



2. The Beijing Platform for Action identified twelve critical areas of concern for priority action to achieve the advancement and empowerment of women. The Commission on the Status of Women has reviewed progress in each of the twelve critical areas of concern and since 1996 has adopted agreed conclusions and recommendations for accelerated implementation. The Platform for Action, together with these agreed conclusions and recommendations, forms the basis for further progress towards the achievement of gender equality, development and peace in the twenty-first century.

3. The objective of the Platform for Action, which is in full conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, is the empowerment of all women. The full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of all women is essential for the empowerment of women. While the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The implementation of the Platform for Action, including through national laws and the formulation of strategies, policies, programmes and development priorities, is the sovereign responsibility of each State, in conformity with all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the significance of and full respect for various religious and ethical values, cultural backgrounds and philosophical convictions of individuals and their communities should contribute to the full enjoyment by women of their human rights and the achievement of equality, development and peace.

4. The Platform for Action emphasizes that women share common concerns that can only be addressed by working together and in partnership with men towards the common goal of gender equality around the world. It respects and values the full diversity of women's situations and conditions and recognizes that some women face particular barriers to their empowerment.

5. The Platform for Action recognizes that women face barriers to full equality and advancement because of such factors as their race, age, language, ethnicity, culture, religion or disability, because they are indigenous women or of other status. Many women encounter specific obstacles related to their family status, particularly as single parents, and to their socio-economic status, Many women encounter

goals set and commitments made in Beijing need to be implemented further. The summary of achievements and of persistent or new obstacles can therefore constitute a global framework for the identification of further actions and initiatives to

Measures were taken in all regions to initiate alternative education and training

field of women's health for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.<sup>4</sup>

12. *Obstacles.* Worldwide, the gap between and within rich and poor countries with respect to infant mortality and maternal mortality and morbidity rates, as well as with respect to measures addressing the health of women and girls, given their special vulnerability regarding sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS and other sexual and reproductive health problems, together with endemic, infectious and communicable diseases, such as malaria, tuberculosis, diarrhoeal and water-borne diseases and chronic non-transmissible diseases, remains unacceptable. In some countries, such endemic, infectious and communicable diseases continue to take a toll on women and girls. In other countries, non-communicable diseases, such as cardiopulmonary diseases, hypertension and degenerative diseases, remain among the major causes of mortality and morbidity among women. Despite progress in some countries, the rates of maternal mortality and morbidity remain unacceptably high in most countries. Investment in essential obstetric care remains insufficient in many countries. The absence of a holistic approach to health and health care for women and girls based on women's right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health throughout the life cycle has constrained progress. Some women continue to encounter barriers to their right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. The predominant focus of health-care systems on treating illness rather than maintaining optimal health also prevents a holistic approach. There is, in some countries, insufficient attention to the role of social and economic determinants of health. A lack of access to clean water, adequate nutrition and safe sanitation, a lack of gender-specific health research and technology and insufficient gender sensitivity in the provision of health information and health care and health services, including those related to environmental and occupational health hazards, affect women in developing and developed countries. Poverty and the lack of development continue to affect the capacity of many developing countries to provide and expand quality health care. A shortage of financial and human resources, in particular in developing countries, as well as restructuring of the health sector and/or the increasing trend to privatization of health-care systems in some cases, has resulted in poor quality, reduced and insufficient health-care services, and has also led to less attention to the health of the most vulnerable groups of women. Such obstacles as unequal power relationships between women and men, in which women often do not have the power to insist on safe and responsible sex practices, and a lack of communication and understanding between men and women on women's health needs, *inter alia*, endanger women's health, particularly by increasing their susceptibility to sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, and affect women's access to health care and education, especially in relation to prevention. Adolescents, particularly adolescent girls, continue to lack access to sexual and reproductive health information, education and services. Women who are recipients of health care are frequently not treated with respect nor guaranteed privacy and confidentiality, and do not receive full information about options and services available. In some cases, health services and workers still do not conform to human rights and to ethical, professional and gender-sensitive standards in the delivery of women's health services, nor do they ensure responsible, voluntary and informed consent. There continues to be a lack of information on availability of and access to appropriate,

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14. *Obstacles.* Women continue to be victims of various forms of violence. Inadequate understanding of the root causes of all forms of violence against women and girls hinders efforts to eliminate violence against women and girls. There is a lack of comprehensive programmes dealing with the perpetrators, including programmes, where appropriate, which would enable them to solve problems without violence. Inadequate data on violence further impedes informed policy-making and analysis. Sociocultural attitudes which are discriminatory and economic inequalities reinforce women's subordinate place in society. This makes women and girls vulnerable to many forms of violence, such as physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation. In many countries, a coordinated multidisciplinary approach to responding to violence which includes the health system, the workplace, the media, the education system, as well as the justice system, is still limited. Domestic violence, including sexual violence in marriage, is still treated as a private matter in some countries. Insufficient awareness of the consequences of domestic violence, how to prevent it and the rights of victims still exists. Although improving, the legal and legislative measures, especially in the criminal justice area, to eliminate different forms of violence against women and children, including domestic violence and child pornography, are weak in many countries. Prevention strategies also remain fragmented and reactive and there is a lack of programmes on these issues. It is also noted that, in some countries, problems have arisen from the use of new information and communication technologies for trafficking in women and children and for purposes of all forms of economic and sexual exploitation.

