



Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations

STATEMENT

OF

H.E. Dr. Zahir Tanin

**Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the
United Nations**

Chairman of the Asian Group for the Month of March

On Behalf of the Asian Group

at the commemorative plenary

of

the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Platform of

Action for Women

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NEW YORK

په ملگرو ملتوکی
د افغانستان اسلامي جمهوریت
دایمی نمایندگی - نیویارک



Permanent Mission of the
Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
to the United Nations

نماینده گی دایمی جمهوری
اسلامی افغانستان
در ملل متحد - نیویارک

Mr . President

On behalf of Asian Group, it is an honor for me and to address this historic gathering commemorating the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration.

In September 1995 we gathered in Beijing for the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on women. Today, fifteen years later, we come together again to commemorate the occasion, acknowledge progress made and challenges ahead, and pay tribute to the ideals embodied in the Beijing Platform of Action. In Beijing we unequivocally declared our shared determination to advance the goals of equality, development, and peace for all women everywhere in the interest of all humanity; we recognized the persistent inequalities between men and women and the repercussions they have on societies; and we acknowledged that the situation is exacerbated by the abject poverty that affects the lives of many of the world's people, in particular women and children. We concluded by dedicating ourselves to addressing these constraints and obstacles, and, perhaps more importantly, we recognized the urgency of this endeavor and the need for collective determination and cooperation for the tasks ahead.

In assessing our progress in implementing the commitments we made to the world's women in Beijing, we realize much progress has been made, but considerable obstacles remain that hobble and dehumanize women throughout the world.

Women's rights are progressive and evolving. Since the Beijing conference men and women throughout the world have become ever more aware of the inequities that women endure, and they have spoken up to demand change. It is that demand that has brought about the improving recognition of women's rights in each country's legal system and here at the United Nations.

Furthermore, the Beijing Conference cemented the notion that it is unacceptable to differentiate women's rights from human rights. But still in many countries around the world women are not safe from the threats of domestic violence, continued discrimination, and wide-ranging socio-economic barriers. We must continue our efforts toward the implementation of Beijing Declaration.

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But progress has been made through a concerted effort of the international community, national governments, and in part through the action of women and girls themselves. For the first time, women in South Asia now live longer than men. This improvement in women's longevity is an indicator of better treatment of women and girls and a valued outcome identified in the Beijing Platform for Action. In addition, high economic growth has led to significant reduction in gender gaps in the labor markets of Asian and Pacific nations.

In the political realm, Asia, where women political leaders are more prevalent than anywhere else, has certainly made progress through the introduction of quota systems to increase women's representation in political governance structures. For example, in Afghanistan where the misogynistic Taliban once ruled and women were deprived of their very basic human rights, now constitutional law stipulates that 27% of all seats in Parliament must be filled by women.

Undoubtedly, because of our actions over the past three decades, women's issues have gained prominence on the international and national development agendas. Attention has gone not only to the plight of poor and disenfranchised women in developing countries, but also to the unfinished gender agenda in more developed countries, such as addressing women's representation in higher-paying jobs and management positions and reducing the prevalence of gender-based violence.

We gather here today to commemorate this special occasion, to celebrate a cause, to celebrate progress, but more importantly to realize that our job is not finished - to realize that there are remaining and arising new challenges. We have come a long way since the conference in Beijing; we shall be ruthlessly unyielding in our pursuit to ensure that our mothers, our sisters, our daughters, are treated with equality, respect, and dignity.

I thank you, Mr. President.