

Ministerial Declaration-2010

“Ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2010 of the Economic and Social Council”

“Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and empowerment of women”

We, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations participating in the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2010 of the Economic and Social Council, held in New York from 28 June to 2 July 2010, whose annual Ministerial review had as its theme ‘Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and empowerment of women’,

Having met three months before the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, to be held from 20 to 22 September 2010, which will focus on accelerating progress towards the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals by 2015,

Have adopted the following declaration:

1. We reaffirm that the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action¹ and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly,² the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women³ by States parties, our commitments under the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,⁴ the outcomes of other relevant United Nations summits and conferences, and relevant resolutions, is part of an interconnected framework that underpins the work undertaken to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and produces essential contributions to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.⁵
2. We reaffirm that gender equality, the empowerment of women, women’s full enjoyment of human rights and the eradication of poverty are essential to economic and social development, including the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals. We also reaffirm the vital role of women as agents of development.
3. We emphasize the commitment made by the Economic and Social Council to contribute to the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly on accelerating progress towards the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.
4. We welcome the establishment of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, to be known as UN Women, and pledge our full support to its operationalization, which will strengthen the ability of the United Nations to support the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women worldwide.

5. We express deep concern at the negative impact of the ongoing global crises, such as the financial and economic crisis, the food crisis and continuing food insecurity, and the energy crisis, as well as the challenges presented by natural disasters and climate change to the achievement of gender equality, the empowerment of women and the Millennium Development Goals. We call for enhanced cooperation and concerted action to address these crises and challenges. We recognize that women are disproportionately affected by many of these crises and challenges, but we also recognize that women have a key leadership role to play, including in decision-making, when responding to them.

6. We commit ourselves to taking the necessary steps to achieve all the internationally agreed development goals, in particular the Millennium Development Goals, by 2015.

7. While noting that, in the past decade, some progress has been achieved in realizing the Millennium Development Goals, we express concern at the unevenness of the progress towards achieving the goals and targets both regionally and thematically, in particular Goal 3 on promoting gender equality and empowering women, Goal 5 on improving maternal health, including achieving universal access to reproductive health, and Goal 6 on combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, as well as the objectives encompassed within the gender equality-related dimensions of all the other Millennium Development Goals. We stress that investing in women and girls has a multiplier effect on productivity, efficiency and sustained economic growth and that achieving Goal 3 is essential to the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals.

8. We call for integrated, comprehensive, multi-sectoral and gender-responsive approaches to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, which are based on strong coordination and cooperation across all sectors. We commit ourselves to ensuring that national development plans, poverty eradication strategies, strategies for achieving the Millennium Development Goals and other macro-level planning instruments and processes systematically contribute to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. We underline the critical role of the global partnership for development in achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. We therefore call upon all countries to strengthen efforts in this regard.

9. We recognize that action on a number of cross-cutting issues will positively enhance the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals and commitments, including the Millennium Development Goals. Towards this end, we:

(a) Stress the need for efforts to tackle discriminatory attitudes and gender stereotypes which perpetuate discrimination against women and stereotypic roles of men and women, and recognize the important role of the media and education in addressing negative portrayals of women and girls;

(b) Emphasize the need for a holistic approach to ending all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls across all sectors, including through initiatives designed to prevent and combat gender-based violence, to encourage and support efforts by men and boys to take an active part in the prevention and elimination of all forms of

violence, especially gender-based violence, and to increase awareness of their responsibility in respect of

- (d) Strengthen the capacity of national mechanisms for gender equality and the empowerment of women and, where they exist, national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, so as to enable them to play a stronger role across all sectors;
- (e) Enact and strengthen comprehensive legal frameworks that promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and prohibit discrimination against women and girls, including, as appropriate, by reviewing existing legal frameworks, and ensure the full and effective enforcement and monitoring of those comprehensive frameworks, as well as take appropriate measures to ensure equal access to justice;
- (f) Design and implement programmes, including educational and awareness-raising programmes, that promote the active involvement of men and boys in eliminating gender stereotypes as well as fostering respectful relationships with women and girls; encourage men and boys to become agents of change in promoting and protecting the human rights of women and girls and promote the equal sharing of responsibilities between men and women across the life cycle; and combat stereotypic attitudes concerning women's and men's roles and responsibilities within the family and society at large;
- (g) Intensify national efforts, including with the support of the international community, to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls; develop measures that encourage and support the efforts of men and boys to take an active role in this regard, as part of strategies of zero tolerance for violence against women and girls; address the consequences of violence against women and girls, including by providing adequate short- and long-term support for victims of violence; and enhance judicial capacity in this regard;
- (h) Develop and implement gender-sensitive policies and programmes aimed at promoting women's economic empowerment, including by enhancing their access to full and productive employment and decent work and equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, and at supporting women's technical, managerial and entrepreneurial capacities and initiatives, with a view to ensuring sustainable and adequate income-generation and empowering women as equal partners with men in these domains;
- (i) Promote and protect women's equal access to adequate housing, property and land, including rights to inheritance, and enable them to secure access to credit, through appropriate constitutional, legislative and administrative measures;
- (j) Facilitate access by women to affordable microfinance, in particular microcredit, which can contribute to poverty eradication, gender equality and the empowerment of women;
- (k) Ensure women's access to social protection schemes; provide adequate social safety nets; and strengthen State- and community-based support systems as an integral part of social policy, in order to enable women and girls, particularly those living in poverty, to withstand adverse economic environments and so as to contribute to their well-being;
- (l) Develop and strengthen policies, strategies and programmes designed to address the inequality affecting women and girls in respect of access to and achievement of education at all levels and commit to eradicating illiteracy, to ensuring, by 2015, access to and completion of free and compulsory quality primary education and, in this regard, to reaffirming the Dakar Framework for Action⁶ on education for all;
- (m) Ensure access of women and girls to formal and non-formal education and vocational training, including lifelong learning and retraining and adult and long-distance education,

including in information and communications technology and entrepreneurial skills, in order to promote the empowerment of women, inter alia, by enhancing and facilitating women's access to full and productive employment and decent work;

the realization of the internationally agreed goals and commitments related to gender equality and the empowerment of women, including the Millennium Development Goals. We also underline the need to take concerted actions in conformity with international law to remove the obstacles to the full realization of the rights of women and girls living under foreign occupation, so as to ensure the achievement of the above-mentioned goals and commitments.

12. We urge developed countries that have not yet done so, in accordance with their commitments, to make concrete efforts towards meeting the target of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for official development assistance to developing countries and the target of 0.15-0.20 per cent of their gross national product for official development assistance to least developed countries, and encourage developing countries to build on the progress achieved in ensuring that official development assistance is used effectively to help meet development goals and targets and to help them, inter alia, to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women.

13. We request the Economic and Social Council to take appropriate action to promote and ensure effective and systematic gender mainstreaming in all areas of its work, including in its subsidiary bodies.

14. We reaffirm the importance of the equal participation of women and men at all levels in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace building processes, and commit ourselves to intensifying our efforts in this regard. We note the upcoming tenth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). We urge the Economic and Social Council and the Peace building Commission, in pursuance of their relationship as established in the 2005 World Summit Outcome,⁷