#### **E. Women and armed conflict**

15. *Achievements.* There is a wider recognition that the destructive impact of armed conflict is different on women and men and that a gender-sensitive approach to the application of international human rights law and international humanitarian law is important. Steps have been taken at the national and international levels to address abuses against women, including increased attention to ending impunity for crimes against women in situations of armed conflict. The work of the International Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia<sup>5</sup> and Rwanda<sup>6</sup> has been an important contribution to address violence against women in the context of armed conflict. Also of historical significance is the adoption of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court,<sup>7</sup> which provides that rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization and other forms of sexual violence are war crimes when committed in the context of armed conflict and also under defined circumstances, crimes against humanity. The contribution of women in the areas of peace-building, peacemaking and conflict resolution is being

implementation of the guidelines for the protection of refugee women, and in addressing the needs of displaced women. Gender-based persecution has been accepted as a basis for refugee status in some countries. There is recognition by Governments, the international community and organizations, in particular the United Nations, that women and men experience humanitarian emergencies







All Forms of Discrimination against Women.<sup>8</sup> In many countries, progress has been achieved in terms of the visibility, status, outreach and coordination of activities of these machineries. Gender mainstreaming has been widely acknowledged as a strategy to enhance the impact of policies to promote gender equality. The goal of the strategy is to incorporate a gender perspective in all legislation, policies, programmes and projects. These machineries, despite their limited financial resources, have made a significant contribution to the development of human resources in the field of gender studies and have also contributed to the growing efforts for the generation and dissemination of data disaggregated by sex and age, gender-sensitive research and documentation. Within the United Nations system, much progress has been made in the mainstreaming of a gender perspective,

system, including into the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and of the Commission on Human Rights.

27. *Obstacles.* Gender discrimination and all other forms of discrimination, in particular racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance continue to cause threat to women's enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. In situations of armed conflict and foreign occupation, human rights of women have been extensively violated. Even though a number of countries have

information and communication technologies, including the Internet. Development of and access to Internet infrastructure is limited, especially in developing countries and particularly for women.

#### **K. Women and the environment**

30. *Achievements.* Some national environment policies and programmes have incorporated gender perspectives. In recognition of the link between gender equality, poverty eradication, sustainable development and environment protection, Governments have included income-generating activities for women, as well as training in natural resource management and environmental protection in their development strategies. Projects have been launched to preserve and utilize women's traditional ecological knowledge, including the traditional ecological knowledge of indigenous women, in the management of natural resources and the preservation of biodiversity.

31. *Obstacles.* There is still a lack of public awareness about environmental risks faced by women and of the benefits of gender equality for promoting environmental protection. Women's limited access to technical skills, resources and information, in particular in developing countries, due to, *inter alia*, gender inequality, has impeded women's effective participation in decision-making, regarding the sustainable environment, including at the international level. Research, action, targeted strategies and public awareness remain limited regarding the differential impacts and implications of environmental problems for women and men. Real solutions to environmental problems, including environmental degradation, need to address the root causes of these problems, such as foreign occupation. Environmental policies and programmes lack a gender perspective and fail to take into account women's roles and contributions to environmental sustainability.

#### **L. The girl child**

32. *Achievements.* Some progress was made in primary and, to a lesser extent, secondary and tertiary education for girls, owing to the creation of a more gender-sensitive school environment, improved educational infrastructure, increased enrolment and retention, support mechanisms for pregnant adolescents and adolescent mothers, increased non-formal education opportunities and enhanced attendance at science and technology classes. Increased attention was given to the health of the girl child, including the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents. An increasing number of countries introduced legislation to ban female genital mutilation and imposed heavier penalties on those involved in sexual abuse, trafficking and all other forms of exploitation of the girl child, including for commercial ends. A recent achievement has been the adoption of the optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on involvement of children in armed conflict<sup>10</sup> and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child

burden of domestic responsibilities on girls, inadequate nutrition and access to health services, and lack of finance, which often prevent them from pursuing and completing their education and training, have contributed to a lack of opportunities and possibilities for girls to become confident and self-reliant, and independent adults. Poverty, lack of parental support and guidance, lack of information and education, abuse and all forms of exploitation of, and violence against, the girl child in many cases result in unwanted pregnancies and transmission of HIV, which may also lead to a restriction of educational opportunities. Programmes for the girl child were hindered by a lack of or an insufficient allocation of financial and human resources. There were few established national mechanisms to implement policies and programmes for the girl child and, in some cases, coordination among responsible institutions was insufficient. The increased awareness of the health needs, including the sexual and reproductive health needs, of adolescents has not yet resulted in sufficient provision of necessary information and services. Despite advances in legal protection, there is increased sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of the girl child. Adolescents continue to lack the education and service needed to enable them to deal in a positive and responsible way with their sexuality.

### **III. Current challenges affecting the full implementation of the Beijing**

labour force has risen, in other cases the application of certain economic policies has had such a negative impact that increases in women's employment often have not been matched by improvements in wages, promotions and working conditions. In many cases, women continue to be employed in low-paid part-time and contract jobs marked by insecurity and by safety and health hazards. In many countries, women, especially new entrants into the labour market, continue to be among the first to lose jobs and the last to be rehired.

36. Increasing economic disparities among and within countries, coupled with a growing economic interdependence and dependence of States on external factors as well as financial crises have, in recent years, altered prospects for growth and caused economic instability in many countries, with a heavy impact on the lives of women. These difficulties have affected the ability of States to provide social protection and social security as well as funding for the implementation of the Platform for Action. Such difficulties are also reflected in the shift of the cost of social protection, social security and other welfare provisions from the public sector to the household. The decreasing levels of funding available through international cooperation has contributed to further marginalization of a large number of developing countries and countries with economies in transition within which women are among the poorest. The agreed target of 0.7 per cent of the gross national product of developed countries for overall official development assistance has not been achieved. These factors have contributed to the increasing feminization of poverty, which has undermined efforts to achieve gender equality. Limited funding at the State level makes it imperative that innovative approaches to the allocation of existing resources be employed, not only by Governments but also by non-governmental organizations and the private sector. One such innovation is the gender analysis of public budgets, which is emerging as an important tool for determining the differential impact of expenditures on women and men to help ensure equitable use of existing resources. This analysis is crucial to promote gender equality.

