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Title: Reference regarding International Women's Day.

MADAM SPEAKER: Hon. Members, today is the International Women's Day, a day to celebrate and honour achievements of ordinary women in their quest for equality, justice, peace and development and highlight the needs and concerns of women on national, regional and global agendas.

Gender equality and women's empowerment are fundamental to the global mission of the United Nations Organization to achieve equal rights and dignity for all. These ideals so firmly rooted in our democracy are enshrined in our Constitution. In recent decades, much progress has been made but even today nowhere in the world can women claim to have the same rights and opportunities as men and they still face inequality and marginalization. A great deal more needs to be done to end this discrimination.

Even in this first decade of the 21st century, we find women still have less access to basic healthcare, education, employment and decision-making. According to UN statistics, growth in female secondary schooling results in growth in economy; yet girls are often kept from receiving education and are being denied benefits of inclusive growth and development. Maternal mortality remains unacceptably high. Female foeticide, dowry deaths, honour killing of girls and the growing violence against women is a cause for serious concern as we find majority of the disadvantaged women living lives in close proximity with their oppressors and perpetrators of crime.

There is an urgent need to address these disparities and aberrations and shape public opinion and perceptions so that women have freedom to define and achieve their full potential and live purposeful lives. The theme for International Women's Day, 2010 is "Equal Rights, Equal Opportunities: Progress for All." The protection of women's rights and their empowerment is a shared responsibility of

the Government, social organizations, the civil society in partnership with the media. Let us rededicate and reaffirm ourselves to this task and collectively strike to make gender equality and women's empowerment an intrinsic part of our development agenda and policy.

श्री शैलेन्द्र कुमार (कौशाम्बी): अध्यक्ष महोदया, हम महिला आरक्षण बिल के वर्तमान

स्वरूप का विरोध करते हैं। हम महिलाओं के विरोधी नहीं हैं। ... (व्यवधान)

11.05 hrs.

*At this stage Shri Shailendra Kumar, Shri Ghanshyam Anuragi
and some other hon. Members came and stood on the floor near the Table*