

Beijing at ten

achieving gender equality, development and peace

PRESS RELEASE

United Nations Commission to appraise worldwide situation of women

(New York, 31 January 2005) Ten years after the Fourth World Conference on Women took place in Beijing, the United Nations will offer an opportunity to policy makers and experts from Governments from around the world to take stock of progress made in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and to recommend concrete steps for future action.

The meeting, known as the *Ten-Year Review and Appraisal*, will be held from 28 February to 11 March 2005 at UN headquarters in New York, as part of the UN Commission on the Status of Women's (CSW) forty-ninth session.

The Beijing conference in 1995 culminated in a groundbreaking *Platform for Action* that Member States and their UN and non-governmental partners hope to move towards broader and more systematic implementation. This meeting will be the first opportunity since a follow up session of the UN General Assembly five years ago, for high level Government officials and a wide spectrum of civil society experts to make in-depth assessments of the status of women today.

“A lot of progress has been made since Beijing. We are seeing more equitable laws that protect women from discrimination, abuse, and violence. However, there is much more that needs to be done to put the *Platform for Action* into practice, especially in terms of alleviating poverty, improving health, creating opportunity for economic advancement and political leadership, and reducing human rights violations,” said Rachel Mayanja, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women.

The Commission on the Status of Women will focus on two major themes during the session: a review of progress in implementing both the Beijing *Platform for Action* and the outcome document that emerged from the General Assembly session five years ago, as well as current challenges and strategies. It will discuss action at the national level and facilitate the sharing of experiences and good practices in overcoming remaining obstacles.

According to the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women, Carolyn Hannan, a large number of non-governmental organizations are expected to attend the meeting.

“This level of participation by non-governmental organizations is a testament to the enormous contribution of civil society to the advancement of women's rights over the last thirty years. Their input into the *Ten-Year Review and Appraisal* and continued collaboration is a crucial element in the process,” said Ms. Hannan.

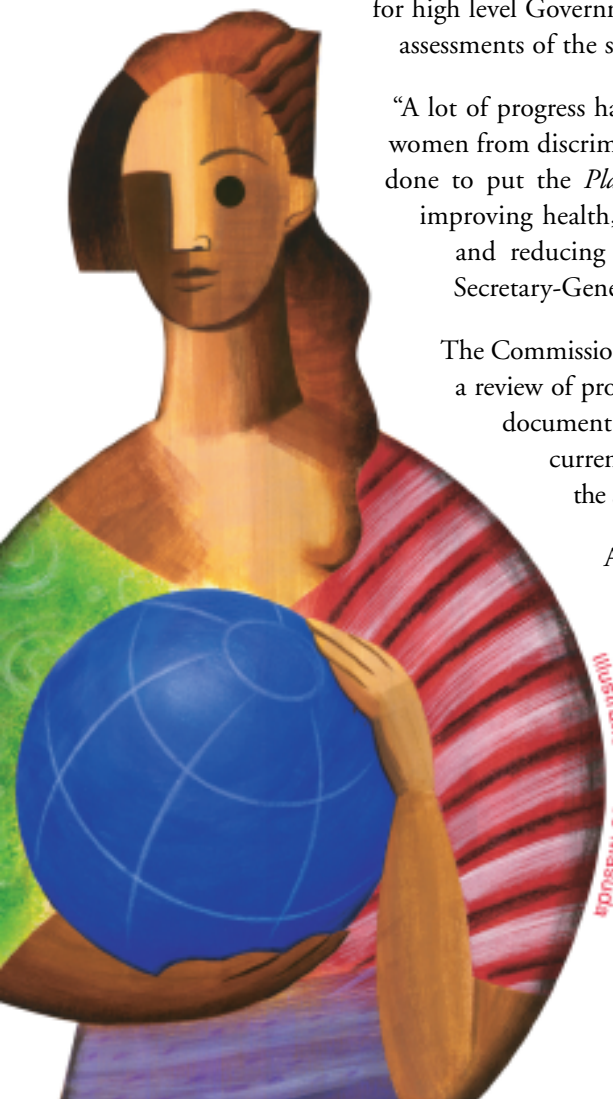


Illustration: Coco Masuda



United Nations

The outcome of the *Ten-Year Review and Appraisal* will be a vital input into the UN General Assembly's High-Level Millennium review in September 2005.

The *Platform for Action* offered a global framework for countries to end discrimination against women and close the gender gaps in twelve critical areas, including health, education, employment, political participation and human rights. The *Ten-Year Review and Appraisal* will highlight current challenges including efforts to:

- improve access to quality health care, including reproductive and sexual health and HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment;
- raise awareness about human rights of women and enhance implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- increase participation of women in decision-making positions within governments and civil society;
- extend full economic opportunities to women, including access to microfinance;
- prevent violence against women including trafficking, and eliminate impunity for offenders;
- reduce armed conflict and increase women's participation in peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution.

In the lead up to the *Ten-Year Review and Appraisal* in the Commission on the Status of Women, 134 countries submitted information to the United Nations on what they had done to promote gender equality and implement the recommendations of the *Platform for Action*. Further advance work was achieved during intergovernmental regional meetings organized by the UN Economic Commissions in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and West Asia and through interactive on-line discussion groups.

The two-week session will consist of a high-level plenary meeting, open to all UN Member States and Observers, where delegates will renew their commitments to women's equality and advancement. The session will also feature roundtable dialogue among high-level representatives from Governments, including First Ladies and Ministers of Women's Affairs, as well as experts on gender equality issues in the UN and non-governmental organizations and civil society.

In addition, seven interactive panels will provide opportunities to examine policy issues in more detail, including gender perspectives in macroeconomics, the linkages between implementation of the *Platform for Action* and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the vision of young women and men for gender equality in the future.

In addition to the official events, a variety of side events to raise awareness about some of the factors that continue to thwart progress on implementing the *Beijing Platform for Action* will be organized by Member States, United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations.

For further information on the *Ten-Year Review and Appraisal*, including accreditation details for media wishing to attend, please visit: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/Review/>

For media enquiries, please contact:

Ms. Renata Sivacolundhu
Development Section
Department of Public Information
Tel: 1-(212) 963-2932 Fax: 1-(212) 963-1186
Email: mediainfo@un.org

For NGO enquiries, please contact:

UN Division for the Advancement of Women
Tel: 1-(212) 963-4714
Email: Csw49@un.org