37. The impact of globalization and structural adjustment programmes, the high costs of external debt servicing and declining terms of international trade in several developing countries have worsened the existing obstacles to development, aggravating the feminization of poverty. Negative consequences of structural adjustment programmes, stemming from inappropriate design and application, have continued to place a disproportionate burden on women, *inter alia*, through budget cuts in basic social services, including education and health.

38. There is a greater acceptance that the increasing debt burden faced by most developing countries is unsustainable and constitutes one of the principal obstacles to achieving progress in people-centred sustainable development and poverty eradication. For many developing countries, as well as countries with economies in transition, excessive debt servicing has severely constrained their capacity to promote social development and provide basic services and has affected full implementation of the Platform for Action.

39. In countries with economies in transition, women are bearing most of the hardships induced by the economic restructuring and are the first to lose jobs in times of recession. They are being squeezed out from fast-growth sectors. Loss of childcare facilities due to elimination or privatization of State work places, increased need for older care without the corresponding facilities and continuing inequality of access to training for finding re-employment and to productive assets

for entering or expanding businesses are current challenges facing women in these countries.

40. Science and technology, as fundamental components of development, are transforming patterns of production, contributing to the creation of jobs and new job classifications, and ways of working, and contributing to the establishment of a knowledge-based society. Technological change can bring new opportunities for all women in all fields, if they have equal access and adequate training. Women should also be actively involved in the definition, design, development, implementation and gender impact evaluation of policies related to these changes. Many women worldwide are yet to use effectively these new communications technologies for networking, advocacy, exchange of information, business, education, media consultation and e-commerce initiatives. For instance, millions of the world's poorest women and men still do not have access to and benefits from science and technology and are currently excluded from this new field and the opportunities it presents.

41. The patterns of migratory flows of labour are changing. Women and girls are increasingly involved in internal, regional and international labour migration to pursue many occupations, mainly in farm labour, domestic work and some forms of entertainment work. While this situation increases their earning opportunities and self-reliance, it also exposes them, particularly the poor, uneducated, unskilled and/or undocumented migrants, to inadequate working conditions, increased health risk, the risk of trafficking, economic and sexual exploitation, racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia, and other forms of abuse, which impair their enjoyment of their human rights and, in some cases, constitute violations of human rights.

42. While recognizing that Governments have the primary responsibility to develop and implement policies to promote gender equality, partnerships between Governments and different actors of civil society are increasingly recognized as an important mechanism to achieve this goal. Additional innovative approaches can be further developed to foster this collaboration.

43. In some countries, current demographic trends show that lowered fertility rates, increased life expectancy and lower mortality rates have contributed to the ageing of the population, and increase in chronic health conditions has implications for health-care systems and spending, informal care systems and research. Given the gap between male and female life expectancy, the number of widows and older single women has increased considerably, often leading to their social isolation and other social challenges. Societies have much to gain from the knowledge and life experience of older women. On the other hand, the current generation of young people is the largest in history. Adolescent girls and young women have particular needs which will require increasing attention.

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countries, is reversing hard-won gains of development. The burden of care for people living with HIV/AIDS and for children orphaned by HIV/AIDS falls particularly on women as infrastructures are inadequate to respond to the challenges being posed. Women with HIV/AIDS often suffer from discrimination and stigma and are often victims of violence. Issues related to prevention, mother-to-child transmission of HIV, breastfeeding, information and education in particular of youth, curbing high-risk behaviour, intravenous drug users, support groups, counselling and voluntary testing, partner notification and provision and high cost of essential drugs have not been sufficiently addressed. There are positive signs in the fight against HIV/AIDS in some countries that behavioural changes have occurred among young people, and experience shows that educational programmes for young people can lead to a more positive view on gender relations and gender equality, delayed sexual initiation and reduced risk of sexually transmitted infections.

45. Growing drug and substance abuse among young women and girls, both in developed and developing countries, has raised the need for increased efforts towards demand reduction and fight against illicit production, supply and trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

46. The increase in casualties and damage caused by natural disasters has raised awareness of the inefficiencies and inadequacies of the existing approaches and intervention methods in responding to such emergency situations, in which women, more often than men, are burdened with the responsibility of meeting the immediate daily needs of their families. This situation has raised awareness that a gender perspective must be incorporated whenever disaster prevention, mitigation and recovery strategies are being developed and implemented.

47. The changing context of gender relations, as well as the discussion on gender equality, has led to an increased reassessment of gender roles. This has further encouraged a discussion on the roles and responsibilities of women and men working together towards gender equality and the need for changing those stereotypical and traditional roles that limit women's full potential. There is a need for balanced participation between women and men in remunerated and unremunerated work. Failure to recognize and measure in quantitative terms unremunerated work of women, which is often not valued in national accounts, has meant that women's full contribution to social and economic development remains underestimated and undervalued. As long as there is insufficient sharing of tasks and responsibilities with men, the combination of remunerated work and caregiving will lead to the continued disproportionate burden for women in comparison to men.

