



United Nations

**Report of the Commission on
the Status of Women acting as
the preparatory committee for
the special session of the
General Assembly entitled
“Women 2000: gender equality,
development and peace for the
twenty-first century” on its
third session**

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Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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Chapter I

Introduction

1. In paragraph 45 of its resolution 52/100 of 12 December 1997, the General Assembly decided to convene, in the year 2000, a high-level plenary review to appraise and assess the progress achieved in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women¹ and the Platform for Action,² five years after its adoption, and to consider further actions and initiatives. In the same resolution, the Assembly also decided that the Commission on the Status of Women should act as the preparatory committee for the high-level review, and invited the Commission to report to the Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, on the progress achieved in the preparations for the review.

Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

12. Palestine, an entity maintaining a permanent observer mission at Headquarters, was also represented.

13. The following United Nations bodies were represented: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Joint United Nations Programme on Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) (UNAIDS), United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Fund for Women, United Nations Population Fund and World Food Programme.

14. The following specialized agencies were represented: International Labour Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, World Health Organization, International Monetary Fund, International Fund for Agricultural Development and United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

15. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented by observers: Caribbean Community, Commonwealth Secretariat, European Community, International Organization for Migration, International Organization of la Francophonie, Organization of African Unity, Organization of American States and Organization of the Islamic Conference.

2. Preparations for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century".
3. Adoption of the report of the Commission acting as the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly.

E. Documentation

23. The Preparatory Committee had before it the following documents:

- (a) Annotated provisional agenda (E/CN.6/2000/PC/1);
- (b) Report of the Secretary-General on the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (E/CN.6/2000/PC/2 and corrigenda);
- (c) Note by the Secretary-General on the comparative report on how different categories of projects and programmes of United Nations organizations include women's interests and gender mainstreaming issues and on resources allocated in this regard (E/CN.6/2000/PC/3);
- (d) Report of the Secretary-General on emerging issues containing additional material for further actions and initiatives for the preparation of the outlook beyond the year 2000 (E/CN.6/2000/PC/4);
- (e) Letter dated 1 December 1999 from the President of the Economic and Social Council addressed to the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women acting as the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" (E/CN.6/2000/PC/5);
- (f) Note by the Secretary-General on the results of regional meetings held in preparation for the special

(q) Draft decision submitted by the Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee, entitled "Resumed third session of the Preparatory Committee" (E/CN.6/2000/PC/L.7);

(r) Draft report of the Preparatory Committee on its third session (E/CN.6/2000/PC/L.8 and Add.1);

(s) Note by the Secretary-General containing a summary of the WomenWatch online working groups on the twelve critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action (E/CN.6/2000/PC/CRP.1);

(t) Note by the Secretariat containing a summary of the general debate by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-fourth session on agenda items 3 (Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women) and 4 (Comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for

as the preparatory committee on 6 March 2000
(E/CN.6/2000/PC/CRP.3).

25. The Preparatory Committee held a general

38. The Preparatory Committee was informed that the draft decisions contained no programme budget implications.

39. At the same meeting, the Preparatory Committee recommended to the General Assembly the adoption of the draft decisions at its fifty-fourth session (see chap. V, sect. A, draft decisions I and II).

Draft political declaration contained in document E/CN.6/2000/PC/L.5

40. At its 4th meeting, on 17 March, the Preparatory Committee had before it the text of a draft political declaration (E/CN.6/2000/PC/L.5), submitted by the Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee.

41. At the same meeting, the Vice-Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee, Misako Kaji (Japan), in her capacity as facilitator of the negotiations on the document, informed the Preparatory Committee of revisions made to the text as a result of informal consultations.

42. The Preparatory Committee then recommended to the General Assembly at its twenty-third special session the adoption of the draft

Chapter IV

Adoption of the report of the Commission acting as the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly on its third session

51. At the 5th meeting, on 20 April 2000, Mónica Martínez (Ecuador), as Vice-Chairperson with rapporteurial responsibilities, introduced the draft report of the Preparatory Committee on its third session (E/CN.6/2000/PC/L.8 and Add.1).

52. Statements were made by the representatives of

Draft decision II*
Arrangements regarding accreditation
of non-governmental organizations to
the special session of the General
Assembly entitled “Women 2000:
gender equality, development and
peace for the twenty-first century”

The General Assembly, recalling its resolution 54/142 of 17 December 1999, Economic and Social Council resolution 1999/50 of 29 July 1999 and the

Assembly will in no way create a precedent for other special sessions of the Assembly.

B. Resolution and decisions recommended for adoption by the General Assembly at its twenty-third special session

56. The Commission on the Status of Women acting as the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" recommends to the Assembly at its twenty-third special session the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Draft political declaration

The General Assembly,

Adopts the Political Declaration annexed to the present resolution.

