police forces, aim at ensuring safe work and public space for women.

Victims of sexual violence and abuse receive medical, legal, counselling services and shelter at the One Stop Centres.

In conclusion, let me underline our commitment to realizing a transformative change for gender equality, women's rights and empowerment, globally.

I thank you.