#### **IV. Actions and initiatives to overcome obstacles and to achieve the full and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action**

48. In view of the evaluation of progress made in the five years since the Fourth World Conference on Women in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as contained in section II above, as well as the current challenges affecting its full realization, as outlined in section III above, Governments now recommit themselves to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and also commit themselves to further actions and initiatives to overcome the obstacles and address the challenges. Governments, in taking continued and additional steps to achieve the goals of the Platform for Action, recognize that all human rights — civil, cultural, economic, political and social, including the right to development —



55. Increased efforts are needed to provide equal access to education, health and social services and to ensure women's and girls' rights to education and the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and well-being throughout the life cycle, as well as adequate, affordable and universally accessible health care and services, including sexual and reproductive health, particularly in the face of the HIV/AIDS pandemic; they are also necessary with regard to the growing proportion of older women.

56. Given that a majority of the world's women are subsistence producers and users of environmental resources, there is a need to recognize and integrate women's knowledge and priorities in the conservation and management of such resources to ensure their sustainability. Programmes and infrastructures that are gender-sensitive are needed in order to respond effectively to disaster and emergency situations that threaten the environment, livelihood security, as well as the management of the basic requirements of daily life.

57. Sustaining the livelihoods of populations in States with limited or scarce resources, including small island developing States, is critically dependent on the preservation and protection of the environment. Women's customary knowledge, management and sustainable use of biodiversity should be recognized.

58. Political will and commitment at all levels are crucial to ensure mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the adoption and implementation of comprehensive and action-oriented policies in all areas. Policy commitments are essential for further developing the necessary framework which ensures women's equal access to and control over economic and financial resources, training, services and institutions as well as their participation in decision-making and management. Policy-making processes require the partnership of women and men at all levels. Men and boys should also be actively involved and encouraged in all efforts to achieve the goals of the Platform for Action and its implementation.

59. Violence against women and girls is a major obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of gender equality, development and peace. Violence against women both violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. Gender-based violence, such as battering and other domestic violence, sexual abuse, sexual slavery and exploitation, international trafficking in women and children, forced prostitution and sexual harassment, as well as violence against women resulting from cultural prejudice, racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia, pornography, ethnic cleansing, armed conflict, foreign occupation, religious and anti-religious extremism and terrorism are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person and must be combated and eliminated.

60. Women play a critical role in the family. The family is the basic unit of society and is a strong force for social cohesion and integration and, as such, should be strengthened. The inadequate support to women and insufficient protection and support to their respective families affect society as a whole and undermine efforts to achieve gender equality. In different cultural, political and social systems, various forms of the family exist and the rights, capabilities and responsibilities of family members must be respected. Women's social and economic contributions to the welfare of the family and the social significance of maternity and paternity continue to be inadequately addressed. Motherhood and fatherhood and the role of parents and legal guardians in the family and in the upbringing of children and the importance of all family members to the family's well-being are also acknowledged and must not be a basis for discrimination. Women also continue to bear a

disproportionate share of the household responsibilities and the care of children, the sick and the elderly. Such imbalance needs to be consistently addressed through appropriate policies and programmes, in particular those geared towards education, and through legislation where appropriate. In order to achieve full partnership, both in public and in private spheres, both women and men must be enabled to reconcile and share equally work responsibilities and family responsibilities.

61. Strong national machineries for the advancement of women and promotion of gender equality require political commitment at the highest level and all necessary human and financial resources to initiate, recommend and facilitate the development, adoption and monitoring of policies, legislation, programmes and capacity-building for the empowerment of women and to act as catalysts for open public dialogue on gender equality as a societal goal. This would enable them to promote the advancement of women and mainstream a gender perspective in policies and programmes in all areas, to play an advocacy role and to ensure equal access to all institutions and resources, as well as enhanced capacity-building for women in all sectors. Reforms to meet the challenges of the changing world are essential to ensure women's equal access to institutions and organizations. Institutional and conceptual changes are a strategic and important aspect of creating an enabling environment for the implementation of the Platform for Action.

62. Programme support to enhance women's opportunities, potentials and activities need to have a dual focus: on the one hand, programmes aimed at meeting the basic as well as the specific needs of women for capacity-building, organizational development and empowerment, and on the other, gender mainstreaming in all programme formulation and implementation activities. It is particularly important to expand into new areas of programming to advance gender equality in response to current challenges.

63. Girls and women of all ages with any form of disability are generally among the more vulnerable and marginalized of society. There is therefore need to take into account and to address their concerns in all policy-making and programming. Special measures are needed at all levels to integrate them into the mainstream of development.

64. Effective and coordinated plans and programmes for the full implementation of the Platform for Action require a clear knowledge of the situation of women and girls, clear research-based knowledge and data disaggregated by sex, short- and long-term time-bound targets and measurable goals, and follow-up mechanisms to assess progress. Efforts are needed to ensure capacity-building for all actors involved in the achievement of these goals. Efforts are also needed at the national level to increase transparency and accountability.

65. The realization and the achievement of the goals of gender equality, development and peace need to be supported by the allocation of necessary human, financial and material resources for specific and targeted activities to ensure gender equality at the local, national, regional and international levels as well as by enhanced and increased international cooperation. Explicit attention to these goals in the budgetary processes at the national, regional and international levels is essential.

**A. Actions to be taken at the national level**

(e) Consider signing and ratifying the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;<sup>7</sup>

(f) Develop, review and implement laws and procedures to prohibit and eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls;

(g) Take measures, including programmes and policies, to ensure that maternity, motherhood and parenting and the role of women in procreation are not used as a basis for discrimination nor restrict the full participation of women in society;

(h) Ensure that national legislative and administrative reform processes, including those linked to land reform, decentralization and reorientation of the economy, promote women's rights, particularly those of rural women and women living in poverty, and take measures to promote and implement those rights through women's equal access to and control over economic resources, including land, property rights, right to inheritance, credit and traditional saving schemes, such as women's banks and cooperatives;

(i) Mainstream a gender perspective into national immigration and asylum policies, regulations and practices, as appropriate, in order to promote and protect the rights of all women, including the consideration of steps to recognize gender-related persecution and violence when assessing grounds for granting refugee status and asylum;

(j) Take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination and violence against women and girls by any person, organization or enterprise;

(k) Take necessary measures for the private sector and educational establishments to facilitate and strengthen compliance with non-discriminatory legislation.

