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Forty-ninth session

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Item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives

Discussion guide on the Commission on the Status of Women High-level round table

Note by the Bureau of the Commission on the Status of Women*

I. Organizational aspects and format

A. Background

1. Following the decision of the Commission at its forty-sixth session, in 2002 (decision 46/101), to introduce high-level round tables, starting from its forty-seventh session, in 2003, the Commission continues to organize these events. The Commission authorized its Bureau to decide, after consultation with all interested Member States through regional groups, on the number, timing and theme of any such round tables. The Commission held two high-level round tables, one on 4 March 2003, during the forty-seventh session of the Commission, and the other on 1 March 2004, during the forty-eighth session of the Commission.

2. In consultation with regional groups and through informal meetings of the Commission on 23 June, 20 July, and 14 September 2004, the Bureau of the Commission developed a programme of work for the forty-ninth session that includes a high-level round table on innovations in institutional arrangements for promoting gender equality at the national level. The present discussion guide has been prepared by the Bureau to set the framework for the high-level round table.

* The submission of the present document was delayed pending the outcome of informal consultations of the Commission.

3. The Division for the Advancement of Women organized an expert group meeting on the theme “The role of national mechanisms in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women: achievements, gaps and challenges” in Rome from 29 November to 2 December 2004. One of the main objectives of the meeting was to identify the different types of formal mechanisms established at the national level and the specific roles played in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of national strategies for the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women, and in particular facilitating gender mainstreaming in all national policy areas.

B. Purpose of the high-level round tables

4. The purpose of the high-level round tables, as set out in decision 46/101, is to further develop opportunities for sharing national experiences during the annual session of the Commission, in particular with regard to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, and to enhance its working methods. The round tables enhance the emphasis in the Commission on practical implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document adopted by the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

5. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/270 B of 23 June 2003, the high-level round tables will support the sharing of best practices and lessons learned, the identification of obstacles and constraints encountered in the context of implementation and the recognition of new challenges and emerging issues.

C. Theme

6. The theme for the high-level event during the forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women is “Innovations in institutional arrangements for promoting gender equality at the national level”. Over the past decade natioo

(e) Future priorities and strategies for different types of national mechanisms to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

17. Guiding questions on institutional developments included in the questionnaire submitted to Member States for the preparation of the review and appraisal mandated in the multi-year programme of work of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2005 could also provide guidance for the discussion at the high-level