



THE GAMBIA  
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*Check Against Police Database*

**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**H.E. MRS. SUSAN WAFFA-OGOO**

**AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE GAMBIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**AT THE**

**55<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE  
STATUS OF WOMEN**

**NEW YORK  
28<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2011**

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H.E. MRS. SUSAN WAFA-OGOO

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Mr. Chairman,  
Madam Under-Secretary,  
Distinguished Delegates

My delegation would like to thank you and the Bureau for all the preparatory work you have undertaken to make the 55<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women a success. We celebrate UN-Women and we look forward to developing an inter-agency relationship with the Commission with a view to enhancing the role and empowerment of women throughout the world.

Likewise, we hope that the agreed conclusions of this 55<sup>th</sup> session of the CSW would further guide the work of UN-Women and other UN entities as it relates to this year's priority theme.

Madam Chairperson,

*"Access and participation of women and girls in quality, free and fair education, including for the promotion of women and girls' access to employment and decent work" is topical and should be a core of policy discussions that aim at empowering women. The education of women and girls empowers them to take charge of their well-being and that of their families and communities. However, access and participation of women and girls in science and technology or education and training in the developing world is affected by factors which must be addressed through innovative policy interactions, legislation, establishment of partnerships and networks, as well as the provision of adequate financial resources. This presents particular challenges to the education systems in developing countries where teaching of science and mathematics lags behind other disciplines. The teaching of basic science starts at the primary school level and the need for training more teachers in science and mathematics therefore cannot be overemphasized. As we strive to improve, we must not leave the question of quality to chance and hence the need to address the issue of gender parity as well.*

Madam Chairperson,

The Government of Cambodia has made education a top priority issue, convinced that it is a root of future successes. We have embarked on a number of initiatives to ensure, in particular, the education of girls and literacy of women. Our Education Policy 2004-2015 **"Rethinking education for poverty alleviation"** places a strong emphasis on gender mainstreaming and increased equitable access to basic education, including in the areas of science and technology. With such strategies, the Government has made education a public concern to all. There are scholarship trust funds that are supported by the Government, including from private sector NGOs and CBO Organizations. Trust funds such as the Education Project (FLUEP) and the Education Fund for Peace have become major tools to

gendered encouragement of both boys and girls to enroll and stay in school without fear of cost and this includes financial scholarships and packages for girls who excel in mathematics and the sciences.

**Madam Chairperson,**

I will highlight other initiatives from our national experience that we believe are examples of best practices that we can share with you. Policy interventions must specifically address the needs of women and girls on gender issues in providing them with education and training in science and technology must incorporate a gender dimension if they are to lead to women's equal access to full employment and decent work. It is therefore imperative to create a conducive school environment, which promotes the health and welfare of students throughout the learning cycle. These include the provision of adequate water and sanitation facilities, and catering for the nutritional needs of children. The Gambia tries to address this through the Child Friendly School Initiative (CFSI) which is supported by UNICEF and it seeks to promote gender equality in enrollment and achievement as well as eliminating gender stereotypes. The promotion of the participation of women and girls in the management of schools is another important element in their participation in education and training.

**Madam Chairperson,**

As I stated earlier, at the heart of our education policy is the emphasis on gender mainstreaming at all stages of the education system. One of the key objectives of access to science and technology. In the last few years, the Government has made a realization of these policy objectives through the establishment of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology and the Science and Technology Centre for research in science and technology as well as allowing private sector interventions in the field of ICT training. In the course of this year, we will see the commencement of operations by the American International University for West Africa and its focus on the teaching of modern science and technology in The Gambia. We believe that these initiatives are all intended to promote the access and participation of women and girls in education and training, especially in science and technology.

While women still face access to full employment and decent work. Whereas significant strides have been made in school management levels in the public sector, men still dominate in the upper levels of private and forward enterprises as managers, professionals and technicians, while women predominate in the lower levels because they lack training and marketable skills. These challenges have galvanized the government's efforts to improve vocational and technical education. As a part of generating dynamic entrepreneurs and technicians. Skills training programme was developed with the View to supply the demand in the labour market. This was the Training Project, a collaboration between The Gambian Government and the International Labour Organization has been designed with these goals in mind.

**Madam Chairperson,**

Most importantly, education and training should not be a privilege or only the educated women and girls in urban cities and towns. Most other African and developing countries have a majority of the women folk are to be found in rural areas and are engaged in agriculture which is the mainstay of our economies. Education and training programmes must also be targeted at this important segment of the workforce particularly in agricultural extension, horticulture, and animal husbandry to enhance women farmers' skills and know-how and in the process, help bring about their economic empowerment.

**Madam Chairperson,**

Let me conclude by reiterating the following observation by George Bernard Shaw, "Reasonable people adapt themselves to the world. Unreasonable people attempt to adapt the world to themselves. All progress therefore depends on unreasonable people." For decades, women worldwide have mobilized, (under the auspices of the UN) as a result, gender politics and policy have changed for good. Yet a lot more remains to be done and are exacerbated by new and more daunting challenges and so, the struggle for equality and women's empowerment must continue.

As the great Mahatma Gandhi puts it *Women empowerment is the only way to see in the world.*

**Thank you.**

Madam Chairperson,

Most importantly, education and training should not be a privilege of only the educated women and girls in urban cities and towns. As in most other African and developing countries, the majority of the women folk are to be found in the rural areas and are engaged in agriculture, which is the mainstay of our economies. Education and training programmes must also be targeted at this sector. In addition, programmes should be designed to enhance women farmers' skills and know-how and in the process, help bring about their economic empowerment.

Madam Chairperson,

Let me conclude by reiterating the following observation by George Bernard Shaw (quote): "Reasonable people adapt themselves to the world. Unreasonable people attempt to adapt the world to themselves. All progress therefore depends on unreasonable people." (unquote). For decades, women worldwide have mobilized, fought, and sacrificed for gender equality. Gender policies and policy have changed for good. Yet a lot more remains to be done and the struggle for equal rights and economic empowerment must continue, unabated.

As the great Mahatma Gandhi puts it - "Women must continue to be the change they wish to see in the world."

Thank you.