69. (a) As a matter of priority, review and revise legislation, where appropriate, with a view to introducing effective legislation, including on violence against women, and take other necessary measures to ensure that all women and girls are protected against all forms of physical, psychological and sexual violence, and are provided recourse to justice;

(b) Prosecute the perpetrators of all forms of violence against women and girls and sentence them appropriately, and introduce actions aimed at helping and motivating perpetrators to break the cycle of violence and take measures to provide avenues for redress to victims;

(c) Treat all forms of violence against women and girls of all ages as a criminal offence punishable by law, including violence based on all forms of discrimination;

(d) Establish legislation and/or strengthen appropriate mechanisms to handle criminal matters relating to all forms of domestic violence, including marital rape and sexual abuse of women and girls, and ensure that such cases are brought to justice swiftly;

(e) Develop, adopt and fully implement laws and other measures, as appropriate, such as policies and educational programmes, to eradicate harmful customary or traditional practices, including female genital mutilation, early and forced marriage and so-called honour crimes, which are violations of the human rights of women and girls and obstacles to the full enjoyment by women of their



71. (a) Consider adopting, where appropriate, national legislation consistent with the Convention on Biological Diversity<sup>12</sup> to protect the knowledge, innovations and practices of women in indigenous and local communities relating to traditional medicines, biodiversity and indigenous technologies;

(b) Adapt environmental and agricultural policies and mechanisms, when necessary, to incorporate a gender perspective, and in cooperation with civil society, support farmers, particularly women farmers and those living in rural areas, with education and training programmes.

72. (a) Adopt policies and implement measures to address, on a prioritized basis, the gender aspects of emerging and continued health challenges, such as malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and other diseases having a disproportionate impact on women's health, including those resulting in the highest mortality and morbidity rates;

(b) Ensure that the reduction of maternal morbidity and mortality is a health sector priority and that women have ready access to essential obstetric care, well-equipped and adequately staffed maternal health-care services, skilled attendance at delivery, emergency obstetric care, effective referral and transport to higher levels of care when necessary, post-partum care and family planning in order to, *inter alia*, promote safe motherhood, and give priority attention to measures to prevent, detect and treat breast, cervical and ovarian cancer and osteoporosis, and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS;

(c) Take measures to meet the unmet needs in good quality family planning services and in contraception, namely regarding the existing gap in services, supplies and use;

(d) Collect and disseminate updated and reliable data on mortality and morbidity of women and conduct further research regarding how social and economic factors affect the health of girls and women of all ages, as well as research about the provision of health-care services to girls and women and the patterns of use of such services and the value of disease prevention and health promotion programmes for women;

(e) Ensure universal and equal access for women and men throughout the life-cycle, to social services related to health care, including education, clean water and safe sanitation, nutrition, food security and health education programmes;

(f) Ensure the provision of safe working conditions for health-care workers;

(g) Adopt, enact, review and revise, where necessary or appropriate, and implement health legislation, policies and programmes, in consultation with women's organizations and other actors of civil society, and allocate the necessary budgetary resources to ensure the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, so that all women have full and equal access to comprehensive, high-quality and affordable health care, information, education and services throughout their life cycle; reflect the new demands for service and care by women and girls as a result of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and new knowledge about women's needs for specific mental and occupation health programmes and for the ageing process; and protect and promote human rights by ensuring that all health services and workers conform

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<sup>12</sup> See United Nations Environment Programme, *Convention on Biological Diversity* (Environmental Law and Institute Programme Activity Centre), June 1992.





and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. Equal relationships between women and men in matters of sexual relations and

women, which would include education, prevention and cessation programmes and services, and the reduction of people's exposure to environmental tobacco smoke, and support the development of the World Health Organization international framework convention on tobacco control;

(q) Promote or improve information programmes and measures including treatment for the elimination of the increasing substance abuse among women and adolescent girls, including information campaigns about the risks to health and other consequences and its impact on families.

73. (a) Mainstream a gender perspective into key macroeconomic and social development policies and national development programmes;

(b) Incorporate a gender perspective into the design, development, adoption





responsible sexual behaviour; raise awareness about, prevent and treat sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, and sexual violence and abuse; and counsel adolescents on avoiding unwanted and early pregnancies;

(g) Design and implement programmes to provide social services and support to pregnant adolescents and adolescent mothers, in particular to enable them to continue and complete their education;

(h) Give particular attention to developing and improving access to improved and new technologies and to safe and affordable drugs and treatments to meet women's health needs, including cardiopulmonary diseases, hypertension, osteoporosis, breast, cervical and ovarian cancer and family planning and contraceptive methods, for both women and men.

80. Develop and use frameworks, guidelines and other practical tools and indicators to accelerate gender mainstreaming, including gender-based research, analytical tools and methodologies, training, case studies, statistics and information.

81. (a) Provide equal opportunities and favourable conditions for women of all ages and backgrounds on equal terms with men by encouraging their entry into politics and their participation at all levels;

(b) Encourage the nomination of more women candidates, *inter alia*, through political parties, quotas or measurable goals or other appropriate means for election to parliaments and other legislative structures, to increase their share and contribution in the formulation of public policy;

(c) Develop and maintain consultative processes and mechanisms, in partnership with women's organizations, including non-governmental organizations and community groups, to ensure that all women, with particular attention to those who face particular barriers to their participation in public life, are fully involved in and informed about decisions that impact their lives.