Annex

Political Declaration

We the Governments participating in the special session of the General Assembly

1. *Reaffirm* our commitment to the goals and objectives contained in the Beijing Declaration⁴ and the Platform for Action,⁵ adopted in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women, and the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women⁶ to the year 2000 as the culmination of the United Nations Decade for Women, 1976 to 1985;

2. *Also reaffirm* our commitment to the implementation of the twelve critical areas of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action, which are women and poverty, education and training of women, women and health, violence against women, women and armed conflict, women and the economy, women in power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, human rights of women, women and the media, women and the environment, and the girl child; and call for the implementation of the agreed conclusions and resolutions on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women since the thirty-ninth session of the Commission;

3. *Recognize* that we have primary responsibility for the full implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and all the relevant commitments for the advancement of women, and, in this connection, call for continued international cooperation including the reaffirmation to strive to fulfil the yet-to-be-attained internationally agreed target of 0.7 per cent of the gross national product of developed countries for overall official development assistance as soon as possible;

4. *Welcome* the progress made thus far towards gender equality and the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and reaffirm our commitment to accelerate the achievement of universal ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women⁷ and in this regard acknowledge the efforts at all levels of Governments, the United Nations system, and intergovernmental, other international and regional organizations and urge continued efforts for the full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action;

5. *Recognize* the role and contribution of civil society, in particular non-governmental organizations and women's organizations, in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, and encourage their participation in further implementation and assessment processes;

6. *Emphasize* that men must involve themselves and take joint responsibility with women for the promotion of gender equality;

7. *Reaffirm* the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective in the process of implementation of the outcome of other major United Nations conferences and summits and the need for a coordinated follow-up to all major conferences and summits by Governments, regional organizations, and all of the bodies and organizations of the United Nations system within their respective mandates.

environment, and to this end pledge to undertake further action to ensure their full and accelerated implementation, *inter alia*, through the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes and promoting women's full participation and empowerment and enhanced international cooperation for the full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action;

9. *Agree* to regularly assess further implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action with a view to bringing together all parties involved in 2005 to assess progress and consider new initiatives, as appropriate, ten years after the adoption of the Beijing Platform

Elimination of Discrimination against Women in contributing to the implementation of the Platform for Action, the Chairperson of that Committee will be invited to participate in the debate in plenary. This invitation will in no way create a precedent for other special sessions of the General Assembly.

K

Schedule of plenary meetings

18. Ten plenary meetings will be held over the five-day period, with two meetings per day as follows: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

C. Decision recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council

58. The Commission on the Status of Women acting as the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft decision:

Resumed third session of the Preparatory Committee

The Economic and Social Council decides:

(a) To authorize the Commission on the Status of Women acting as the preparatory committee for the

⁵ Ibid., annex II.

⁶ *Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985* (United Nations publication, Sales

Annex I

Summary of the general debate by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-fourth session on agenda items 3 (Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women) and 4 (Comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action)

Note by the Secretariat

1. During the general debate, 67 Member States, as well as Colombia on behalf of the Rio Group, Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and Portugal, on behalf of the European Union, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, the associated country Cyprus, the European Free Trade Association, countries members of the European Economic Area and Iceland, in addition to Palestine, addressed agenda items 3 and 4. Speakers made suggestions related to the special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century” to review progress in implementing the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and the Beijing Platform for Action.

2. Delegations reaffirmed their commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action as the fundamental document not open to renegotiation. They acknowledged it as an essential instrument for the achievement of gender equality and underlined the importance of seeing the review of its implementation as part of the process for women’s advancement. Delegates emphasized the need for the special session to give a new impetus to the implementation of the Platform for Action, as the five years since its adoption had been too short a time-span for effective implementation of all commitments. The hope was expressed that the review would result in an effective outcome document, with specific, concrete measures and time-bound targets to overcome remaining obstacles. Such a document should be useful not only to Governments, but also to the United Nations system and other key actors, including non-governmental organizations. Future actions and initiatives should be based on best practices and lessons learned from the review and appraisal process, with the promotion and protection of women’s human rights and fundamental freedoms forming the basis for all future actions. The

issues that different regions faced in implementing the Platform for Action should also be considered and reflected in the outcome of the special session. Several delegates indicated the need to set measurable targets, and identify strategies and operational mechanisms, rather than determine new goals to fulfil the Beijing commitments. Delegates stressed that the implementation of the commitments required reinforced political commitment, *inter alia*, through the earmarking of resources and continuous monitoring.

