

**PERMANENT MISSION OF INDIA**

**GENEVA**

**HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

**23<sup>RD</sup> SESSION (27 MAY – 14 JUNE 2013)**

**ITEM 3:- CLUSTERED ID WITH SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON  
CULTURAL RIGHTS AND WORKING GROUP ON  
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN**

**(3 June 2013)**

**STATEMENT BY INDIA**

Mr. President,

We thank the Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights Ms. Fareeda Shaheed and Working Group on Discrimination against Women for their respective reports.

2. We appreciate the focus of the report of the Working Group on discrimination against women. We believe the focus on political representation of women and the challenges that lie therein is a relevant issue in addressing discrimination against women. Within the framework of a democratic polity it is important that laws, development policies, plans and programmes should aim at women's advancement in different spheres including their political participation.

3. In order to ensure the participation in the decision making processes of the country, the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendments of our Constitution have provided for reservation of seats in the local bodies. We appreciate the acknowledgement of this by the Working Group. On our part, we would like to share that this initiative has three pronged benefits- first, women take different decisions that better reflect women's need. Second, they gain acceptance as leaders, in a way that cannot be **replicated with campaigns** and finally their presence does lead to a change in parent's attitude towards girls in traditional families.

4. The Working Group has recommended the reduction of knowledge gap regarding women's participation in political and public life. Acknowledging the importance of technology, we would like to know from the Working Group the causes and how can information and communication technology be harnessed in order to reduce the knowledge gap.

5. Now I turn to the report of the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, Ms. Farida Shaheed focusing on the right to freedom of artistic expression and creativity. The Indian Constitution in Article 19 guarantees freedom of expression to every citizen and there have been landmark cases in the Indian Supreme Court that have affirmed the nation's policy of allowing this freedom. In India citizens are free to criticise politics, politicians, bureaucracy and policies.

6. While acknowledging the need for freedom of artistic expression, it is important that every artist must ensure that he or she is exercising self imposed reasonable restrictions on his or her freedom of expression so that the social harmony is not disturbed by their works. Artists have to be aware that for a State, maintaining social harmony is more important than allowing individual creative freedom. The concept of society and nation-states are based on giving up certain individual freedoms for common good. Self-restraint is the best form of censorship, as it gives the artist sufficient opportunity to express his ideas or art in a way that the essence of work is not compromised.

Thank you.

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