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Commission on the Status of Women

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Agenda item 3 (a) (ii)

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and
to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly**

entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and

peace for the twenty-first century”: implementation of strate



resolution 1325 (2000) and other policy documents and human rights instruments were critical to achieving this goal.

3. Some progress had been made in implementing the agreed conclusions. There was an increase in the number of women in decision-making positions in the public and private sector. Currently, women exceeded 30 per cent representation in national assemblies in 24 countries with Rwanda taking the lead with 56 per cent of seats occupied by women. The number of women in national parliaments had increased globally from 11.6 per cent of seats in 1995 to 18.4 per cent in 2008. There was also an upward trend in women's participation in academia, local government, civil service and the military. Participants placed particular emphasis on the number of

7. Efforts to increase the number of women in public office at the local level, including in local government and local development committees, had also yielded positive results. Such representation enabled women to gain new skills and experience and advanced women's rights. Participants noted the efforts undertaken by trade unions to increase women's participation in leadership, including through reserving a designated number of seats for women, and establishing women's advisory committees.

8. Progress had also been made in providing and implementing capacity-building measures for women aimed at development of skills to seek elected or appointed office. Steps had also been taken to enhance opportunities for women to benefit from leadership training and mentoring once in office in order to increase their effectiveness. Gender-sensitivity training aimed at men in public or political office had also been established to strengthen their awareness and understanding of gender-based discrimination and the importance of women's participation in public life. Steps also aimed to enhance men's role as advocates for gender equality and as mentors for women in leadership positions. Steps had also been taken to increase women's access to funding when seeking political office, for example for election campaigns or for capacity-building.

9. Awareness-raising initiatives on the role of women in public life and decision-making were on the increase. Such efforts, which were aimed at motivating women to seek public office or pursue their professional careers at the highest level of decision-making, also focused on women leaders as important role models for younger women. Communication strategies, aimed at promoting women's rights generally, were also being carried out.

10. Participants stressed the critical role of different stakeholders working together to achieve women's equal participation in decision-making. Cooperation between Governments and the private sector was important, as was the advocacy work of the women's movement and of civil society to enhance women's political representation. Cross-party cooperation between women's organizations had been used successfully to raise issues of concern to women in the political and legislative agenda, and steps had been taken to enhance women's leadership roles through development cooperation.

11. Measures to increase monitoring and reporting on women's participation in decision-making led to greater accountability. Strategies included the requirement for Governments or other designated bodies to report publicly, on women's rights

Gaps and challenges in implementation

13. Despite progress achieved, participants expressed concern about the slow pace of change, and the continuing lack of equal participation of women in all areas, especially in senior management and leadership positions in the private and finance sectors.

14. The persistence of gender stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes regarding the roles of women and men was considered to be a significant barrier to achieving equal participation of women in decision-making processes at all levels. Even where women had gained access to decision-making positions in government, these positions, more often than not, dealt with social policies, perceived as “soft” issues, rather than with finance, budget, foreign policy and national security.

15. It was noted that despite the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), there was a continuing underrepresentation of women in peace negotiations