3. Many delegates indicated that, while much progress had been made in implementing the Platform for Action’s recommendations at the international, regional and national levels, significant barriers to full

Nations conferences and summits of the 1990s. A few delegates further emphasized the importance of the coordination segment of the substantive session of 2000 of the Economic and Social Council in assessing the progress made within the United Nations system to implement the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences. Interaction and coordination between and among the Council and the functional commissions to strengthen efforts to mainstream a gender perspective required improvement. The Commission's continued ability to play a catalytic role in this regard needed to be ensured.

5. Delegations drew attention to the special role of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the contribution of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to the full implementation of the Platform for Action. Regret was expressed that the Platform for Action's goal of universal ratification by the year 2000 had not been met, although many welcomed the opening of the Optional Protocol to the Convention for signature, ratification and accession. Several delegations indicated their intention to sign the Optional Protocol during the session, or in the near future. Others expressed the intention to ratify or accede to the instrument during 2000. Some delegations emphasized that the Committee's resources would need to be adjusted in the light of its new responsibilities under the Optional Protocol.

6. The important role of international development cooperation in supporting national efforts was underscored by many delegations as creating an enabling environment for the Platform for Action's implementation. Delegations highlighted particular areas in which progress in implementation of the Platform for Action had been made. These included the increased awareness of the gender dimensions of national policies ranging from security to social and economic concerns. There had been increased worldwide attention to poverty and gender-based violence against women, reduction in women's illiteracy rates, reduction in maternal mortality and the strengthening of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women. Gender mainstreaming had emerged as the key global strategy to implement measures to promote equality between women and men and the evaluation of progress in its implementation was urged, as was the integration of a life-cycle approach into all actions.

7. During the discussion, a number of issues were identified as constituting particular challenges to the further implementation of the Platform for Action. These included the lack of human and financial resources. Concern was expressed that globalization, although providing opportunities for women, also had the capacity to affect them negatively, and to deprive them of their human rights, including the right to development. Unequal access to improved communications technology also constituted a challenge, as did the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) pandemic, which was affecting Africa disproportionately. The persistence and deepening of poverty among women and girls, especially certain groups, such as indigenous women and girls and older women, also constituted an obstacle, which was exacerbated in situations of transition and economic crisis. Developing countries highlighted the impact of the debt burden on implementation, while delegates, particularly from Asia, drew attention to the disproportionate impact of recent financial crises on women. Stereotypic attitudes towards the gender roles of women and men impeded the achievement of equality and encouraged such discriminatory practices as gender-based violence against women and traditional practices harmful to the health of women and girls. The proliferation of civil unrest, political upheaval and armed conflict, as well as international terrorism, with their attendant gender-specific abuses and the resulting displacement, particularly of women and children, both internally and across State borders remained a significant challenge.

8. Delegates provided information during the debate on actions taken to implement the Platform for Action. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and its gender-sensitive provisions and procedures were highlighted, as was the adoption of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Regional, subregional and national programmes to address violence against women were cited, including efforts to combat trafficking in women. Many delegations described the formulation of national action plans and specific allocations for gender programming within national budgets. In addition, gender-mainstreaming strategies, the establishment and strengthening of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, law reform and reproductive health programmes were mentioned. In most cases, this

information had been reflected in government responses to the questionnaire regarding the implementation of the Platform for Action.

9. Delegations acknowledged the contribution of the United Nations system, as reflected in the assessment of the implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, including lessons learned. These serve as the basis for the preparation of the new plan for the period 2002-2005. New efforts were called for in order to achieve the goal of 50/50 gender balance in the United Nations Secretariat by the year 2000.

6. Participants noted the well-documented correlation, in particular in developing countries, between women's education and fertility rate, as well as between women's education and infant and maternal mortality rates. The link between poverty, illiteracy and rural residence was highlighted. In industrialized countries, there was a relationship between fertility and social responses, which could take the form of government policies or private sector or individual initiatives. However, it was stressed that the effects of education were different in a given context and analysis should take into consideration other data and facts. There was general agreement that further efforts should be deployed to enhance the education of women and girls.

7. With regard to implementation of the Platform for Action, it was noted that Governments and politicians often had limited information on women's rights and issues and were not familiar with international documents such as the Platform for Action. The question was raised how the actors identified in the Platform for Action, such as branches of Governments, civil society, professional associations and the international community, could be made better aware of the recommendations addressed to them.

8. Suggestions for Governments, in particular in

law enforcement personnel — were seen as being of vital importance for the detection and prevention of violence against women. There was also recognition that advocacy and education alone were insufficient when women lacked the economic means to break free from domestic or other forms of violence. Speakers urged international organizations to provide economic assistance in creating job opportunities for women. Legislation was identified as an important vehicle to combat violence and trafficking. Other measures included cooperation among States, support and allocation of resources for the rehabilitation of victims of trafficking and a concerted, coordinated international effort to punish perpetrators.

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