Committee: United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)
Country: People's Republic of Bangladesh
Agenda: Addressing the Institutionalization of Gender-Based Discrimination in Afghanistan: Examining the Recognition of “Gender Apartheid”, Accountability Mechanisms and the International Community’s Responsibility to Protect Fundamental Rights.

Position Paper

The People's Republic of Bangladesh firmly believes that gender equality is not merely a social objective but a fundamental human right. The ongoing situation in Afghanistan, particularly the restrictions imposed on women and girls since August 2021, is a matter of serious concern for the international community. Denial of education, employment, freedom of movement and participation in public life has left millions of Afghan women and girls unable to exercise their basic rights. Bangladesh believes that no cultural, political or religious interpretation should be used to justify the systematic denial of fundamental human rights.

As a country that has consistently emphasized women's empowerment, education and participation in national development, Bangladesh recognizes the importance of protecting the dignity and rights of women. Bangladesh is a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and believes that equal opportunities in education, healthcare and employment are essential for the development of any society. The situation in Afghanistan is therefore not simply an internal policy concern but a serious human rights issue requiring international attention.

Regarding the recognition of Gender Apartheid, Bangladesh acknowledges the importance of addressing systematic and institutionalized discrimination against women and girls. While existing international legal frameworks recognize gender-based persecution as a crime against humanity, the absence of a separately codified crime of gender apartheid creates a gap in addressing institutionalized gender oppression. Bangladesh supports further international discussions on its recognition and codification, ensuring that the process is legally sound and takes into account the voices and experiences of Afghan women themselves.

Bangladesh believes that accountability must go beyond verbal condemnation. The international community should strengthen independent investigations, preserve evidence of human rights violations and ensure that those responsible are held accountable through established international legal mechanisms. The work of the International Criminal Court and United Nations human rights mechanisms must be supported. At the same time, accountability efforts should remain impartial, transparent and focused on justice for victims rather than political interests.

Furthermore, Bangladesh emphasizes that international responsibility must translate into practical action. The international community should expand humanitarian assistance,

support women-led organizations, facilitate access to education and provide healthcare and livelihood opportunities for Afghan women and girls. Engagement with Afghanistan's de facto authorities should remain focused on human rights commitments and should not come at the cost of normalizing discrimination. However, humanitarian assistance must never be withheld in a manner that further punishes the Afghan civilian population.

The People's Republic of Bangladesh calls upon the Human Rights Council to strengthen international monitoring and accountability mechanisms, encourage the meaningful participation of Afghan women in decision-making processes and support an inclusive, Afghan-led approach to restoring fundamental rights. Bangladesh believes that the future of Afghanistan cannot be built while half of its population remains excluded from society. Protecting women's rights is not an act of interference in a nation's identity; it is a responsibility towards human dignity, equality and justice.