82. (a) Promote and protect the rights of women workers and take action to remove structural and legal barriers as well as stereotypical attitudes to gender equality at work, addressing, *inter alia*, gender bias in recruitment; working conditions; occupational segregation and harassment; discrimination in social protection benefits; women's occupational health and safety; unequal career opportunities and inadequate sharing, by men, of family responsibilities;

(b) Promote programmes to enable women and men to reconcile their work and family responsibilities and to encourage men to share equally with women household and child-care responsibilities;

(c) Develop or strengthen policies and programmes to support the multiple roles of women in contributing to the welfare of the family in its various forms, which acknowledge the social significance of maternity and motherhood, parenting, the role of parents and legal guardians in the upbringing of children and caring for other family members. Such policies and programmes should also promote shared responsibility of parents, women and men and society as a whole in this regard;

(d) Design, implement and promote family friendly policies and services, including affordable, accessible and quality care services for children and other dependants, parental and other leave schemes and campaigns to sensitize public opinion and other relevant actors on equal sharing of employment and family responsibilities between women and men;

(e) Develop policies and programmes to enhance the employability of women and their access to quality jobs, through improving access to formal, non-formal and vocational training, lifelong learning and retraining, long-distance education, including in information and communications technology and entrepreneurial skills, particularly in developing countries, to support women's empowerment in the different stages of their lives;

(f) Take action to increase women's participation and to bring about a balanced representation of women and men in all sectors and occupations in the labour market, *inter alia*, by encouraging the creation or expansion of institutional networks to support the career development and promotion of women;

(g) Develop and/or strengthen programmes and policies to support women entrepreneurs, including those engaged in new enterprises, through access to information, training, including vocational training, new technologies, networks, credit and financial services;

(h) Initiate positive steps to promote equal pay for equal work or work of equal value and to diminish differentials in incomes between women and men;

(i) Encourage and support the education of girls in science, mathematics, new technologies, including information technologies, and technical subjects, and encourage women, including through career advising, to seek employment in high-growth and high-wage sectors and jobs;

(j) Develop policies and implement programmes, particularly for men and boys, on changing stereotypical attitudes and behaviours concerning gender roles and responsibilities to promote gender equality and positive attitudes and behaviour;

(k) Strengthen gender-awareness campaigns and gender equality training among women and men, girls and boys to eliminate the persistence of harmful stereotypes;

(l) Analyse and respond, as necessary, to the major reasons why men and women may be affected differently by the process of job creation and retrenchment associated with economic transition and structural transformation of the economy, including globalization;

(m) Promote gender-sensitivity and social responsibility of the private sector, *inter alia*, through the management of work time and dissemination of gender-sensitive information and advocacy campaigns.

83. (a) Strengthen or establish, where appropriate, national collaborative and regular reporting mechanisms, with the participation of non-governmental organizations, especially women's organizations, to monitor progress in the implementation of national policies, programmes and benchmarks for achieving gender equality;

(b) Support the work of non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations in helping disadvantaged women, in particular rural women, in gaining access to financial institutions in establishing businesses and other sustainable means of livelihood;

(c) Take measures to enable all older women to be actively engaged in all aspects of life, as well as to assume a variety of roles in communities, public life and decision-making, and develop and implement policies and programmes to

ensure their full enjoyment of human rights and quality of life, as well as to address their needs, with a view to contributing to the realization of a society for all ages;

(d) Design and implement policies and programmes to address fully specific needs of women and girls with disabilities, to ensure their equal access to education at all levels, including technical and vocational training and adequate rehabilitation programmes, health care and services and employment opportunities, to protect and promote their human rights and, where appropriate, to eliminate existing inequalities between women and men with disabilities.

### **C. Actions to be taken at the international level**

#### **By the United Nations system and international and regional organizations, as appropriate:**

84. (a) Assist Governments, at their request, in building institutional capacity and developing national action plans or further implementing existing action plans for the implementation of the Platform for Action;

(b) Support non-governmental organizations, especially women's organizations, to build their capacity to advocate for, implement, assess and follow up the Platform for Action;

(c) Allocate sufficient resources to regional and national programmes to implement the Platform for Action in its twelve critical areas of concern;

(d) Assist Governments in countries with economies in transition to further develop and implement plans and programmes aimed at economic and political empowerment of women;

(e) Encourage the Economic and Social Council to request the regional commissions, within their respective mandates and resources, to build up a database to be updated regularly, in which all programmes and projects carried out in their respective regions by agencies or organizations of the United Nations system are listed, and to facilitate their dissemination, as well as the evaluation of their impact on the empowerment of women through the implementation of the Platform for Action.

85. (a) Continue to implement and evaluate and follow up the mandated work of the United Nations agencies, drawing on the full range of expertise available within the United Nations system, as well as agreed conclusions of the Economic and Social Council and other programmes and initiatives, to mainstream a gender perspective into all policies, programmes and planning of the United Nations system, including through the integrated and coordinated follow-up to all major United Nations conferences and summits, as well as to ensure the allocation of sufficient resources and maintenance of gender units and focal points to achieve this end;

(b) Assist countries, upon their request, in developing methods for and compiling statistics on the contributions of women and men to society and the economy, and the socio-economic situation of women and men, in particular in relation to poverty and paid and unpaid work in all sectors;

(c) Support national efforts, particularly in developing countries, for enlarged access to new information technology as part of the efforts to develop collaborative research, training and information dissemination, including through



the Gender Awareness Information and Networking System developed by the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, while at the same time supporting traditional methods of information dissemination, research and training;

(d) Ensure that all United Nations personnel and officials at Headquarters and in the field, especially in field operations, receive training in order to mainstream a gender perspective in their work, including gender impact analysis, and ensure appropriate follow-up to such training;

(e) Support the Commission on the Status of Women, within its mandate, in assessing and advancing the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the follow-up thereto;

(f) Assist Governments, upon their request, in incorporating a gender perspective as a dimension of development into national development planning;

(g) Assist States parties, upon their request, in building capacity to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,<sup>8</sup> and in this regard encourage States parties to pay attention to the concluding comments as well as the general recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

86. (a) Assist Governments, upon request, in developing gender-sensitive strategies for the delivery of assistance and, where appropriate, responses to humanitarian crises resulting from armed conflict and natural disasters;

(b) Ensure and support the full participation of women at all levels of decision-making and implementation in development activities and peace processes, including conflict prevention and resolution, post-conflict reconstruction, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building, and in this regard, support the involvement of women's organizations, community-based organizations and non-governmental organizations;

(c) Encourage the involvement of women in decision-making at all levels and achieve gender balance in the appointment of women and men, with full respect for the principle of equitable geographical distribution, including, as special envoys and special representatives and in pursuing good offices on behalf of the Secretary-General, *inter alia*, in matters relating to peacekeeping, peace-building and in operational activities, including as resident coordinators;

(d) Provide gender-sensitive training to all actors, as appropriate, in peacekeeping missions in dealing with victims, particularly women and girls, of violence, including sexual violence;

(e) Take further effective measures to remove the obstacles to the realization of the right of peoples to self-determination, in particular peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation, that continue to adversely affect their economic and social development.

87. (a) Support activities aimed at the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, including by providing support for the activities of women's networks and organizations within the United Nations system;

(b) Consider launching an international "zero tolerance" campaign on violence against women.

88. Encourage the implementation of measures designed to achieve the goal of 50/50 gender balance in all posts, including at the Professional level and above, in particular at the higher levels in their secretariats, including in peacekeeping missions, peace negotiations and in all activities, and report thereon, as appropriate, and enhance management accountability mechanisms.

89. Take measures, with the full participation of women, to create, at all levels, an enabling environment conducive to the achievement and maintenance of world peace, for democracy and peaceful settlement of disputes, with full respect for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States and non-intervention in matters which are essentially within the jurisdiction of any State, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law, as well as the promotion and protection of all human rights, including the right to development, and fundamental freedoms.

**D. Actions to be taken at the national and international levels**

**By Governments, regional and international organizations, including the United Nations system, and international financial institutions and other actors, as appropriate:**

90. Take steps with a view to the avoidance of and refrain from any unilateral measure at variance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations that impedes the full achievement of economic and social development by the population of the affected countries, in particular women and children, that

(d) Eliminate gender biases in bio-medical, clinical and social research, including by conducting voluntary clinical trials involving women, with due regard for their human rights, and in strict conformity with internationally accepted legal, ethical, medical, safety, and scientific standards, and gather, analyse and make available to appropriate institutions and to end-users gender-specific information

(e) Adopt measures to ensure that the work of rural women, who continue to play a vital role in providing food security and nutrition and are engaged in agricultural production and enterprises related to farming, fishing and resource

96. (a) Increase cooperation, policy responses, effective implementation of national legislation and other protective and preventive measures aimed at the elimination of violence against women and girls, especially all forms of commercial sexual exploitation, as well as economic exploitation, including trafficking in women and children, female infanticide, crimes committed in the name of honour, crimes committed in the name of passion, racially motivated crimes, abduction and sale of children, dowry-related violence and deaths, acid attacks and harmful traditional or customary practices, such as female genital mutilation, early and forced marriages;

(b) Increase awareness and knowledge of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court,<sup>7</sup> which affirms that rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization and other forms of sexual violence constitute war crimes and, in defined circumstances, crimes against humanity, with the aim of preventing such crimes from occurring, and take measures to support the prosecution of all persons responsible for such crimes and provide avenues for redress to victims; also increase awareness of the extent to which such crimes are used as a weapon of war;

(c) Provide support to non-governmental organizations, in collaboration with the United Nations system, *inter alia*, through regional and international cooperation, including women's organizations and community groups, in addressing all forms of violence against women and girls, including for programmes to combat race and ethnic-based violence against women and girls;

(d) Encourage and support public campaigns, as appropriate, to enhance public awareness of the unacceptability and social costs of violence against women, and undertake prevention activities to promote healthy and balanced relationships based on gender equality.

97. (a) Intensify cooperation between States of origin, transit and destination to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children;

(b) Support the ongoing negotiations on a draft protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, to supplement the draft United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime;<sup>15</sup>

(c) As appropriate, pursue and support national, regional and international strategies to reduce the risk to women and girls, including those who are refugees and displaced persons, as well as women migrant workers, of becoming victims of trafficking; strengthen national legislation by further defining the crime of trafficking in all its elements and by reinforcing the punishment accordingly; enact social and economic policies and programmes, as well as informational and awareness-raising initiatives, to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, especially women and children; prosecute perpetrators of trafficking; provide measures to support, assist and protect trafficked persons in their countries of origin and destination; and facilitate their return to and support their reintegration into their countries of origin.

98. (a) Improve knowledge and awareness of the remedies available for violations of women's human rights;

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<sup>15</sup> See resolution 54/126.

(b) Promote and protect the human rights of all migrant women and implement policies to address the specific needs of documented migrant women and, where necessary, tackle the existing inequalities between men and women migrants to ensure gender equality;

(c) Promote respect for the right of women and men to the freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Recognize the central role that religion, spirituality and belief play in the lives of millions of women and men;

(d) Encourage, through the media and other means, a high awareness of the harmful effects of certain traditional or customary practices affecting the health of women, some of which increase their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections, and intensify efforts to eliminate such practices;

(e) Take necessary measures to protect individuals, groups and organs of society engaged in promoting and protecting women's human rights;

(f) Encourage States parties to continue to include a gender perspective in their reports to the treaty bodies; also encourage these bodies to continue to take into account a gender perspective in the implementation of their mandates, taking into account the need to avoid unnecessary duplication and overlapping of their work; and further encourage human rights mechanisms to continue to take into account a gender perspective in their work;

(g) Support innovative programmes to empower older women to increase their contribution to and benefit from development and efforts to combat poverty.

99. (a) Promote comprehensive human rights education programmes, *inter alia*, in cooperation, where appropriate, with education and human rights institutions, the relevant actors of civil society, in particular non-governmental organizations and the media networks, to ensure widespread dissemination of information on human rights instruments, in particular those concerning the human rights of women and girls;

(b) Take measures through, *inter alia*, supporting and strengthening existing mechanisms entrusted with prosecuting perpetrators of violations of the human rights of women, to eliminate impunity;

(c) Take measures to eliminate violations of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Many of these violations have a negative impact on the promotion and protection of the human rights of women;

(d) Address the root causes of armed conflict in a comprehensive and durable manner, as well as the differences in the impact of armed conflict on women and men, and take them into account in relevant policies and programmes in order to, *inter alia*, enhance the protection of civilians, particularly women and children;

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inter alia



(i) Identify and implement development-oriented and durable solutions which integrate a gender perspective to external debt and debt-servicing problems of developing countries, including least developed countries, *inter alia*, through debt relief, including the option of official development assistance debt cancellation, in order to help them to finance programmes and projects targeted at development, including the advancement of women;

(j) Support the Cologne initiative for the reduction of debt, particularly the speedy implementation of the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative; ensure the provision of adequate funds for its implementation and implement the provision that funds saved should be used to support anti-poverty programmes that address gender dimensions;

(k) Promote and accelerate the implementation of the 20/20 initiative, which integrates a gender perspective to fully benefit all, particularly women and girls;

(l) 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, thereby increasing the flow of resources for gender equality, development and peace;

(m) Facilitate the transfer to developing countries and countries with economies in transition of appropriate technology, particularly new and modern technology, and encourage efforts by the international community to eliminate restrictions on such transfers, as an effective means of complementing national efforts for further acceleration in achieving the goals of gender equality, development and peace;

(n) Recommend that the Preparatory Committee for the Millennium Assembly make an effort, within the context of gender mainstreaming in the United Nations system, to integrate a gender perspective in all activities and documents related to the Millennium Assembly and Summit, including in the consideration of poverty eradication;

(o) Create an enabling environment and design and implement policies that promote and protect the enjoyment of all human rights — civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, including the right to development — and fundamental freedoms, as part of the efforts to achieve gender equality, development and peace.

102. (a) Create and strengthen an enabling environment, in accordance with national laws, to support the capacity of women's non-governmental organizations to mobilize resources to ensure the sustainability of their development activities;

(b) Encourage the establishment and strengthening of multi-stakeholder partnerships/cooperation at all levels among international and intergovernmental organizations, with relevant actors of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, the private sector and trade unions, and women's organizations and other non-governmental organizations, communications and media systems in support of the goals of the Fourth World Conference on Women;

(c) Encourage partnerships and cooperation among Governments, international organizations, in particular international financial institutions, and multilateral organizations, private sector institutions and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, especially women's and community-based

organizations, to support poverty eradication initiatives focused on women and girls;

(d) Recognize the crucial role of and support women and women's non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations in the implementation of Agenda 21,<sup>18</sup> by integrating a gender perspective in the formulation, design and implementation of sustainable environmental and resource management mechanisms, programmes and infrastructure.

103. (a) Promote programmes for healthy active ageing that stress the independence, equality, participation and security of older women and undertake gender-specific research and programmes to address their needs;

(b) As a matter of priority, especially in those countries most affected, and in partnership with non-governmental organizations, wherever possible, intensify education, services and community-based mobilization strategies to protect women of all ages from HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, including through the development of safe, affordable, effective and easily accessible female-controlled methods, including such methods as microbicides and female condoms that protect against sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS; voluntary and confidential HIV testing and counselling; the promotion of responsible sexual behaviour, including abstinence and condom use; and the development of vaccines, simple low-cost diagnosis and single dose treatments for sexually transmitted infections;

(c) Provide access to adequate and affordable treatment, monitoring and care for all people, especially women and girls, infected with sexually transmitted diseases or living with life-threatening diseases, including HIV/AIDS and associated opportunistic infections, such as tuberculosis. Provide other services, including adequate housing and social protection, including during pregnancy and breastfeeding; assist boys and girls orphaned as a result of the HIV/AIDS pandemic; and provide gender-sensitive support systems for women and other family members who are involved in caring for persons affected by serious health conditions, including HIV/AIDS;

(d) Take effective and expeditious measures to mobilize international and national public opinion concerning the effects of different dimensions of the world drug problem on women and girls and ensure that appropriate resources are provided to this end.

104. Encourage partnerships between Governments and non-governmental organizations in the implementation of commitments made at the Fourth World Conference on Women and at other United Nations world conferences and summits in order to promote gender equality, development and peace in the twenty-first century.

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<sup>18</sup> *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda in th/ on El i4ai6uragee6s voectionsdopected bf tal